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## The Profile of Students' Social Skills of Bengawan Solo Elementary Nature School

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**Abstract:** This study aimed to describe the profile of the students' social skills of Bengawan Solo nature elementary school. The study was qualitatively conducted as a case study. The participants were teachers and students who were chosen by employing a purposive sampling technique. The data were obtained through observations, questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis. This study employed an interactive model data analysis included: data validating, data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The conclusions of the study comprise: (1) the cooperation aspect, students can collaborate well; (2) the assertion aspect, students can get along with new friends and communicate with others; (3) the responsibility aspect, students understand their role and responsibility to the God, themselves, others, and society; (4) the empathy aspect, students can feel others' feeling and problem; (5) the self-control aspect, students can control their mental state so that they can avoid anger and bad influences.

**Keywords:** Social skills, elementary school, nature school.

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### Introduction

The partnership for 21st-century learning (P21) develops learning skills that are beneficial for students in the 21st century. The skills are reliable to enhance an individual's ability and to enact them to be good citizens. The skills are summarized into 3 parts; (1) innovation skills, (2) technological skills, and (3) life skills. One of the most essential life skills is the social skills. The social skills or social competencies are the behaviors which allow an individual to interact and influence one another. Furthermore, such a skill can keep an individual away from unexpected things. The skill is guided by social norms. It encompasses behaviors such as establishing new relationships, communicating, asking for help, and giving suggestions (Morgan et al., 2013; Rawles, 2016). This view is confirmed by Sharma et al. (2016) and Patrick (2008) elaborating that the social skill is the ability which facilitates the interaction and communication with the society through languages, eye contacts, and appropriate behavior to establish and maintain a good relationship among individual by holding on to social norms.

Specifically, social skills can be defined as the association of behaviors, such as collaborating, helping, building a relationship, asking for help, managing emotion, developing the sympathy, giving appreciation, and showing respect. Those are learned to give an individual the ability to build a relationship with others and to stay away from negative social reactions (Agran et al., 2016; Daraee et al., 2016; Pellitteri & Smith, 2007). In short, social skills are behaviors that encourage an effective social relationship (Arends, 2008). Johnson et al. (2016) classified social skills into 4 categories, such as survival skills, interpersonal skills, problem-solving skills, and conflict-resolution skills. According to Sharma et al. (2016), social skills consist of communication skills, relationship skills, self-control, and control of emotion.

Some behaviors are indicating that an individual has the social skills, such as scheduling the diet, dressing up, being grateful, accepting critiques, being polite, accepting failures, apologizing, collaborating, etc (Agran et al., 2016; Daraee et al., 2016; Rawles, 2016). Bremer and Smith (2004) asserted that the aspects of social skills are peer relational skills, academic skills, self-management skills, compliance skills, and assertion skills. Furthermore, Gresham and Elliott

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(2008) categorized social skills into 4 aspects. They were cooperation, assertion, responsibility, and self-control. Spench (2003) developed the indicators of social skills that comprise the ability to deal with situations, assertive response, ability to handle conflicts, and the quality of peer and family relationships. The indicators of the social skills which are used in this study are cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control.

The development of social skills is one of the important topics in all education systems. There are various strategies for developing social skills. Eroglu and Demirel (2018) explain that social skills can be developed through physical education. Davies et al. (2014) add that there are three stages carried out to develop social skills, namely that teachers need to measure these skills, develop effective teaching strategies for them, and evaluate their progress. Then, Leffert et.al (2009) explain that there are tools for teachers to develop students' social skills, the tools are as follows: (1) *tool one: What's a student to learn?*; (2) *tool two: what's a teacher to do?*; (3) *tool three: "how do i include more kids?"*. At the end of his explanation, Leffert reveals that these three tools help school personnel to instill instruction in social skills that are important in existing academic programs, by taking advantage of the various instructional opportunities that are present during each school day. Furthermore, there is a lot of research showing the tremendous effect of literature circles on the development of social skills. Dogan and Kaya-Tosun (2020) state that there are the methods and practices for developing social skills that has highlighted the literature circles method. Literature circles are defined as a teaching method in groups created in accordance with students' choices of books, where students periodically discuss the parts they read. During a reading, students take notes about their reading, share their reading roles, and discuss the text according to these roles. In literature circles, regular meetings are held, and in each meeting session, discussion roles are swapped. Once a book is finished, group members share what they have read with other classmates. Then, the cycle of reading and discussion repeats with the selection of a new text or a new book (Daniels, 2002; Dogan and Kaya-Tosun, 2020).

Social skills can positively enhance an individual's relationship to nature or the environment (Lynch & Simpson, 2010). Social skills serve as the basis of a good individuals' relationship. Moreover, such skills serve as a crucial factor in improving academic achievement, social achievement, mental health, and social welfare (Carter et al., 2004; Wilson & Sabee, 2003). According to Sharma et al. (2016), the social skills are vital since they can assist people to behave appropriately, to navigate the daily interaction (exchanging information, communicating, building a new friendship, asking for help, and giving instructions), to minimize the possibility of psychological disorders, such as depression, anxiety, loneliness, frustration, and loss of self-identity.

