Proceedings Series of Educational Studies

The 5th International Conference on Educational Management and Technology (ICEMT) 2026

The Use of the Magic Face Board to Improve Children's Ability to Recognize Various Emotions in Group B at NOOR FADJAR Preschool

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Abstract

The ability to recognize various emotions is an important aspect of social-emotional development in early childhood. Initial observations of children in Group B at Noor Fadjar Kindergarten showed that most children still experienced difficulties in recognizing and distinguishing various emotional expressions. Therefore, concrete and interactive learning media that are appropriate to the characteristics of early childhood are needed. This study aimed to improve children's ability to recognize various emotions through the implementation of the Magic Face Board among children in Group B at Noor Fadjar Kindergarten. This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) using the Kemmis and Mc Taggart model, which was conducted in two cycles, with each cycle consisting of two meetings. The research subjects consisted of 21 children. Data were collected through observation, documentation, and assessment of children's development, while the data were analyzed using quantitative and qualitative descriptive approaches. The results showed an improvement in children's ability to recognize emotions at each stage. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Magic Face Board can improve children's ability to recognize, distinguish, and imitate various emotional expressions while creating a concrete, interactive, and enjoyable learning experience.

Keywords: emotion recognition; magic face board; early childhood; classroom action research.

1. Introduction

Young children are in the most important phase of character development—a crucial period for their development in all aspects, particularly their social and emotional development. Between the ages of five and six, children begin to recognize, understand, and express various emotions such as joy, sadness, anger, fear, and surprise. The ability to recognize emotions is vital for children to build social relationships, develop empathy, regulate their behavior, and communicate effectively with others. Therefore, this ability needs to be nurtured through engaging, dynamic, and age-appropriate learning activities.

The ability to recognize emotions is a fundamental component of social and emotional development and must be nurtured from an early age. Children who can recognize emotional expressions will find it easier to understand their own feelings and those of others, which helps them interact positively at school and at home. Children who have not yet learned to recognize emotions often struggle to regulate their behavior, express their feelings, and form friendships with their peers (Faizatul Fitriyah et al., 2024). This situation indicates that children's ability to recognize various emotions has not yet fully developed. Teaching

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materials are not yet sufficiently varied and need to be improved to help children learn to identify various emotions.

Initial observations of Group B, consisting of 21 children, showed that 16 of them still had difficulty recognizing various facial expressions such as joy, sadness, anger, fear, and surprise. Children need action-oriented, enjoyable, and practical learning experiences so they can actively participate in the learning process. This aligns with research on the use of educational toys such as busy books, which shows that teaching materials featuring fun activities can promote the social and emotional development of young children (Ayatina & Zulfahmi, 2024). Yulianti and Sidik (2024) also emphasize the importance of emotional and social stimulation through age-appropriate learning activities. Furthermore, research by Hidayat et al. (2026) indicates that the use of emotion-coin media can help 4–5-year-olds better recognize emotions. Therefore, engaging and interactive learning materials are needed that allow children to directly observe, select, match, and identify various facial expressions.

One useful tool is the facial chart learning material—a type of facial chart that allows children to match various facial features with specific emotional expressions. This not only helps them learn to recognize the characteristics of each expression but also provides a fun and interactive learning experience. These facial charts allow children to explore various facial expressions firsthand, making the learning process more meaningful. Research by Rizqa (2023) shows that the use of facial expression charts helps young children recognize emotional expressions. Children can identify various facial expressions more easily because they learn through visual and hands-on experiences with interactive learning materials. The study shows that expression-based media can help children better understand various types of emotions. In addition, research by Rahma et al. (2025) indicates that the use of educational media in classroom action research projects can improve children's ability to express their emotions and help them develop self-control through active play. Meanwhile, research by Meno et al. (2024) indicates that learning materials specifically designed to convey emotions during the learning process are essential, as they promote the social and emotional development of children aged 5 to 6 years. These findings are supported by Faizatul Fitriyah et al. (2024), who explain that emotional recognition in early childhood is a key indicator of a child's social and emotional development. Additionally, Nova Liani (2024) states that the use of innovative and engaging learning materials can optimally foster the social and emotional development of young children.

Based on the above discussion, there is a need for learning activities that help children recognize various emotions using engaging, age-appropriate media that align with the learning characteristics of early childhood. Therefore, the researcher planned a classroom action research (CAR) project titled "The Application of the Magic Face Board to Improve the Ability to Recognize Various Emotions in Children in Group B at Noor Fadjar Preschool."

