

Introducing Filipino Games To Promote Peer Play Interaction

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Abstract

Long ago, Filipino games have been part of the Filipino pastime. These games, being cooperative by nature, seem to promote close social relationships in the family, in school and in the community. But nowadays, Filipino children rarely play these games. The present generation has been exposed to a variety of games in handheld technological devices that could lead to less interest in playing Filipino games, or other social play. This action research aimed to find out how teaching Filipino games to kindergarten students, help promote peer play interaction in a class of eleven children, aged 3 to 4 years old, in a private preschool in Metro Manila. They were observed to do solitary and parallel play very often, and hardly do associative or cooperative play. This research is qualitative and data analysis is limited to descriptive statistics to show difference of peer interaction between pre- and post-intervention. The researchers used observation, video recording, anecdotal records, and a Peer Play Checklist in data gathering. Results show that Filipino Games are effective in promoting peer interaction among children. More of the children were able to cooperate and collaborate with their peers, listened better, encouraged peers to join in, were more considerate, and responded to ideas more often. This implies that preschool teachers can teach 3 to 4 year old children Filipino games to promote peer interaction or socialization.

Keywords: peer interaction, socialization, Filipino games, cooperative play

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Introduction

To be successful in human society, children need to understand and acquire social competencies. In early childhood, this is the “ability of young children to successfully and appropriately select and carry out their interpersonal goals” (Guralnick, 1990). Thus social competence is the effectiveness and appropriateness of interaction and relationships with other people in particular settings. They can be defined either by skills (*like problem-solving behavior, taking the perspective of others, taking turns*) or by outcomes (*like having friends, being popular/liked by peers, or engaging in effective social peer interaction*). Thus if one outcome of being socially competent is having friends, then in a child’s context, it would mean he has playmates. Since a child normally lives and learns through play, in order to have playmates, he should learn how to play successfully with others.

An essential skill learned in early childhood is the ability to develop positive social competence and establish effective peer relationships, especially through play, influencing academic and social success (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, cited in Isenberg and Jalongo, 2010). Professional organizations for early childhood, like the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the International Association for Childhood Education (IACE), emphasize the importance of play as part of kindergarten curriculum because, while playing, children develop cognitive, social, emotional and language skills as well (Nadon-Gabrion, 2007; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, cited in Isenberg and Jalongo, 2003). Play therefore, as a developmentally appropriate practice, is a necessity (Jamison, 2010).

Long ago, Filipino children had the opportunity to play social games in the neighborhood during their pastime. While playing, there was fun in negotiations and compromises going on, from playing pretend games during free play to traditional Filipino games with simple rules. Most of these games, being cooperative by nature, seem to promote close social relationships in the family, in school and in the community.

Nowadays, many Filipino children rarely play these games. The present generation has been exposed to a variety of electronic games in handheld technological devices like tablets, cellphones and game consoles, that could lead to less interest in playing Filipino games, or other cooperative games.

Objectives of the study

The children in this study were enrolled in a play-based private school, which believes that through play, children's curiosity and eagerness to learn arises. However, the children in a class of 3- to 4-year olds were observed to do solitary and parallel play most of the time, and the school wanted to encourage them to play with each other. During free time, students in this school were given time to play and were offered a variety of toys, play equipment and learning materials to choose from. With a wide range of toys and equipment to choose from, the children often played by themselves. This behavior continued even up to the middle of the school year, despite being together daily for at least five months when this research was done. Thus, this study introduced Filipino games to the children to see its effect in promoting peer interaction in this age group. Specifically, it aimed to answer the following questions: (1) How does introducing Filipino games to 3- to 4-year old children promote peer interaction? and (2) What common behaviors do children show while playing Filipino games?

Literature Review. The development of social competence for a successful adjustment to kindergarten is deemed necessary for social and academic success. A component of social competence is effective peer interaction during play (Hampton, 1999).

As children play they experience peer interaction, cognitive challenges, use of language, and expressing emotions, learning essential behavioral skills needed to survive in the world. They continuously put into practice these skills, which they apply, exercise, and repeatedly carry out for them to be able to endure the challenges that they would be facing as they become adults (Gorin & Steffens, 1997; Mitchell & Wild, 2007; Reynolds & Jones, 1997).

Play is important since it helps build confidence, ability to interact socially and, gain empathy for others. Interaction in active play allows children to engage in higher level or elaborated play schemes and movement with peers and are more likely to use verbal communication compared to children who engage in inactive play or those who have not much contact with peers during play time (Gorin & Steffens, 1997). This is in line with the sociocultural theory of Vygotsky, stressing that for cognitive development to occur, the child should be socially mediated, interacting with a knowledgeable or skillful partner, either an

adult or a more competent peer (Bovey & Strain, 2003).