Social skills are undoubtedly influential to children's life stages in the future (Türkoğlu, 2019). Social skills can strengthen the connection between mental and performance in working (Hochwarter et al., 2006). If people possess social skills, they will communicate firmly by showing good expressions, body language, and eye contact. Someone who has social skills is more possible to get an occupation (Beheshtifar & Norozy, 2013). This is due to the fact that social skills allow us to have social interaction so that we can understand each other and avoid misconceptions (Patrick, 2008; Witt & Ferris, 2003). Social skills are also pertinent to children's intelligence. An intelligent child tends to show good enthusiasm and mental activities. A child with a high level of intelligence can usually compare and interpret information to create an appropriate social interaction (Daraee et al., 2016; Morgan et al., 2013).

In reality, society is still lacking social skills. It is confirmed by the data from the Indonesian Commission of Children Protection (KPAI). Since 2011 until 2017, the KPAI has received 26 thousand cases of children dealing with the law. The cases comprise bullying, students' fights, drugs and alcohols, cheating, corruption, porn, and others. Such cases may occur due to the lack of social skills in individual, family, society, or even country. Children with no social skills will encounter bad influences from the environment, either from adults or friends of the same age (Daraee et al., 2016; Kaya & Deniz, 2020). Students' lack of social skills can negatively affect intrapersonal skills, interpersonal skills, and academic skills. Furthermore, it tends to decrease the self-confidence and self-respect. It turns someone to be both more aggressive and sensitive. Also, it induces emotional and mental problems which may lead someone to commit crimes (Kılıç & Güngör Aytar, 2017; Smogorzewska & Szumski, 2018).

Therefore, learning social skills by establishing efficacious relationships with others is crucial in childhood. When in elementary school, children need more exposure to interact and build a social relationship with friends, teachers, and family (Berry & O'Connor, 2010; Kılıç & Güngör Aytar, 2017). It is pivotal for students to possess social skills as it helps them to be accepted by society. They will be able to solve their problem with others, and they are able to develop more life skills. Additionally, social skills can help students to cope with any difficulties in school and encourage them to achieve more optimally. In short, students will be able to enjoy their lives and be joyful. Furthermore, Rawles (2016) and Daraee et al. (2016) agree that one of the most crucial childhood educational goals is to develop the social skills as they are influential to the health and educational achievement. Accordingly, social skills are vital for students in schools.

Each school has various learning stages, so does the nature school. A nature school is a kind of alternatives which is slightly different from any formal school. Such a school, the nature school, is based on activities in nature. Nonetheless, it contains positive character values. A nature school offers great opportunities for students to develop their self-confidence through a learning experience in nature itself. It is because learning in nature positively affects the cognitive, affective, interpersonal, and physical aspects of students (Murray & O'Brien, 2005; O'Brien, 2009). The nature

school allows students to actively participate in experiments, investigations, problem solving, and the development of their understanding through physical and social interaction. Besides, the learning process involving well-prepared outdoor activities can improve students' eagerness and awareness of learning. It, then, improves students' long-term mental health (Aronsson et al., 2015). A nature school offers practical learning by exploiting nature as the means or media of learning. It allows students to expand their imagination, creativity, critical thinking, independence, and life skills (Coates & Pimlott-Wilson, 2019). According to Dowdell et al. (2011) and Knight (2016), a nature school provides 4 major benefits, such as (1) developing creativity, collaborative action, and problem-solving skill of cognitive skill; (2) developing physical activities; (3) establishing a good social interconnection, responsibility and self-confidence, developing control of emotion; and (4) developing negotiation and diplomacy ability which are the core of the social skills.

One of the nature schools in the province of Central Java of Indonesia is the Bengawan Solo nature school. Bengawan Solo nature school is one of the educational programs of the Taruna Bengawan Solo foundation. The curriculum is purposed to enable students to possess leadership, to think scientifically, to possess life skills, to possess entrepreneurship, and to love the environment (Fravisdha & Susanti, 2019). Bengawan Solo nature elementary school is the part of Bengawan Solo nature school which equals the elementary level. Bengawan Solo nature elementary school is a formal school managed by the Department of Education and Culture. This school has a different learning approach from other formal schools. Accordingly, the students' output is different. The school has a lot of activities which can improve students' abilities, including social skills. Besides, it has a different curriculum compared to other schools. The curriculum encompasses morals, cognitive, leadership, and business.

Firstly, the moral curriculum emphasizes the ethic regarding good and bad things, God's command about human rights and responsibility as social creatures. Societies need moral members. Moral education develops the understanding of the psychological concept of moral development to students concerning values, empathy, respect, caring, and altruism (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006). Secondly, the cognitive curriculum is designed to fulfill students' needs in terms of logical progression and analytical ability. The cognitive education can be defined as an educational strategy which aims at developing the systematical thinking process, problem-solving, concept understanding, and students' horizon (Haywood, 2013). The methods utilized to support the curriculum are Discussion, Outing class, Work with facilitators, and scientific or social projects. Thirdly, the leadership curriculum underlines an individual's ability to influence others to collaborate as planned to achieve the goals which are based on values. A good leader is needed by almost all levels of society. Therefore, through education, students are taught to react appropriately by showing good leadership so that it produces citizens that can lead society (Ricketts & Rudd, 2002). The leadership curriculum develops students' potentials to acquire premier leadership, career success, and personal growth through activities such as debates, discussions with a moderator, and organizations at school (Morgan et al., 2013). Finally, the business curriculum aims at building students' entrepreneurship. Future professionals should own some sorts of skills to encounter challenges caused by globalization. The curriculum is expected to enable students to be independent and hard-working to get whatever they want (Mei & Siraj, 2013). The whole implemented curricula emphasize the development of students' character and social skills.