2. Method

This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design aimed at enhancing children's emotional development through the educational toy "Magic Face Board." Classroom Action Research (CAR) is a process in which educators solve problems faced by students (Corey in Ritonga et al., 2023). This research design was deemed appropriate due to a problem

identified in Class B of KB Noor Fadjar Kindergarten: children's limited ability to recognize various emotions. The classroom action research approach employed was a collaborative study using the Kemmis and Mc Taggart model.

The research was conducted through collaboration between the researcher and the classroom teacher. The teacher carried out the instruction, while the researcher conducted observations and reflections. The Kemmis and McTaggart research model was chosen because it consists of four stages: planning (developing an action plan), acting (implementing the action), observing (observation), and reflecting (reflection). These four stages were carried out in two repeated cycles.

This study was conducted at KB Noor Fadjar Kindergarten during the even semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. The research lasted for six weeks. The first activity was carried out by the researcher through initial observation. Subsequent activities included implementing interventions in Cycle I and Cycle II, as well as evaluating the children's developmental progress.The subjects of this study were the 21 children in Group B, consisting of 11 boys and 12 girls.

The research was conducted in two cycles, with each cycle consisting of two sessions. Cycle I focused on planning the activities to be carried out. This was followed by observation and intervention using an assessment sheet for emotional recognition skills. After the observation, the next step was reflection to identify the successes and obstacles of the interventions implemented in Cycle I, followed by determining the plan to be implemented in Cycle II. The activities in Cycle II were designed to reinforce the results from Cycle I. Cycle II incorporated various additions and improvements to the previous interventions to address the obstacles and difficulties that had been identified.

Data collection was conducted through observation, documentation, and assessment of the children's development. Observations were carried out through direct monitoring during learning activities. Teachers observed the children's ability to recognize various facial expressions, their ability to identify facial features, their eye-hand coordination, their level of concentration, and their responses to using the Magic Face Board. Documentation was used to record learning activities in the form of photos of the activities and the children's work. Observation results were recorded using an observation sheet that included indicators of the children's development in recognizing facial expressions during learning activities.

This study was analyzed using quantitative and qualitative descriptive techniques. The qualitative analysis was derived from observations, field notes, and documentation to describe changes in children's behavior during the learning process using the "Face Board" medium. The quantitative analysis was used to determine the development and improvement of children's ability to recognize various emotions in each cycle through the calculation of observation scores. Each indicator was assessed using an early childhood development scale consisting of Not Developed (ND) with a score of 1, Beginning to Develop (BD) with a score of 2, Developing as Expected (DE) with a score of 3, and Developing Very Well (DVW) with a score of 4. Next, learning achievement is calculated based on the number of children who reached the Developing as Expected (BSH) and Developing Very Well (BSB) categories. The completion rate is calculated using the formula:

$P = (F/N) \times 100\%$

Explanation:

P = Classical achievement rate

F = Number of children who achieved the BSH and BSB categories

N = Total number of children

The study is considered successful if at least 80% of the children achieve the Developing as Expected (BSH) or Developing Very Well (BSB) categories.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Result

The learning process using Face Board takes place in two cycles, each consisting of two sessions. Each cycle begins with an introductory activity in which the learning objectives are explained and the use of the medium is demonstrated. This is followed by the main activity using Face Board. Finally, the children's ability to recognize various emotions is assessed based on their individual capabilities. The results of each cycle are shown in Figure 1.