Peer Interaction during play includes behaviors like comforting and helping other children, showing fairness (including sharing and taking turns), listening to comments and suggestions of others, joining the play themes of other children, using language and physical behavior, disagreeing without fighting, directing others' actions politely, showing creativity in play, encouraging others to join play, and showing positive emotion during play like smiling or laughing; and for some children there is disruptive behavior and non-participation (Bovey & Strain 2003; Fantuzzo & Hampton, 2000). This also involves exposure to opinions and feedback from other children, and recognizing and respecting feelings and ideas of other children (Australian Government Department of Education, 2009).

On the contrary, absence of positive social interactions in childhood is linked to negative consequences later in life, such as withdrawal, loneliness, depression, and feelings of anxiety. In addition, low acceptance by peers in the early years is a predictor of grade retention, school dropout, and mental health and behavior problems (Ladd, 1999). Teachers therefore should intentionally help promote children's positive interactions with adults and peers, guiding and planning play experiences in various settings (Evangelou et al., 2009).

There are different types of play. One classification scheme for play is as follows: (a) *locomotor/ active play* (physical, outdoors, sports); (b) *socio-dramatic* (enactment with dolls, role-playing, with scenes); (c) *manipulative/exploratory* (with construction materials, puzzles, and patterns); (d) *creative* (creating, designing, etc.); among others (Hughes, 2002). Many Filipino games are active games.

Another classification scheme for play is based on the fact that children of various ages vary in social, cognitive, emotional and physical development, and is classified as follows: (a) *Solitary /Independent Play* (6 months to 3+ years) where children play alone even when there are other children around; (b) *Onlooker behavior* (18 months to 3+ years) when children just watch others play; (c) *Parallel/Adjacent Play* (2 to 4+ years) when children play with similar toys but only playing side by side, not playing with each other; (d) *Associative Play* (3 ½ to 5 years) when children play, practice language and social skills not necessarily working together at the same game, just imitating other children around them, each possibly having a monologue beside each other; and (e) *Cooperative Play* (4 ½ years and up) when children have developed social skills and form friendships, talking, discussing, working on a project

together, or doing dramatic play together, even playing elaborate games with rules, organized sports and board games (Parten, 1932, cited in Shaffer, 2009; Ramseyer, 2007).

However, there are arguments regarding this classification in terms of sequence, duration and age of onset of types of play. Some say (1) Solitary play is life-long, associated with concentration, and is not confined to 6 months to 3 years of age only, nor is it a sign of immaturity, and (2) whether children younger than 3 years are unable to play cooperative games (Shaffer, 2009). Thus the introduction of Filipino games to 3 to 4 year old children could actually still be developmentally appropriate.

Filipino games usually use cooperative play. These are played as part of Filipino pastime in the neighborhood streets, for recreation and socialization, excitement, development of playing skills and physical development (Malay, 1956, cited in Lopez, 2001). According to Henson and Henson (2001), games bring children together and develop values like cooperation, sportsmanship, confidence building and brotherhood. These games also strengthen the ties between families, neighbors and friends (Malay, 1956, cited in Lopez, 2001; Buan, Monte, Dela Cruz & Salangsang, 2011).

Related studies. Kitsmann and Howard (2011) investigated the emotion socialization of early childhood educators in Hong Kong (PRC) and Memphis (USA). They then proposed a conceptual model that integrates Le Vine's work in cultural anthropology and research on emotion socialization. Results show that adults in both countries have the same goal to help children develop emotional competence (i.e., skills for emotion expression, knowledge, and regulation). This is achieved universally through adult responses to emotions, modeling, emotion conversations and meta-emotion philosophies; although implementation is culture-specific.

The current study recognizes that emotions play a strong role on whether a child's peer relationships are successful or not. However, the current study focuses more on social competence, specifically peer interaction among young children, while Kitsmann and Howard (2011) focus more on emotional competence. Common to both studies is the critical role of early childhood educators as agents in the transmission of cultural values and practices, and in guiding young children towards social or emotional competence.

Similarly, Rhee (2007) investigated the role of teachers in furthering the development of

social competence in young children. By finding the reasons for difficulties in interacting with other children, examining changing play behavior, and observing teachers' roles in helping them become involved in peer group play, Rhee (2007) was able to find ways of helping two non-sociable four-year-old children (one boy and one girl) to become involved in peer group play. Observation was done one child at a time, over more than nine months. Data was meta-analyzed, with reasons for non-participation compared to Colewell and Hart (2006); for stages of play, analyzed in relation to Parten's research (Parten, 1932, cited in Shaffer, 2009); and for the teacher's roles, they were analyzed as to the strategies or roles they played, their action and its effects on the child. Results show that lack of communication skills and emotional instability were the main difficulties the children faced. For stages of play, these children passed through five distinct stages of play, from staying alone, to showing interest in peer group play, voluntarily joining friends, actively playing with one or two friends, to finally becoming an active member of the peer play group. And for teacher roles, the teachers during this time were making the children feel safe, giving them an opportunity to experience familiar things, suggesting plays, creating opportunities for them to become acquainted with other children, and modeling how to play with other children.