Therefore, the purpose of this study, based on the above elaboration, is to portray the social skills of students in Bengawan Solo nature elementary school. There have been no researches that specifically probe into students' social skills in this kind of elementary school. The results of this study can be used as a reference, guidance, and description of possible efforts to improve elementary students' social skills.

## Methodology

### *Research Design*

The study was conducted as qualitative research. Qualitative research is a study that allows researchers to report situations and phenomena specifically by using a combination of instruments to collect data (Creswell & Clark, 2017). The study was conducted as a case study. The case study is an in-depth investigation in a real-life context (Daniati et al., 2019; Yin, 2014). This study aimed to analyze the profile of students' social skills in daily life by employing various sources and instruments such as an interview (with a guideline), a questionnaire, and a document analysis. The problem of the study is: How is the profile of students' social skills in Bengawan Solo nature elementary school?

### *Participants*

The study was conducted in Bengawan Solo nature elementary school. The school is situated in the west of Dengkeng and Bengawan Solo river estuary, in the Juwiring district of Klaten regency of the Central Java province. This location was chosen based on some considerations: (1) The school opens to any research; (2) the school adopts Finland's educational guidelines which are known as the country with the best education in the world; (3) the school curriculum emphasizes not only academic achievement but also students character; and (4) the school seriously takes care of the environment and focuses on the nature-based learning.

The subjects of this study were headmaster, teachers and students of Bengawan Solo nature elementary school, in the school year of 2019/2020. The participants were chosen by employing a purposive sampling technique that is suitable for this research. The purposive sampling technique is a sampling technique in which samples were chosen due to particular considerations, such as the comprehensiveness of the study problem (Palinkas et al., 2015). Purposive sampling technique is applicable for qualitative research since it allows the researcher to appoint samples that meet the criteria to increase the trustworthiness of the obtained data (Etikan, 2016). In this study, teachers were chosen as they have sufficient knowledge of social skills. The selected teacher has worked for more than 5 years at the school and has attended the National Curriculum implementation training (Curriculum 2013) which focuses on spiritual and social attitudes as well as the knowledge and skills of students. Some stakeholders such as the school principal, the gardener, the cafeteria's owner, and parents were also involved. To increase the efficiency level of the study, 36 students were observed and interviewed. The student selection criteria are based on: (1) student availability; (2) ownership of social projects/activities at the time of the research; (3) the fulfillment of research data. The students represented grades 1 to 6. They were classified into students with low social skills and students with high social skills, based on their teachers' information. The study stopped once the data were considered sufficient and representative the condition of the population.

#### *Data Collection Technique*

A researcher, to obtain qualified data, is required to employ the appropriate data collection technique. The data collection of a qualitative study is usually conducted in a natural setting, not in a made-up setting (Gill et al., 2008). The data collection techniques were observations, questionnaires, interviews, document analysis. The observation employed in the study is non-participating observation. In other words, the observer did not participate in the observed activities. The observation was conducted to obtain the data of students' social skills of some indoor and outdoor activities. Observations were made twice a week for 3 months. The observation was equipped with an observation sheet that contained aspects of the social skills with indicators and assessment sheets. The scoring descriptors were: (1) never, (2) sometimes, (3) often, and (4) always. Otherwise, the scoring descriptors regarding students' social skills were: (1-25) bad, (26-50) adequate, (51-75) good, and (76-100) very good (Trends, 2014).

Also, the study used an open-ended questionnaire containing 30 questions about social skills. The open-ended questionnaire used Likert-Scale which include; Strongly disagree/never, Disagree/rarely, Neutral/sometimes, Agree/often, and Strongly agree/very often. Furthermore, the interview was conducted naturally informal, yet it was guided through the interview guidelines. The interview was recorded to assist the researcher in analyzing the data. Interviews were conducted 5 times with the principal, two teachers, and 9 students. The document analysis was conducted by checking and analyzing documents that were appropriate to support or complete the obtained data. The documents were students' character development journals and teachers' notes on students' reports. The collection of the documents was utilized to check the trustworthiness of the interview and observation data since the documents were considered as a piece of stronger evidence, rather than the oral information.

All research instruments including the observations sheet, the instrument questionnaires, and the interview instrument had passed the validity test for the contents of the instrument. The content validity test was carried out by testing the instruments to experts related to research instruments such as (1) Indonesian language experts to examine grammar; (2) research instrument expert to scrutinize the effectiveness of the instrument to measure the desired variable; (3) social skills experts to analyze the accuracy of targeting instruments on aspects of social skills, and (4) educational psychologists to verify instruments to suit the level of psychological development of students.

#### *Data Analysis*

The Interactive model by Miles and Hubberman (1994) was used to do the data analysis. The stages were extended to data validating, data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Daniati et al., 2019). The validity of the data was carefully considered to prove that the study is scientific research in which the data are based on reality and are credible, representative, and appropriate (Whittemore et al., 2001). Triangulation was used to increase the trustworthiness of the study. The triangulations employed in the study were the method triangulation and source triangulation. The source triangulation was to collect data from multiple data sources, such as teachers, principals, and parents. In addition, the method triangulation was to collect data by using multiple methods of data collection such as interviews, observation, questionnaires, and document analysis to obtain complete data.