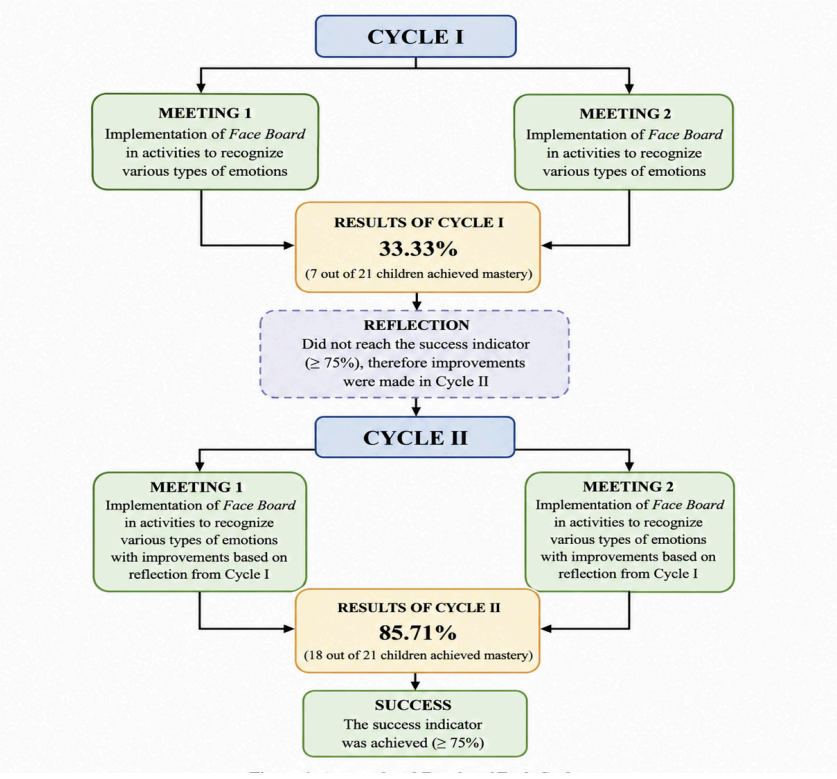


Figure 1. Accumulation Results of Each Cycle

Figure 1 shows that implementing the intervention in each cycle resulted in improved ability to recognize various emotions. In the first cycle, the success rate was 33.33% (7 out of

21 children), but it increased to 85.71% (18 out of 21 children) following improvements in the second cycle. This increase indicates that the use of the "Magic Face Board" has a positive impact on children's ability to recognize various emotions.

During the planning phase, the researcher developed a lesson plan using the "Magic Face Board" as the primary tool for introducing various emotions to the children. She prepared teaching materials, picture cards, facial features such as eyes, eyebrows, noses, and mouths, as well as observation sheets to document the children's progress throughout the activity. This activity was designed as a two-part session to help children recognize, distinguish, and imitate various emotional expressions.

The first cycle was conducted in two sessions. The teacher began the lesson by introducing the "Magic Face Board" game and demonstrating how to play it. The children then took turns selecting emotion cards, matching the facial features to the corresponding images, naming the emotion, and imitating the expression. Throughout the activity, the teacher provided guidance to children who were having difficulty.

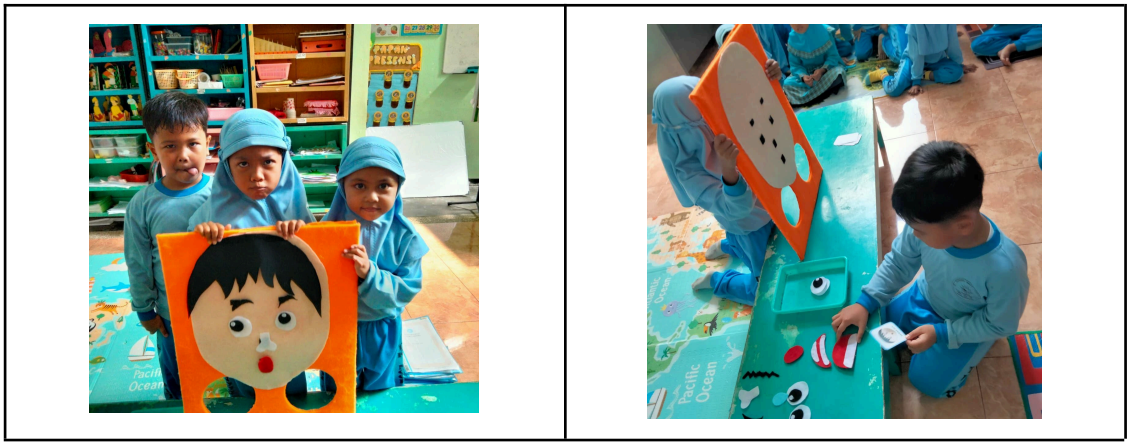


Figure 2. Implementation of Learning Activities in Cycle I

The results of the observation showed that the children participated in the learning activities with great enthusiasm, as the materials used were engaging and enjoyable (Figure 2). However, several difficulties arose. For example, some children had trouble correctly positioning the eyes, eyebrows, and mouth, and misinterpreted facial expressions as sad, angry, afraid, or surprised. Of the 21 children, 7 achieved the completion category. Of these, 6 were in the "Development as Expected" category and 1 was in the "Excellent Development" category. Thus, the completion rate for Cycle I was 33.33%.