The current study is similar to Rhee's study in that it tried to find ways of helping non-sociable children join a peer group in play. But aside from observations in play patterns or types or stages of play, specific peer play interactions or behaviors were focused on. Reasons for difficulties in joining were not focused on here, neither was teacher roles during this time. This study focused on the effect of a particular strategy, which was the introduction of Filipino games and how it affected peer interaction by comparing pre and post intervention results, using a checklist, anecdotal records, interviews and observations.

Synthesis

Peer interaction, especially through play, aids in the development of children. Through play children get to learn social, physical, language, emotional, and cognitive skills. There are different types of play, but nowadays, many Filipino children rarely play group games. The present generation has been exposed to a variety of electronic games in handheld technological devices that promote solitary play. To attain the benefits of cooperative play,

this research attempted to introduce Filipino games and found out its effect on peer interaction.

Method

Design. This is a qualitative action research. The researchers used observation, video recording, anecdotal records, interview and a Peer Play Checklist in data gathering, done over 6 weeks.

Sample. The sample consisted of eleven children aged three to four years old, enrolled in a play-based private school in Metro Manila, five girls and six boys.

Intervention. The traditional Filipino games used in this study were pilot-tested for simplicity and appropriateness for 3 to 4-year old children. These are (1) *“Aso at Pusa”* (“Dog and Cat”), a tag game with the “it” player as the “dog” sitting in the center of a circle on the ground, and would run after the “cats” who try to steal “bones” (slippers or other objects); (2) *“Luksong Tinik”* (jumping over “thorns”) when two children sit on the ground and use their legs and hands as obstacles (“thorns”) over which other players jump over, and (3) *“Tumbang Preso”* (“knocking down the prisoner”), basically a tag game where the “it” is standing near an empty can on the ground and runs after anyone who successfully knocks down the can. The knockers usually use their slippers for knocking down the can, and try to retrieve these before the “it” could tag them.

Instrument. A checklist for observing peer play interaction was used. In the context of observing children’s play, the researchers used a behavioral checklist adapted from the Penn Interactive Peer Play Scale (PIPPS). This is a behavioral rating scale used for understanding peer play behaviors in early childhood (Fantuzzo, Tighe, McWayne, Davis, & Childs, 2002). It consists of parallel versions of parent and teacher rating scales to assess play in the home and neighborhood, and play in the classroom & school during free play, consecutively. Each version consists of 32 items including dimensions on (1) Play Interaction (strengths - comforting and helping other children, showing creativity in play, and encouraging others to

join play) (2) Play Disruption (aggressive, antisocial behaviors that interfere with on-going peer play interactions) and (3) Play Disconnection (withdrawn behavior and nonparticipation in peer play). This checklist is not for diagnosis or testing. It was developed and validated with a target population of children from a large urban school district with plenty of low-income, minority children, and is not recommended for use in a different population (Castro, Mendez, & Fantuzzo, 2002).

The checklist used in this study is an adaptation, containing only 10 interactive peer play behaviors as follows: Helps other children; Shows fairness (shares, takes turns); Listens to the comments/suggestions of others (including follows rules); Responds to ideas and thoughts presented by others; Joins others' play themes; Uses language instead of physical behavior to play situations; Disagrees without fighting; Directs others' action politely; Encourages others to join play; Shows positive emotion during play like smiles/laughs. The checklist was content validated by review of two faculty experts for relevance and clarity.

Data Gathering. Pre- and post- intervention observations by two researchers and one lead teacher was done using a checklist for the duration of one week each, during free play. Observations in the form of anecdotal records helped in analyzing how effective the intervention was. Conversations and peer interaction were noted and video-recorded.

Data Analysis. This research is qualitative. Detailed analysis of child behaviors from anecdotal records and video recordings was done. Data analysis of the checklist results is limited to descriptive statistics to show the difference in frequency of peer play interaction behaviors between pre- and post-intervention observations.

Results

Pre-intervention observation show that some children in this class have the difficulty in controlling strong emotions, expressing themselves, sharing, joining play and sustaining positive interaction. It was observed that the many of the children in the classroom preferred to play by themselves.

Child AA. loves to play in the dramatic center and science center, is optimistic, lively, likes to play with friends and engages in pretend play. She is very creative when playing with different materials. Child AA exchanges her ideas with friends and initiates play. But when her friends would share their ideas, she does not pay attention. She knows how to politely say “borrow”, but if her friend wouldn’t let her, she gets very upset and cries. She fights and argues with classmates at times when she disagrees.

After intervention (Figure 1), Child AA is seen to have improved in responding to ideas and thoughts presented by others, using language in expressing emotions, and directing others’ actions politely. She can now disagree without fighting.