The data collection of this study involved many participants and employed multiple data collection techniques. Then, the data reduction was conducted by summarizing, filtering, specifying, classifying, and categorizing the data based on the coded themes consisted of 5 aspects of social skills, namely cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control. The data display is crucial as it helps researchers to have a comprehensive understanding of the arranged information, so the conclusion drawing or other actions can be done accurately. The qualitative data display can be in the form of brief descriptions, charts, tables, graphs, themed-base connections, and others. At last, the conclusion drawing can be conducted repeatedly. The early conclusion drawing in a qualitative study is temporary. The early

conclusion can be changed and adjusted to the obtained data or evidence. The conclusion is a description of an object which was unclear. It, then, turns to be clear after the study.

### Findings / Results

The students' social skills are divided into 5 aspects. The whole aspects are pertinent to the instrument proposed by (Gresham & Elliott, 2008). They are cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control. Based on the observation, the comparison of students' frequency on each aspect of the social skills can be seen in Figure 1.

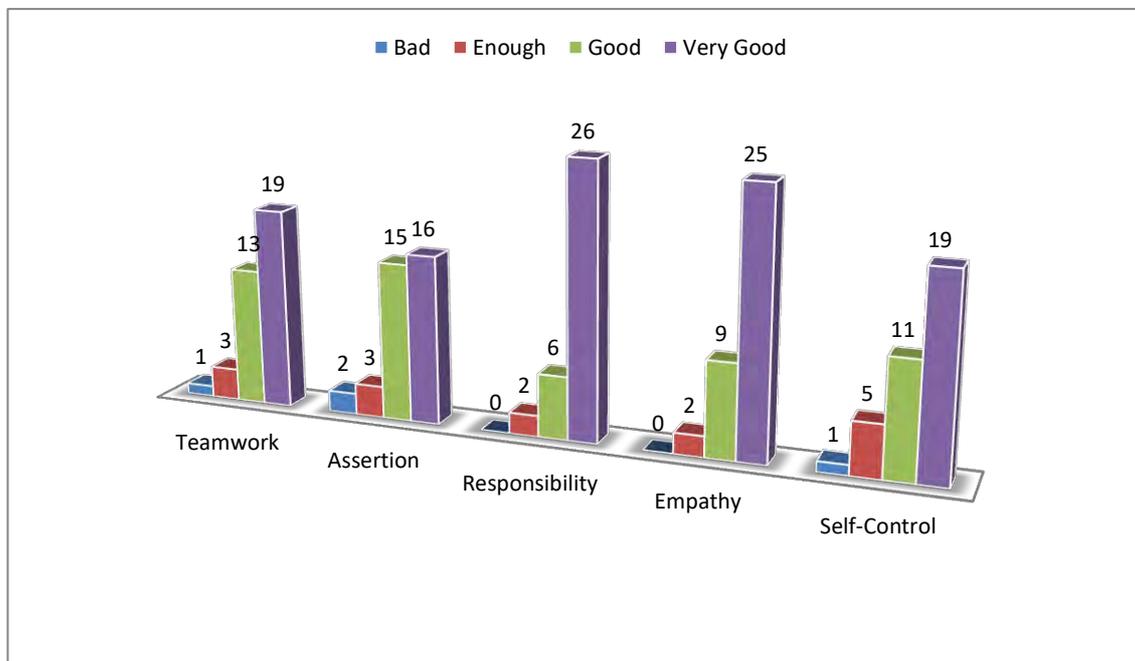


Figure 1. The comparison of students' frequency on each aspect of the social skills

#### Cooperation

A cooperation aspect is a form of social interaction that involves some particular activities which aim to achieve the common goals by helping each other, encouraging, and understanding others' activities in the social interaction group. The cooperation encompasses some indicators; being able to collaborate with others, following instructions, asking for permission, avoiding actions which can make problems, and completing tasks.

In terms of collaborating with others, students had demonstrated the distribution of tasks in a discussion, in which all members should finish the tasks. Regarding the ability to follow instructions, students demonstrated how they listened to instructions carefully. They asked the teacher once the instruction was unclear. Then, they did the activities by following the instruction. Furthermore, students got used to asking for permission when borrowing others' stuff. Also, they always said thanks when they returned it. In avoiding actions that triggered problems, students demonstrated the way how they focused on their tasks and did not bother others. Concerning task completion, students tried to finish their tasks punctually.

Based on the social skills questionnaire, it was obtained that: (a) 50% of the students asserted that they always and often collaborated with their friends in group work; (b) 45,9% of the students confirmed that they always and often followed the teacher's instructions; (c) 66,6% of the students answered that they always and often asked for permission when they borrowed stuffs; (d) 62,5% of the students claimed that they sometimes bothered their friends; and (5) 45,9% of the students stated that they always and often finished their homework and school tasks.

Group work as well as a discussion can develop the cooperation aspect. Generally, students are divided into groups which consist of different grades and genders. The classification is considered effective to promote students' collaboration aspect. It is supported by the interview results which state,

"Dividing the students into groups is truly beneficial. When there is a problem, they will seek solutions to finish or solve it together. They should respect each other, and do not tease each other too. Whatever it takes, they should finish together. Now they are willing to collaborate. For instance, when there is a friend who does not actively participate in the group, others will try to encourage him or her. Thus, the students demand their friends to be active".