The results of the observation showed that the children's ability to recognize various emotions had not yet reached the target score of 75%. Only 33.33% of the 21 children (7 out of 21) successfully completed the task. Reflection results indicate that the children still face difficulties in using this face board, particularly in arranging facial features when viewing them from the back and distinguishing between similar expressions such as sadness, fear, anger, and surprise. Therefore, improvements were made to the learning process by providing clearer explanations of the activities to be carried out, repeating instructions before the activity began, demonstrating facial expressions directly, and emphasizing mutual support and cooperation as the foundation for the second trial. Children who still struggled to understand the materials and distinguish facial expressions received more intensive guidance

from the teacher. They were given the opportunity to observe facial expressions demonstrated by the teacher before working on the task independently. These improvements were intended to help the children better understand the steps in the facial expression chart and boost their confidence in recognizing and imitating various emotional expressions during the second cycle.

The plan for Cycle II was developed based on the evaluation and analysis of Cycle I. The researchers optimized the learning strategy by simplifying the steps for using the media, introducing the practice gradually, and providing children with more opportunities to discuss and practice expressing facial expressions before using the Magic Face Board. Observation sheets were also used in this cycle to document the children's progress.

The second cycle consisted of two sessions and was conducted based on the progress made in the previous cycle. The teacher began the activity by reviewing various emotions, then directly demonstrated facial expressions before the children used the Magic Face Board. The children appeared more confident and actively participated in selecting expression cards, arranging facial features, naming emotions, and imitating the correct expressions (Figure 3). The teacher encouraged the children through praise and motivation, making the learning environment more engaging and enjoyable.

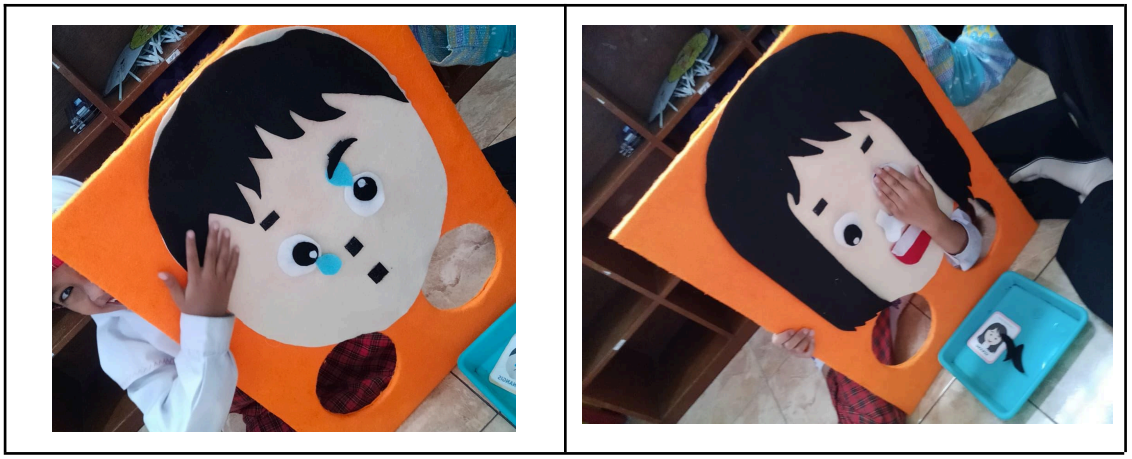


Figure 3. Implementation of Learning Activities in Cycle II

The results of the second cycle showed a significant improvement compared to the previous cycle. Most of the children are now able to independently recognize, distinguish, and imitate facial expressions such as joy, sadness, anger, fear, and surprise. Of the 21 children, 18 achieved the highest level of competence, 10 of whom fell into the "BSH" category and the other 8 into the "BSB" category. Only 3 children remained in the "Early Development" (MB) category, meaning that, overall, the children's development has reached 85.71%.

Based on observations during the second cycle, the research success indicators were met, as the percentage of children who achieved the competency level exceeded 75%. The children demonstrated improvement not only in recognizing emotion labels but also in their ability to distinguish and express emotions using the "Magic Face Board." Therefore, this study was concluded after the second cycle, as the research objectives had been achieved.

