

Implementation of Social-Emotional Learning in Fostering Positive Character in Children at Taruna Kindergarten

Astuti¹, Retnoningsih², Syahru Ramadhan^{3*}

¹²³Universitas Muhammadiyah Bima, Bima City, Indonesia

Abstract

This study was motivated by the need at Taruna Kindergarten in Bima City to strengthen positive character traits in young children through targeted and sustained social-emotional learning. Initial observations indicated that some children still struggled with managing their emotions, showing empathy, cooperating, and communicating positively. This study aims to describe the process of implementing social-emotional learning and its impact on children's character development. The method used is qualitative descriptive research, as this approach is most appropriate for deeply describing learning phenomena that occur naturally without manipulating variables, and allows the researcher to uncover the meaning of children's social-emotional behaviors based on real-world classroom contexts. Data collection techniques included direct observation of learning activities, in-depth interviews with teachers and the school principal, and documentation in the form of activity photos, teacher notes, and child development monitoring instruments. The data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model, which involves data reduction, data presentation, and continuous conclusion drawing. The research findings indicate that, based on interviews, observations, and field notes, several key strategies implemented by teachers at TKTaruna—namely, encouraging greetings, friendly interactions, and smiling—have been shown to improve polite behavior. morning circle activities help regulate children's emotions; observations show that children are able to express their feelings, and the quiet corner effectively soothes emotions; engaging in group work activities to foster cooperation is evident from the interaction in sharing tasks during class projects. There is a reinforcement of appreciation to encourage positive behavior; teachers' notes indicate an increase in children's participation following praise. The findings in this study confirm that social-emotional learning contributes significantly to the sustained development of positive character in children.

KEYWORDS

implementation of learning, social-emotional, positive character

Introduction

Early childhood education is the cornerstone of shaping children into individuals of good character and sound personality. At this stage, children are in the golden period of their development, during which every aspect of their development cognitive, social, emotional, and moral progresses rapidly and is greatly influenced by their learning environment (Retno Utami, 2019; Sawong et al., 2019). Early childhood education does not focus solely on mastering academic skills such as reading, writing, and arithmetic, but is also aimed at fostering positive character traits through learning that addresses social and emotional development (Cahyati & Ahmadin, 2024). The reality is that many educational institutions, such as early childhood education centers, still place greater emphasis on academic and cognitive

aspects, while children's social and emotional development has not yet been fully nurtured (Nurhidaya & Syahru Ramadhan, 2025; Ramadhan et al., 2024). This situation is also evident in kindergartens, where initial observations indicate that some children still struggle with managing their emotions, showing empathy, and collaborating with others. This highlights a gap between the curriculum's requirements and the actual implementation of learning in the classroom.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is an educational approach that emphasizes the development of children's social and emotional competencies so they can recognize their own feelings, understand others, manage their emotions effectively, behave positively, and make responsible decisions (Rahmani et al., 2025). Ideally, the implementation of social-emotional learning will result in children who possess a high level of self-awareness, are able to manage their emotions, respect differences, show empathy, and engage in healthy social interactions (Mandasari et al., 2025). The reality is that some young children still struggle to manage their emotions, exhibit aggressive behavior, have difficulty cooperating, and even lack empathy toward their peers. This indicates that efforts to implement social-emotional learning in early childhood education institutions have not yet been fully realized and require more serious attention from educators (Isya et al., 2024).

The urgency of implementing social-emotional learning is growing amid rapid social change and the complexity of challenges in child development (Ardila et al., 2024). Today's children are growing up in a digital age saturated with information, competition, and virtual interactions, all of which indirectly influence their character development and behavior (Asfiati et al., 2025). Without adequate social and emotional skills, children will struggle to adapt to their social environment, be prone to stress, have difficulty empathizing, and exhibit deviant behavior (Hermansyah et al., 2024). Therefore, it is important to integrate social-emotional learning into early childhood education so that children can grow into resilient individuals who are self-aware, capable of managing their emotions, able to form positive social relationships, and capable of making decisions with a strong sense of moral responsibility (Boeriswati, 2024).