Figure 2. Group discussion in the learning process

### Assertion

Assertive behaviors are open and honest expressions of feeling, opinion, and right. Such behaviors help someone to express what he or she wants. Moreover, the behaviors help someone to respect and maintain pride, respond to others' needs, and be recognized. The assertion aspect comprises some indicators, such as: being friendly and being able to interact confidently. The aspect, moreover, enables students to appreciate others, start a conversation, and be helpful.

About being friendly, students show acceptance to new friends. They are willing to communicate with new friends. Regarding the self-confidence, students are brave to do activities, to show their work, and to ask questions. In giving and receiving appreciation, students get used to appreciating their friends' work. In terms of starting a conversation, students are accustomed to accosting teachers and other students. In terms of volunteering, students demonstrate mutual assistance in some sorts of activities.

Based on the social skills questionnaire, it was obtained that (a) 75% of the students answered that they could sometimes get along with new friends; (b) 25% of the students declared that they often and always felt confident when they did activities; (c) 41,7% of the students answered that they always and often gave and received appreciation; (d) 75% of the students stated that they always and often started a conversation, and (e) 66% of the students answered that they sometimes appreciated others' work. The high score of the indicator "being friendly" is supported by the interview results of a teacher of grade 6 saying,

"Students are encouraged to trade, starting from the preparation stage until the final stage, reporting the sales results. Students are also trained to interact with society by bargaining with them during trading activities. During the "Sell Day", students learn how to start communication by offering or marketing their goods".



Figure 3. Students' trading activities in the Sell Day

Students' ability to start the conversation is routinely practiced through the presentation in the class. Students are prepared to start a conversation and communication. They ask each other, and they give suggestions or critique to one another. Also, they practice how to end a conversation. It is supported by the interview results of a teacher in grade 4 saying,

"Students' assertion is developed as they get used to speaking in front of the class. Automatically, they develop self-confidence. Students will compile the reports starting from the planning stage, execution, and the conclusion of an

outdoor or outing class. Then, their work which is a worksheet is presented in front of the class. After the presentation, students continue the question and answer session. The students need to give or receive appreciation for their work”.



Figure 4. Outing class

### Responsibility

Responsibility is defined as an individual's behavior to do the tasks and responsibility as it is supposed to be. The task is the students' responsibility to themselves, society, and the environment. The aspect of responsibility consists of some indicators; doing and saying good things, showing concern toward friends and environment, expressing the feeling appropriately, following instructions and norms, and reporting something accurately.

In doing and uttering good things, students act politely and always do the religious service as their responsibility to God. In terms of concern to friends and the environment, students help their friends and keep the class clean. Regarding expressing feeling appropriately, students speak politely and say sorry when they make mistakes. In following instructions and orders, students always do the duty although there is no supervising teacher. In reporting something accurately, students are accustomed to reporting on their activities as their responsibility.

Based on the social skills questionnaire, it was obtained that (a) 66,6% of the students chose "always" and "often" about being responsible to the environment; (b) 50% of the students chose "always" in being self-responsible; (c) 66,6% of the students chose "often" in being responsible to others; (d) 75% of the students chose "always" and "often" in being responsible to the God; and (e) 60% of the students chose "always" in being honest.

The results of the questionnaire indicated that only some students had demonstrated their responsibility toward others. Responsibility toward others can be in the form of backpacking. It is supported by the statement of the teacher in grade 2 saying,

"Students are demanded to visit a place with a limited budget. So, students should wisely stock their food with friends. They should also take care of themselves and interact with society. As they are required to stay when backpacking, students should ask for permission to the society. Teachers have prepared the lodge though”.



Figure 5. Students' backpacking

Besides, students have shown their responsibility to God by doing the worship together. It is supported by the interview results of the principal saying,

"Every morning, we allocate time for the congregational Duha prayer by turns with other classes. Every Friday, we do the Jumat prayer together. About female students, there is a talk with female teachers about good female characters."

### *Empathy*

Empathy is the ability to understand and adapt to others without being personally involved in their feeling. Individuals who have empathy are able to understand, respect, and concern with someone else's thoughts and feeling as the person feels and thinks. The aspect of empathy comprises some indicators, such as: understanding others' feelings, feeling sorry about others' problems, listening to others' stories, expressing friendliness, and discussing problems or thoughts with someone else.

In understanding others' feelings, students indicated happiness to the success of their friends in a project. In feeling sorry for someone's problem, students felt sad and concerned. In listening to others' stories, students listened to the friends' stories carefully and tried to amuse them. In expressing friendliness, students were accustomed to smiling when meeting with their friends or new friends. Finally, in discussing problems with friends, students usually concerned about their friends' problems.

Based on the social skills questionnaire, it was obtained that (a) 91,6% of the students chose "always" and "often" about feeling happy towards someone's achievement; (b) 87,5% of the students chose "always" and "often" for feeling sorry about their friends' problem; (c) 50% of the students chose "always" and "often" for listening to their friends' problem and finding solutions; (d) 75% of the students chose "always" and "often" for defending someone who is unfairly treated; and (e) 37,4% of the students chose "always" and "often" for discussing any problems with their friends. It was supported by the interview results of the principal saying,

"Each class has social activities. Such activities are also known as students' social projects. Some of the projects are planned, while some are not. Each social project concerns to any real phenomena."