Table 1. Summary of Results on the Ability to Recognize Various Emotions

Stage	BB	MB	BSH	BSB	Completed	Percentage
Pre-Cycle	9	7	5	0	5	23.81%
Cycle I	5	9	6	1	7	33.33%
Cycle II	0	3	10	8	18	85.71%

Based on Table 1, the children's ability to recognize various emotions improved in each phase of the study. In the first phase, 5 children (23.81%) reached the "Completed" category, which includes the "Development as Expected" (BSH) and "Very Good" (BSB) subcategories. However, the majority of children were still in the "Not Yet Developed" (BB) and "Early Development" (MB) categories. Following the introduction of the Magic Face Board in Cycle I, the number of children reaching the "Mastery" category increased to 7 (33.33%). Despite this improvement, the results still fell short of the established success criterion of 75%, so the study proceeded to Cycle II. Thanks to improvements in the learning process during Cycle II, the number of children who reached the "Completed" category increased significantly to 18 (85.71%). This group consisted of 10 children in the BSH category and 8 children in the BSB category. In Cycle II, no children fell into the BB category.

Based on the results of Cycle II, the improvement achieved after Cycle I was the best possible outcome. The children now appear more capable of using the Magic Face Board, recognizing various emotional expressions, naming those emotions, and imitating facial expressions on their own. The success rate increased to 85.71%, exceeding the success criterion of 75%. Therefore, no further action is required, and this study was concluded after Cycle II. The results of the study indicate that the use of the Magic Face Board can improve children's ability to recognize various emotions and meets the study's success criteria.

3.2 Discussion

3.2.1 Application of the "Face Board" Medium to Enhance the Ability to Recognize Various Emotions in Group B Kindergarten Children

The use of the Magic Face Board in Group B's learning process at Noor Fadjar Kindergarten has proven to create an interactive, concrete, and enjoyable learning environment. According to Gemilang and Ningrum (2023), learning media can help students more easily understand the material being taught; moreover, with the use of play-based learning media, children will not get bored quickly and can learn in a concrete way. These results are consistent with the findings of a study by Utamimah et al. (2024), which showed that the use of learning materials combined with hands-on activities can promote children's learning processes and social-emotional development. Materials that actively engage children allow them to have more meaningful learning experiences compared to purely passive learning. Therefore, the use of the Magic Face Board in this study provides children with the opportunity to learn through play by directly manipulating various parts of the face.

At the start of implementation in Cycle I, the introduction of the facial feature board sparked great curiosity and enthusiasm among the children. However, field findings from the

initial phase (Cycle I) of the media's implementation showed that the children still faced technical difficulties in arranging facial features from behind the board and often had trouble distinguishing between similar expressions, such as sadness, fear, anger, and surprise. This indicates that young children require step-by-step guidance and repeated concrete manipulation to understand abstract emotional concepts. As Aliyasari and Martadi (2021) noted, young children need visual aids and clear, repeated demonstrations because these can help them more easily understand the characteristics of various expressions. This is also supported by research by Wardhani et al. (2024) on the "Face Poly Game" media, which shows that media based on facial shapes and expressions can improve the social and emotional skills of young children. The similarities among these media suggest that the use of realistic facial representations allows children to gain firsthand experience in recognizing various facial expressions.

To address these challenges, a reflection was conducted on Cycle I, resulting in a series of improvements to the interventions in Cycle II. The improvements included clearer explanations of how to use the materials, systematic repetition of instructions, the teacher directly demonstrating facial expressions, and encouraging collaboration among peers (peer tutoring). The opportunity for children to guide one another and discuss while matching facial features has been shown to significantly enhance their understanding. These results are consistent with the findings of Hasibuan et al. (2025), who state that children's learning process using educational media designed to be interactive and collaborative can help them recognize basic emotions in a natural and enjoyable way. These findings can also be linked to a study conducted by Wargiantiningsih et al. (2024) on the media used in the Emotional Check-Up Board. That study showed that media that directly involve children in emotion-recognition activities can promote social and emotional development through active learning. Research conducted by Rohbaniyah et al. (2025) also shows that learning activities that directly engage children through arts and crafts can provide enjoyable and meaningful learning experiences for children aged 5 to 6 years. These findings support the use of the "Magic Face Board" in this study, as children have the opportunity to actively participate in selecting, matching, and observe facial features to recognize various emotional expressions.

In addition, actively involving children in manipulating and imitating facial expressions using the Magic Face Board provides a hands-on learning experience. Children not only view images of facial expressions but also select them, adjust their positions, observe them, and imitate them. This aligns with the findings of a study by Lupita et al. (2024) on the Augmented Reality Expression Book (MAREBOO), which was developed to enhance the social-emotional skills of children aged 5 to 6 years. Research shows that media specifically designed to convey expressions and emotions can be an effective tool for the social-emotional development of young children.