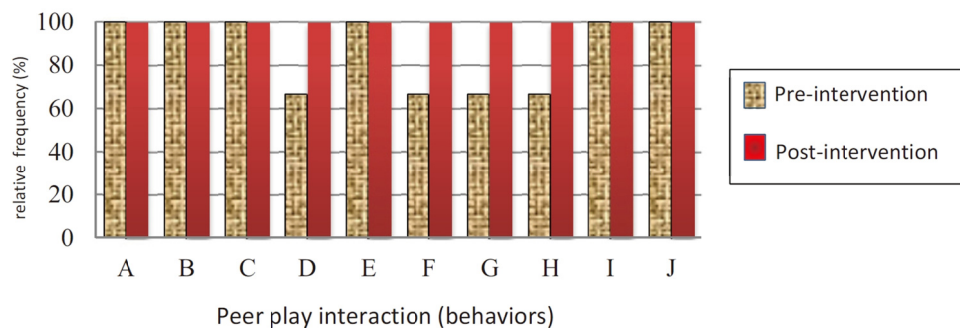


Figure 1. Child AA Frequency Comparison Chart for Pre and Post – Intervention

Child BB. who often comes to school late, finds his friends playing at different centers when he arrives, minding their own play. He is a friend to everyone and can engage himself with others’ play themes. He is fond of balloons, brings one to school every day to play with, and sometimes share them, although he usually withdraws and prefers to work or play in isolation. At times he invites friends to play with him but he is usually bossy and during misunderstandings he fights physically.

After the intervention, Child BB (Figure 2) learned to use language instead of physical behavior to play situations, to disagree without fighting, and to be polite when directing others’ actions. Every time he enters the class, he would share ideas and stories with classmates. There are still times that he isolates himself but he does it to concentrate in his work. He allows others to join him but sets his own rules.

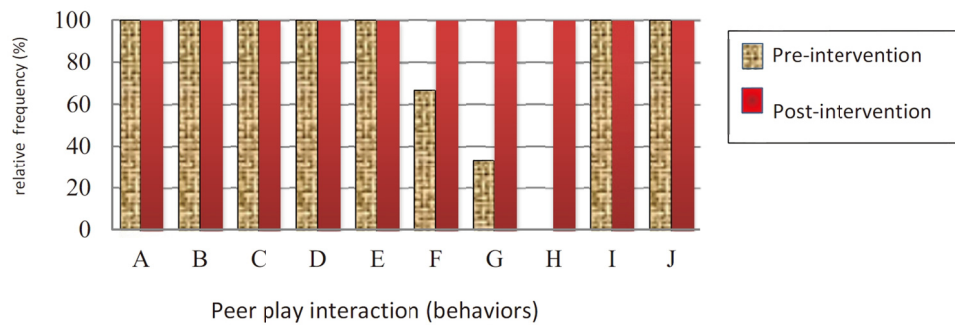


Figure 2. Child BB Frequency Comparison Chart for Pre and Post - Intervention

Child CC. is very sociable, often playing at the blocks corner with 2-3 of his friends, building towers, toy cars, or building racetracks. When other children want to join his group of friends, he hesitates to allow them to join. He usually has a happy disposition, often smiling and laughing. When he disagrees at something he never gets into a physical fight but uses language and is very polite in saying no. He also directs others as they play with a polite tone of voice. He is also able to listen and easily responds to the ideas presented to him by his peers.

After intervention (Figure 3) Child CC has remained sociable as before, but this time learned to invite others to join play. He even allows others who are not from his circle of friends to join in.

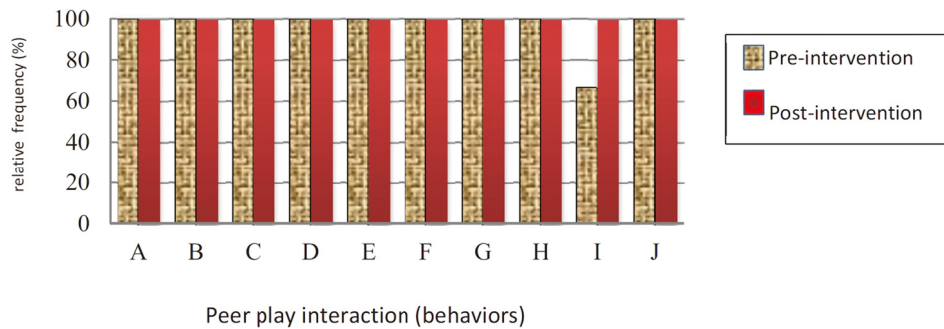


Figure 3. Child CC Frequency Comparison Chart for Pre and Post - Intervention

Child DD. chooses who she wants to play with and excludes others who want to join in although she does not get into physical fights. When in a bad mood, she would frown, firmly say “no”, be rude and would not follow directions given to her. When in a good mood she would smile, listen and respond to her peers.

After intervention (Figure 4) Child DD improved her ability to respond to ideas and thoughts presented by others; and joined others’ play themes more often. Some new things she learned includes being polite in directing others’ actions and encouraging others to join, saying “please” and “no” politely . Something she still needs to learn is to show fairness, still having difficulty playing with other classmates who are not close friends.