Another social activity that can develop empathy is fundraising for victims of natural disasters. It is supported by the interview results of a teacher in grade 6 saying,

"Students' empathy is excellent. The students usually visit their mourning friends together. If there is a friend whose family member is sick, students will come to visit".

Moreover, students' empathy is indicated through their routine donation (infaq). A teacher in grade 5 asserts,

"In order to improve students' empathy, the school frequently collaborates with other parties or social communities. For instance, the last November our school collaborated with a social community, Aman Palestine. They educated our students about things that happened in Palestine by showing some videos and stories".



Figure 6. Students' social project

### *Self-control*

Self-control is the ability to arrange, guide, manage, and direct any behaviors which emerge positive impacts. Self-control enables an individual to impede a particular impulse in order to avoid moral-breaking behaviors. Self-control is pivotal in demonstrating constructive behaviors. Moreover, it helps to avoid from breaking the rules of family, school, and society. Social control comprises some indicators: accepting disagreement, avoiding bad behavior, respecting others' opinions, controlling emotion, and rejecting something politely.

In accepting disagreement, students are able to express their disagreement reasonably. In avoiding bad behavior, students do not commit cheating and focus on completing their tasks. In accepting others' points of view, students are able to express both agreement and disagreement towards others' opinions. In controlling the emotion, students are

not easily offended when they are bothered by others. In rejecting something politely, students can respectfully refuse to friends when they are invited to commit bad things.

Based on the social skills questionnaire, it was obtained that: (a) 70,8% of the students sincerely accepted critiques; (b) 95,8% of the students accepted disagreement respectfully; (c) 58,7% of the students always smiled and accosted to others; (d) 90,8% of the students treated someone gracefully; (e) 58,7% of the students sometimes refused to friends inviting them to commit bad things. The results of the questionnaire indicated that most of the participants could control themselves by behaving as social norms. However, some participants still needed guidance regarding self-control. It was supported by the interview results of a teacher in grade 6 elaborating,

"As far as I concern, there has been progressing on students' self-control. Nevertheless, as they are children, they need to be reminded on and on. Children are not like adults who can fully control themselves. It might be different if they are having puberty. However, we can see that the students of grade 6 are better than the other students. They become the role model for the younger students".

The students who are not able to control themselves are provided with regular counseling. It is supported by the interview results which state,

"Regarding students who bother their friend and are less polite, I invite them to have a sharing session after the class. I will try to find out the source of the problem. Then, I try to guide them and explain that what they do can harm others. Also, I give them motivation and look for the best solution. Besides, I communicate and collaborate with their parents for the advantage of the students. I also do the same thing to the less-participating students. In the next meeting, I often ask them questions. Also, I ask them to read the material. The habit of speaking in public will unconsciously improve students' public speaking skills. They will get used to delivering opinions. It will also improve students' communication skills."

## Discussion

The social skills of the students in Bengawan Solo nature elementary school are varied due to the children's growth level. Students of the higher grade have better social skills than the lower grade students. It is since social skills are the effect of a long-term learning experience (Akelaitis & Malinauskas, 2016). In the early stage of education, students tend to have poor social skills (McClelland et al., 2000). In contrast, Zsolnai and Kasik (2014) asserted that older students have worse social skills than younger students. Based on the data analysis, it can be concluded that the students' social skills consist of 5 major aspects. The whole aspects are extended to cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control.

### *Cooperation*

As seen in Figure 1, there is only a student considered having good cooperation skills. 11 of them are good. 5 students are at a sufficient level, and 1 has poor cooperation skills. Thus, it can be concluded that the students have demonstrated the cooperation aspect. The indicator of the cooperation aspect regarding students' ability to cooperate with others in group work was demonstrated by choosing an appropriate tone when communicating with other members, and by managing the time and situation during the project. It is in line with Egelhofer and Lecheler (2019) who asserted that an individual should consider using an appropriate voice tone when communicating with others to avoid misunderstanding.

The cooperation aspect regarding not bothering others has been demonstrated by the students. They collaborate and focus on their goal, and they manage the discussion with the help of their teacher. These findings confirm some theories vindicating that to improve students' ability to manage the time and condition, to focus, and to avoid distractions, teachers should assign students with clear instructions and duration (Timperley et al., 2007; Weeks, 2000).

Furthermore, students have demonstrated that they can follow the instructions. They listen to others' opinions, and they deliver their point of view politely. It is because all students get an equal opportunity to deliver their ideas. If they have different views about something, they will not blame anyone. Otherwise, the teacher only needs to supervise them. An intense social interaction will create togetherness allowing students to share their knowledge as they have different proficiency. They will express their feeling together and turn to be active and proactive students. Moreover, mutual communication can enhance the motivation of all group members (Carrasco & Torres Iribarra, 2018; Murphy et al., 2009).

Students' collaboration appears when they are asked to understand each other during camping. Each group consists of different classes and gender. The higher-grade students should look after the lower-grade students in their group. They should share their opinion and task based on physical ability and gender. It is because the teacher is not involved in the activity. The teacher only controls and watches the students from distance, so that they have to cooperate to succeed in the camping. The advantage of camping is to tighten students' relationships. Camping helps students to know themselves, to provide a challenge and adventure, to make students more active, and to improve students' independency and collaboration (Larson, 2000; Thurber et al., 2007).