Therefore, in this study, the Magic Face Board provides a learning experience tailored to the needs of young children by combining play, visual observation, tactile interaction, imitation of facial expressions, and interaction with peers. The use of this tool also helps teachers to gradually and individually adapt lessons to the children's abilities, particularly in recognizing and distinguishing various types of emotional expressions..

3.2.2 Improving the Ability to Recognize Various Emotions Using "Face Board" Media in Kindergarten Group B

The gradual use of the Magic Face Board significantly improved the ability of children in Group B at Noor Fadjar Kindergarten to recognize various emotions. Based on the research data, during the pre-cycle phase, the mastery rate was only 23.81% (5 out of 21 children). After the intervention using the Magic Face Board in Cycle I, the mastery rate increased to 33.33% (7 out of 21 children). Although there has been an improvement, the results for Cycle I have not yet met the established success criteria, which is a minimum of 75%.

Following a review of Cycle I's learning outcomes, the learning process in Cycle II showed a significant improvement in the children's abilities, with the percentage of students meeting the standard reaching 85.71% (18 out of 21 children). At the end of Cycle II, 10 children were in the "Developing as Expected" (BSH) category, 8 children were in the "Developing Very Well" (BSB) category, and no children were in the "Not Yet Developing" (BB) category. The children were not only able to independently name and distinguish between expressions of happiness, sadness, anger, fear, and surprise, but they were also able to imitate these facial expressions and practice them on their own.

This improvement demonstrates that emotion recognition through visual-tactile game-based media has a positive impact on children's social-emotional development. These results align with the findings of Shiddiq et al. (2024), which show that active learning promotes the development of various skills in children aged 5 to 6 years. This occurs through activities that encourage communication, creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration. In this study, the children's active participation was clearly evident in selecting emotion cards, matching facial features, naming emotions, and imitating corresponding expressions. These activities allow children to learn through direct experience, making their understanding of various emotions more active and meaningful. These findings are also consistent with research by Hidayat et al. (2026), which shows that learning media interventions based on symbols and expressions have a significant effect on improving emotional understanding in young children. As explained by Faizatul Fitriyah et al. (2024), the ability to recognize and distinguish emotional expressions is a crucial indicator of young children's social-emotional development. Furthermore, the results of this study indicate that interactive media-based learning in classroom action research can stimulate emotional expression and optimally support children's emotional regulation.

These findings are consistent with the results of a study by Kustiawan et al. (2020), which showed that the use of appropriate learning media can enhance the skills of young children, while media that is less engaging can lead to boredom and a decline in interest in learning. The use of the Magic Face Board in this study provided a stimulating learning experience through activities such as selecting, matching, observing, and imitating facial expressions, which actively engaged the children throughout the entire learning process.

This study also shows that improvements in children's skills align with the findings of Sholihah and Kustiawan (2020). They found that learning materials tailored to the needs of 5- to 6-year-olds can help teachers create more meaningful learning experiences. This aligns with the use of the Magic Face Board, which enables children to directly recognize and distinguish

various emotional expressions. Furthermore, de Lima et al. (2022) noted that social and emotional development is a crucial component of early childhood development and can be influenced by various developmental factors. In this study, stimulation through play activities using the Magic Face Board can encourage children to recognize emotions, express their feelings, and interact during learning activities.

The ability of children in the second cycle to imitate facial expressions is consistent with the findings of a study by Ramadhan et al. (2024), who developed animated films as a medium for teaching social and emotional skills to toddlers. This study shows that media presenting facial expressions and social-emotional values can help children understand both their own feelings and the feelings of others. Therefore, the use of visual expression tools in the learning process can provide children with concrete experiences in dealing with emotions.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the classroom action research and the discussions that have taken place, it can be concluded that the use of the Magic Face Board effectively improves the ability of children in Group B at Noor Fadjar Kindergarten to recognize various emotions. The use of this teaching aid, combined with the teacher's demonstration of facial expressions, clear instructions, and collaborative activities among the children, creates a concrete, interactive, and enjoyable learning experience.

The improvement in the children's abilities was evident in the significant increase in completion rates at each stage: 23.81% (5 children completed the program) in the pre-cycle stage, rising to 33.33% (7 children completed the program) in Cycle I, and reaching 85.71% (18 children completed the program) in Cycle II. The achievement in Cycle II exceeded the established research success indicator (>75%). Therefore, the Magic Face Board is recommended as an innovative educational tool for early childhood educators to help optimize the social and emotional development of young children.

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