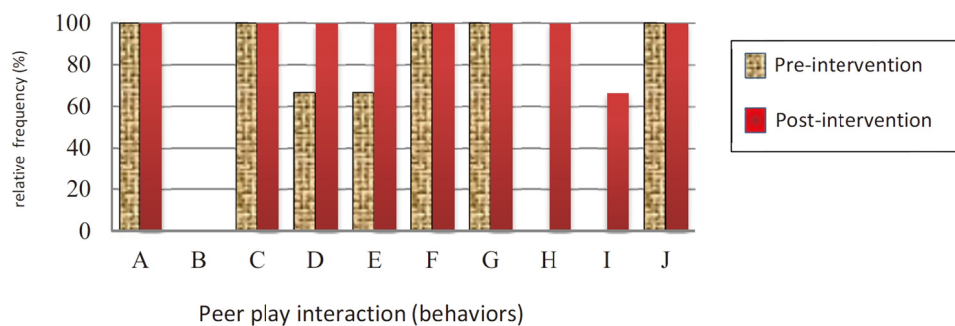


Figure 4. Child DD Frequency Comparison Chart for Pre and Post – Intervention

Child EE. often plays with the blocks and tinker toys. He usually played alone but usually tolerated others to play with him. He listens and responds to ideas being presented to him.

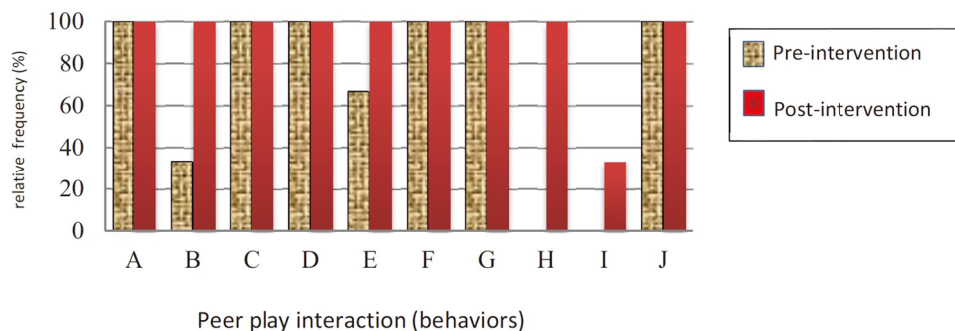


Figure 5. Child EE Frequency Comparison Chart for Pre and Post – Intervention

After the intervention (Figure 5), Child EE improved in his ability to show fairness, and in joining others' play themes. Something new he learned was to politely direct others' actions and to encourage others to join play. He now openly talks to his friends and shares his ideas. He approaches others and initiates conversations, and play saying "*Can you play with me?*". He helps in packing away and selflessly says sorry if he hurts a friend. He also hugs other children to show affection.

Child FF. is a very affectionate and sweet girl. She likes to hug others, help them and play with them. She likes to play pretend with her girl friends in the dramatic area. She openly listens to other children's stories and opinions, initiates and sustains conversations and can equally respond to ideas. She can easily adapt to others' play themes. But she sometimes fights others when she disagrees, and can be demanding and bossy by ordering other children around.

After the intervention (Figure 6) Child FF improved her skills in showing fairness, in disagreeing without fighting, and in encouraging others to join play. Something new she learned was to direct other's action politely. She shares her drawing and coloring materials to friends, draws pictures for friends and gives it to them, politely asks if she can exchange coloring materials with others, can now wait for her turn. She also listens to others' suggestions in drawing and coloring. Whenever she disagrees, she would say, "No, it's okay. I like this" or "Sorry, I like it this way". When playing with puzzles she would strictly abide with the rules and play fairly with friends. She equally distributes puzzles and dominos to friends to have equal chances in playing. She has a very sharp memory and knows whose turn it is. She now encourages others to play with her and is no longer bossy.

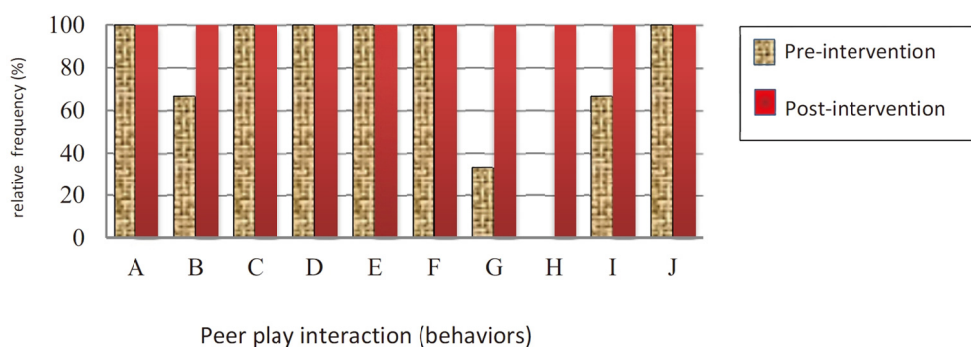


Figure 6. Child FF Frequency Comparison Chart for Pre and Post - Intervention

Child GG often says “Can I join you?” and always smiling as she joins in. She is fond of joining in with the play themes of her peers and expressing her intention to join. She follows directions given to her by her peers but she has a difficulty giving out directions politely. She tends to play with only a few friends and excludes others from joining in.