### *Assertion*

Figure 1 indicates that students have demonstrated the aspect of the assertion. There are 16 students with very good assertion ability. 15 students are considered good, and 3 students are at a sufficient level. In addition, 2 students have poor assertion ability. Teachers teach the students to be confident through sorts of activities. The assertion aspect, such as helping each other and voluntarily helping friends, is demonstrated in the outing class.

The indicator of assertion about having self-confidence and being friendly can be improved during the Sell Day activity. The confident students impersonate a seller offering the goods to buyers who are strangers. The trading process does not directly teach students to be able to invite others to participate in trading activity. Moreover, it prepares students for how to communicate by involving buyers in the activity. Having a good relationship with sellers, offering the goods, as well as bargaining for the expected price enable students to create, adapt, and maintain communication with others. Such a habit will enhance students' ability in conducting social interaction with strangers. By doing so, students will be able to interact confidently in the future. It is in line with Gulay and Akman (2009) who claim that social skills are the ability created through social adaptation by establishing and maintaining the social relationship step by step and for a long time. It is important to create, improve, and maintain students' social skills by providing a social environment that allows students to keep socializing (Aksoy & Baran, 2010).

Based on the observation, the assertion aspect of starting a conversation can be found in the learning process. Students are facilitated to confidently speak in public through a worksheet presentation. Also, students learn how to start and end a conversation politely. It is in line with Al-Hebaish (2012) elaborating that a presentation is one of the practices to improve students' confidence which can develop their communication skills in the future. Learner success is not just a charismatic presenter but those that involve learners in tasks that cognitive and social conditions of the charge and teach them how to do the tasks productively (Syarifuddin et al., 2020). Furthermore, worksheet gives students a chance to appreciate others' works. By presenting the worksheet, students can get compliments. A reward given by a teacher is crucial for learning motivation, academic achievement, and the positive change of students' behavior (Davis et al., 2006; Wigfield et al., 1998).

### *Responsibility*

Based on Figure 1, there are no irresponsible students. 2 students are considered having sufficient responsibility. 6 students have good responsibility, 26 students have very good responsibility. The responsibility aspect is the most visible aspect of the whole social skill aspect. Students' responsibility towards the environment can be seen clearly in the Outing class activity. Students can exploit nature as a learning source without destroying it. Students clean the location after finishing the lesson. They also admonish friends who harm any plants during the outing class. They remind each other to keep their rubbish. An outing class sets the environment as a learning facility and location in which students can interact intensely with the environment. Thus, they unconsciously learn to be responsible after exploiting the nature for studying. This is in line with a study from Soh and Meerah (2013) and Amini (2015) which reveal that an outing class or outdoor learning can improve students' concern towards the environment.

Students' responsibility is also demonstrated through students' habit of keeping the basecamp clean. Without any orders, students organize their shoes and bags every day. Moreover, there is no picket schedule in Bengawan Solo nature elementary school. It is because the school environment is in their responsibility. Students voluntarily cooperate to clean their class every day, before and after the class. O-soji, a Japanese school cleaning habit which has been implemented since the primary education is considered beneficial to improve students' awareness of the ownership and responsibility towards nature or environment (Bamkin, 2016; Junaedi & Syukur, 2017). It is due to the fact that schools in Japan do not have janitors. Therefore, without the picket schedule, students regard that sanitation is a part of self-responsibility. Besides, school facilities are a joint responsibility (Kuchai, 2013; Luhmer, 1990).

Again, the responsibility to God is indicated by the congregational praying habit. If it is time to pray, students are guided to go to the prayer room. The high-grade students, without any orders, realize their responsibility to go praying. In contrast, low-grade students should be ordered by their teachers to go praying. Some low-grade students understand their responsibility although the teacher does not give any orders. Infusing the worship discipline to the young generation is pivotal to build their character to be not lazy, apathetic, or anti-religion. It is also important to increase their responsibility as God's servants (Arweck & Nesbitt, 2007; Mulalić, 2017; Vokey & Palmer, 2001).

The indicators of the responsibility are created through the backpacking activity. Generally, students are given instructions to visit a place by spending the small amount of money. Students manage to share food fairly and look after each other in order to succeed in the exploration as teachers only do the supervision without giving any helps. It is supported by Carpenter and Pease (2013) who state that doing something without anyone's help and full of consideration is an example of self-responsibility. An evaluation in the form of a worksheet has developed students' honesty since they need to make a report honestly in which the truth of the worksheet is measurable. An honest individual is considered responsible since he or she is responsible for what is said. Honesty is a kind of self-responsibility (Cavico & Mujtaba, 2009; Park, 2003).

### *Empathy*

Empathy is considered excellent. It is indicated in Figure 1 that there is no student with poor empathy. 2 students come with sufficient empathy, and 9 students are with good empathy. In addition, 25 students are considered having great empathy. Students' empathy can be about feeling sorry for others' problems, listening to others' stories, and looking for solutions toward others' problems. These can be done through fundraising activity and social projects which are regularly held by the school either in class or with other schools. Students donate some of their money sincerely to help underprivileged people by providing foods, clothes, or houses. Further, students do social projects for some particular people. The project can be in the form of renovating a student's uninhabitable house. During the process, students will learn and think about others' problems, discuss it, and look for a possible solution. Unconsciously, the students become a good model for others to do good things. The capitalization of mindset through such kind of regular activities can be a good way to grow students' empathy. Students should be accustomed to doing such activities, so students can slowly grow their empathy (Lazo & Vik, 2014). Furthermore, the habit of involving in social projects is considerably able to develop and improve the individual function of empathy (Hasgul & Serpen, 2014; Verhaert & Van den Poel, 2011).