After the implementation (figure 7), Child GG improved in the following behaviors: showing fairness, responding to ideas and thoughts presented by others, disagreeing without fighting, and directing others’ actions politely. She does not need to be reminded to let other children join in her play. She now uses the word “please” when she wants something and the word “no” politely when she disagrees with something.

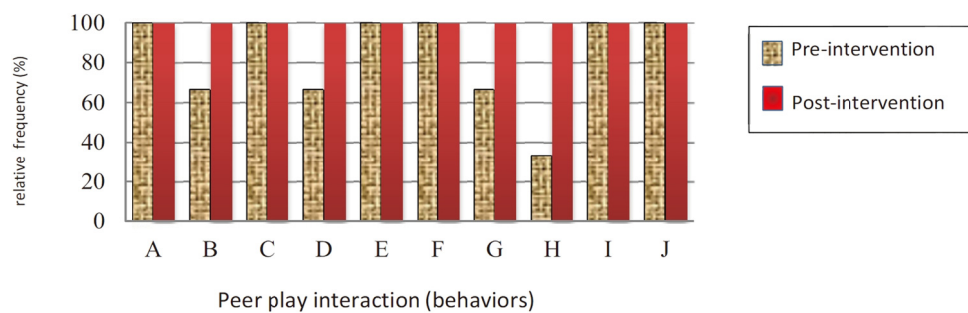


Figure 7. Child GG Frequency Comparison Chart for Pre and Post - Intervention

Child HH. is often smiling while playing with peers. He interacts with anyone, helps others and encourages others to play with him. He is often seen playing with the blocks building towers or playing with the toys cars and gears. He offers help, is able to listen to other children’s thoughts, but when he disagrees, that eventually results to fighting.

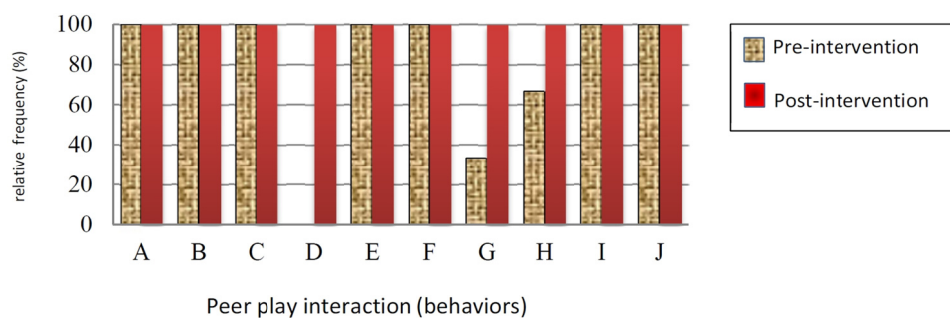


Figure 8. Child HH Frequency Comparison Chart for Pre and Post - Intervention

After intervention (Figure 8), Child HH improved in these two behaviors: disagreeing without fighting and directing others' actions politely. Something new he learned was to respond to ideas and thought presented by others, learning to say "no", "it is okay" and "thank you".

Child II. loves to play in the blocks area. Every day, during center time, he would proceed to the blocks area, usually constructing a rocket ship. He usually plays with the teacher aide and seldom plays with classmates. He does not know how to wait for his turn, and whines if he does not get what he wants. He has the tendency to grab other children's toys, and is prone to disrupting other children's play. If Child II was asked "Can I borrow?" he would completely ignore that child. Child II loves to play pretend and would sometimes initiate a conversation. But he is fond of using physical actions instead of talking when playing and is very possessive of the toys he uses.

After intervention (Figure 9), Child II more often now joins others' play themes, and politely directing others' actions. He now exchanges his ideas with others and does not isolate himself from the group. He no longer plays with his usual "rocket ships" in the blocks area but instead he plays with other toys with friends. During play, he listens to what his friends say. He no longer ignores them. However, he still cries when he does not get what he wants, and he still gets into fights when he disagrees with other children and this is actually seen more often. Something new he learned after the intervention is to help others and to show fairness. When he wants something, he rarely grabs toys, but often asks for permission. When he slips back to grabbing or disrupting others' play, he often apologizes.