In feeling sorry towards someone's problem, students are invited to watch videos about victims of natural disasters, a war in Palestine, the Uyghur Muslims, etc. Many unexpected things happen to students when they watch the videos. Some students fall into tears as they watch the people's suffering. Such activity can positively affect students' empathy. Students become aware of the importance of helping others so that they are called to give whatever they have to others. Every day the students save their money to be donated. With this regard, the stakeholders support their students to keep doing such activities. This phenomenon indicates that students have empathy. It is in line with some experts declaring that someone who has empathy tends to have strong sensitivity and easily feel others' feelings. He or she feels sorry for what others are going through. Finally, he or she will think about how to help others (Cameron et al., 2019; Cuff et al., 2016; Konstantikaki, 2008).

### *Self-Control*

It is indicated in Figure 1 that there is only 1 student who has poor self-control. 5 students have a sufficient level of self-control, while 11 have good self-control. Also, 19 students have very good self-control. The higher-grade students can control themselves. The indicators of self-control such as accepting critiques and being open to disagreement are infused to students through modeling. Students are accustomed to giving critiques or suggestions to their friends during a presentation or a discussion. Furthermore, students understand how to deliver the critiques and suggestions by appreciating good things that have been made by their friends before giving the critiques. It is due to the fact that teachers regularly build students' character through modeling, such as stories of the prophets. Through little things, teachers exemplify some attitudes which can train students to be able to control their emotion in every aspect of life and to treat others properly. Students will always remember all behaviors during interacting with teachers. Whatever teachers do will always be retained and imitated by students (Bashir et al., 2014). Teachers' modeling in school toward the development of students' character undoubtedly affects students' personality in the future, including their self-controlling ability (Lunenberg et al., 2007; Zirkel, 2002).

Moreover, treating someone respectfully as the indicator of self-control has been well performed by students in daily activities. Teachers emphasize and prioritize harmony in school. The harmony which is promoted every day will create a positive classroom atmosphere (Sardjijo, 2017). A positive school atmosphere can increase students' participation and decrease students' aggression during the interaction, which is indicated through the improvement of self-controlling ability (Barr, 2016; Epstein et al., 2008; Sulaiman, 2015).

Besides, the students of Bengawan Solo nature elementary school always smile and are friendly to all people, including strangers. Also, the students are accustomed to greet teachers, classmates, or the parents of other students. The students say greetings to one another. The students are polite. This is indicated through how they sit, how they talk and ask others, and how they behave in front of older people. The indicator of self-control is also indicated through the way students apply the "5S" culture. The "5S" culture grows students' character and noble mind by transforming students to be calm, respectful, and friendly. Such a culture also enables students to establish a positive social interaction (Agboola & Tsai, 2012; Rahayu, 2017; Widodo & Yulianti, 2019).

Some students who are considered having low self-control are guided through counseling. Sometimes students are unable to avoid actions that trigger problems. It is indicated through students' behavior which cannot reject their best friend's invitation to commit bad things. The counseling is conducted to guide and direct students to prevent them from making problems. After the counseling, the students are expected to compromise with their society and to control themselves. In general, the counseling will be conducted if the students harm people or break the norms. The counseling is aimed at optimizing students' potentials, such as creativity, knowledge, understanding, and attitude (Howe, 2009). Besides, the counseling allows teachers to help students to find solutions toward their problem by showing them the best way. It also encompasses a consultation of students' interests and talent (Tuchili & Ndhlovu, 2017). Thus, the counseling can control the students with trouble, create students' self-control, and develop students' potentials.

### Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion above, it can be concluded that the students' social skills in Bengawan Solo nature elementary school are taught through social projects and habituation in the daily learning process. The profile of students' social skills in Bengawan Solo nature elementary school is classified into 5 categories. The first is cooperation or collaboration. With this regard, the students can cooperate with others in many things. The second is an assertion. The students can get along with new friends and start a conversation with others. The third one is responsibility. It is about how students can understand their role and responsibility toward God, themselves, others, and the environment. The fourth is empathy. The students can understand others' feelings and problems. The last is self-control. The students can control their emotions, so they are not easily offended. Further, they reject invitations to do bad things.

### Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, the school is suggested to develop the Outing class, Backpacker, Social service, Social project, 5S culture, Worshiping habit, Discussion and presentation, Worksheet, and harmony in order to improve students' social skills. For future researchers, it is suggested to investigate schools implementing other unique educational concepts. Future studies can extend the sample by involving more schools that accommodate the development of students' social skills in the regional, nation, or international level.

### Limitations

The weaknesses felt by researchers need to be expressed for the perfection of further research in the same discussion. The limitation of this research is that the research subject is limited because it is only in one of the primary schools in Indonesia. Thus, generalizing the social skills profile of elementary school students in Indonesia is not considered representative.

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