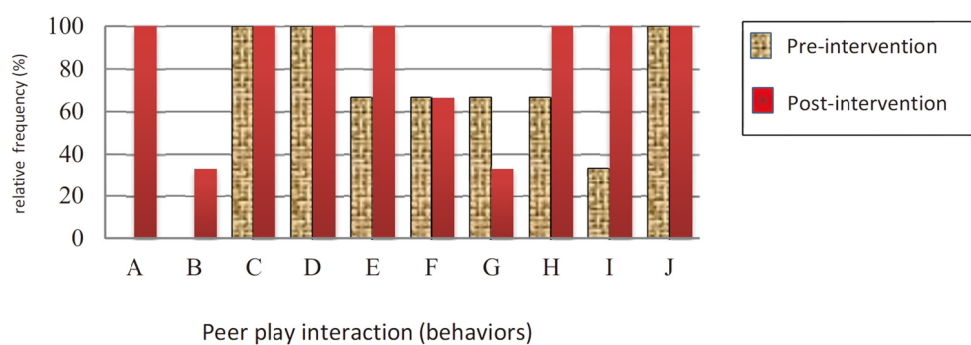


Figure 9. Child II Frequency Comparison Chart for Pre and Post – Intervention

Child JJ. loves to play in the dramatic center, and loves solving puzzles at the manipulatives center. Although she does not invite others to join her play, she does not exclude others who would like to join. She enjoys conversing with, working and helping others. When talking, she faces them and correctly addresses them. She does not choose just a few friends to the exclusion of others. However, when she disagrees with others, she gets into physical fights.

After the intervention (Figure 10), Child JJ more often now can disagree without fighting, can talk to and direct others' actions politely, and to encourage others to join her in play. She would often call and encourage friends to join her in building tall houses with blocks, share her stories to others while playing with the blocks, and is open to suggestions on what to do next. She now has learned to say "Sorry", "Please" and "Thank you". Whenever the tower they built collapses, she does not get mad but instead she laughs and says, "It is okay. We can build it again and again and again".

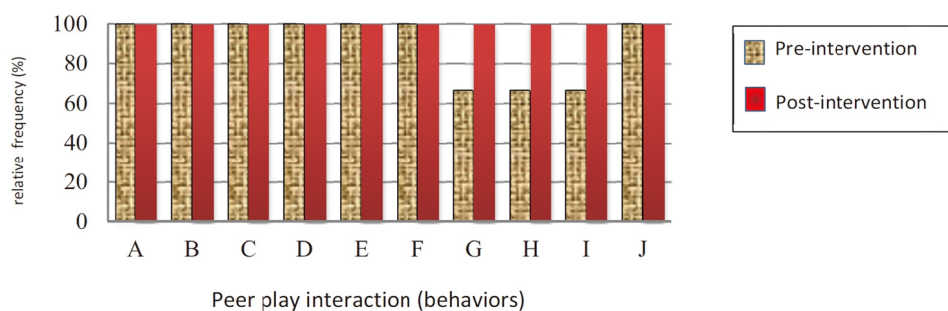


Figure 10. Child JJ Frequency Comparison Chart for Pre and Post - Intervention

Child KK. is often seen playing alone. He disagrees with his peers often for just about anything. When he does not get what he wants he would whine and throw tantrums. Sometimes he pushes other children who want to join him. He also gets into physical fights. He does not listen or respond to what others say.

After intervention (Figure 11), Child KK more often now joins others' play themes, and uses polite language in expressing emotions. New things he learned were: (1) showing fairness, (2) listening to comments or suggestions of others, (3) politely directing others' actions, and (4) encouraging other to join in play. Two things he still has to learn are to respond to ideas and thoughts presented by others, and to be able to disagree without fighting.

This time he actually initiates play with other children, calling out for example “Child FF, look at this!” When he does not get what he wants he still has the tendency to whine, but not as often as before. He also does not push others away anymore. When someone plays near him, he would just continue to play. He now listens to his peers who talk to him but he still needs guidance when it comes to accepting ideas presented to him.

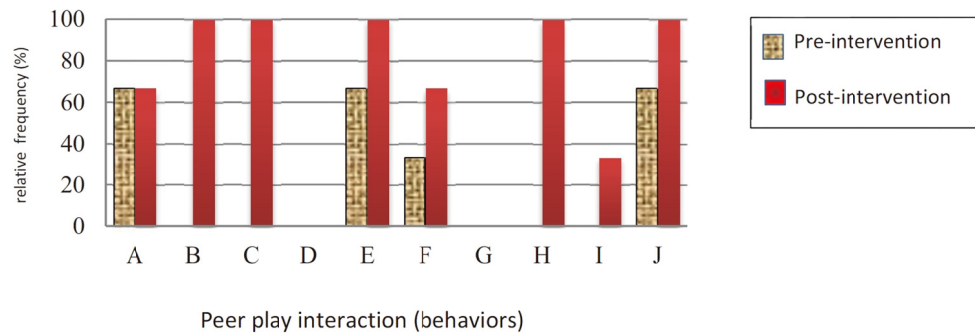


Figure 11. Child KK Frequency Comparison Chart for Pre and Post – Intervention

As a whole (Table 1), there were peer interaction behavioral skills already present among the children before intervention. Most of the children were already helpful (10/11); listened to comments or suggestions of others (10/11), and would show emotions of happiness like smiling or laughing during play (10/11). Helping other children was a new skill that child II learned after the intervention.

Showing fairness is not very common from the start (5/11). After the intervention, three more children showed fairness more often, two learned this as a new skill, and this is still absent in one child (DD).

Responding to the thoughts and ideas presented by others (including taking others’ perspective) is not very common (6/11) from the start. After intervention, three more children learned to do this more often, for one child (HH) this is an entirely new skill, and for another (KK), this is still absent.

Disagreeing without fighting is something not common at the start (3/11). After intervention, seven more children learned to do this more often, but this still remains absent in one child (KK).

Introducing Filipino Games To Promote Peer Play Interaction

Table 1. Summary of results for all children in the study

Child	Peer Play Interaction									
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
AA	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>	IMPROVED	<i>already present</i>	IMPROVED	IMPROVED	IMPROVED	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>
BB	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>	IMPROVED	IMPROVED	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>
CC	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>	IMPROVED	<i>already present</i>
DD	<i>already present</i>	Absent	<i>already present</i>	IMPROVED	IMPROVED	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>	NEW	NEW	<i>already present</i>
EE	<i>already present</i>	IMPROVED	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>	IMPROVED	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>	NEW	NEW	<i>already present</i>
FF	<i>already present</i>	IMPROVED	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>	IMPROVED	NEW	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>
GG	<i>already present</i>	IMPROVED	<i>already present</i>	IMPROVED	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>	IMPROVED	IMPROVED	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>
HH	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>	NEW	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>	IMPROVED	IMPROVED	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>
II	NEW	NEW	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>	IMPROVED	<i>already present</i>	IMPROVED	IMPROVED	IMPROVED	<i>already present</i>
JJ	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>	<i>already present</i>	IMPROVED	IMPROVED	IMPROVED	<i>already present</i>
KK	<i>already present</i>	NEW	NEW	Absent	IMPROVED	IMPROVED	Absent	NEW	NEW	IMPROVED

Code:

already present – always seen since pre-intervention phase

NEW – not seen during pre-intervention and seen only in post-intervention

IMPROVED – sometimes observed in pre-intervention and more often observed in post-intervention

Absent – not observed in pre-intervention nor in post-intervention

Peer Play Interaction (behaviors):

A. Helps other children

B. Shows fairness and not bias

C. Listens to the comments/suggestions of others

D. Responds to ideas and thoughts presented by others

E. Joins others' play themes

F. Uses language instead of physical behavior to play situations

G. Disagrees without fighting

H. Directs others' action politely

I. Encourages others to join play

J. Shows positive emotion during play (e.g., smiles, laughs)

Directing others' action politely is also not common among the children (2/11). After intervention, four more children learned to do this more often, and four more children learned this as a new skill.

Another uncommon peer interaction behavior at the start is encouraging others to join in their play (5/11). After intervention, three more children did this more often, and this is an entirely new skill among three other children.

Among all the children in this study, child KK improved in 3 out of 11 behaviors observed, learned 4 new ones (fairness, listening, being polite and encouraging others to join), but still needs to learn 2 more (responding to others ideas, disagreeing without fighting).

DISCUSSION

It is interesting to note that even without adult direction or intervention, most of these children would help each other and listen to each other. Possibly because adults model this behavior and children naturally imitate this. This might also imply that if a child does help others or does not listen to other children, adults might want to look into why these children who do not exhibit these and could help the child acquire this behavior. Consequently, in accordance to numerous educational theories like that of Vygotsky (Daniels, 2001) or Bronfenbrenner (Harkonen, 2007), if a child is exposed to negative behaviors, he might exhibit these behaviors as well.

Behaviors like showing fairness, disagreeing without fighting, responding to thoughts and ideas presented by others, are not common among these children and could be due to their young age, so that immaturity resulted in poor peer interaction, as found in the study of Rhee (2007).

Getting angry is normal at any age, but how anger is expressed or how to get out of anger could be affected by how adults around the child deal with anger. These children are still learning impulse control, not yet realizing the consequences of emotional outbursts. As with learning theories of Vygotsky (Daniels, 2001) or Bronfenbrenner (Harkonen, 2007), adults modeling behavior, media, or other factors may affect how children deal with anger themselves. This is the same even for talking politely to others.

For children, learning to encourage other children to join in play apparently is facilitated by introducing fun group games to children, as in the case of many Filipino games.

Conclusion

Peer play interaction could be affected by age of children, or by what the children see around them, including modeling behaviors of adults. For children who are used to playing alone, playing with others might be quite difficult, especially with exposure to highly technological toys that promote solitary play. Difficulty playing with others may also be because the children do not know any fun group games.

Filipino games can help improve peer play interaction among 3- to 4-year old children, even among children who isolate themselves in class. Teachers can intentionally introduce these to children of this age group (Shaffer, 2009) so as to reap the language, social, emotional, cognitive and physical benefits, of playing cooperative games (Evangelou et al., 2009).

Equipped with such knowledge, it is then possible for children to interact more with each other even during free play. Consequently, playing Filipino games would also lead to the preservation of the Filipino culture. Future research can use a larger sample and another age group and for a longer period like perhaps one year.

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