The primary goal of implementing social-emotional learning in early childhood is to foster positive character traits rooted in universal values of goodness, including honesty, empathy, responsibility, and respect for others (Khadijah, 2024). This lesson is designed to help children understand their own feelings and those of others, manage negative emotions, and foster mutual respect in their interactions (Mashar, 2015). In the context of early childhood education, social-emotional learning is not taught solely through lectures or rules, but rather through meaningful and context-based activities, such as role-playing, small-group discussions, and simple reflections on feelings. Common challenges include teachers' lack of understanding regarding strategies for implementing social-emotional learning, limited access to relevant teaching materials and methods, and the absence of comprehensive assessments of children's social-emotional development (Wuri & Nurhidayah, 2023).

Research on social-emotional learning has been extensively studied, yielding several key findings. Previous research has shown that social-emotional learning has a positive impact on improving children's emotional regulation skills and prosocial behavior. Additionally, other

studies confirm its contribution to students' readiness for learning and academic achievement (Susanti et al., 2023). Most studies focus on the impact of social-emotional learning on children's academic achievement or emotional regulation, but few have specifically examined whether the implementation of this approach can holistically foster positive character traits in young children within the school environment (Muthoharoh, 2022). Thus, there remains a gap in understanding regarding the contextual and sustained application of social-emotional learning in fostering positive character development in young children. This study contributes by describing real-world practices, learning strategies, and their impact on children's character development in the environment (Hidayat et al., 2024).

Based on the preceding discussion, this study is important to conduct at the early childhood level, particularly at Taruna Kindergarten in Simpasai Village, Monta Subdistrict, Bima Regency. The selection of this location is not merely descriptive but is based on strong analytical considerations. Socially, the children at Taruna Kindergarten grow up in an environment characterized by high levels of communal interaction, including a culture of mutual cooperation, intense communication among residents, and family involvement in school activities. Preliminary observations also indicate changes in children's behavior, such as an increase in individualistic tendencies, difficulty managing emotions, and low levels of cooperation—factors influenced by technology use and diverse parenting styles. These characteristics make Taruna Kindergarten a relevant context for examining how social-emotional learning is practically implemented in response to these social dynamics. Compared to other schools, this environment offers greater opportunities to analyze the relationship between local wisdom values and social-emotional learning practices. Thus, this study not only describes the phenomenon but also generates contextual understanding and practical solutions for fostering positive character in children.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative research design with a descriptive approach. This approach was chosen because it provides an in-depth, natural, and comprehensive understanding of social-emotional learning as implemented in school settings and its role in fostering positive character development in children (Ramadhan, 2017). The study was conducted at Taruna Kindergarten in Bima City using purposive sampling, involving 1 principal, 4 classroom teachers, and 20 children from Groups A and B as the main participants. The selection criteria were based on active participation in social-emotional learning activities. The primary data sources in this study included teachers, the principal, and students, as well as supporting documents such as learning materials, teacher observation notes, child development journals, and documentation of school activities (Sugiono, 2020). Data collection took place over a 4-week period and included 6 classroom observations, 6 in-depth interviews with teachers and the school principal lasting 30–60 minutes, and an analysis of documents (lesson plans, anecdotal notes, child development journals, and photos of activities). Observations focused on teacher-child interactions, social-emotional learning strategies, and changes in children's behavior. Interviews used a semi-structured protocol covering understanding, practice, and implementation challenges. Documents were selected based on their relevance to indicators of children's social-

emotional development (Luthfiyah, 2017).

The data collected were analyzed using the qualitative analysis technique developed by Miles and Huberman, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Sidiq & Choiri, 2018). During the data reduction phase, the researchers sorted, organized, and simplified the key data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation so that the research remained focused on its primary objective: understanding the role of social-emotional learning in shaping children's positive character. The data presentation stage was carried out by compiling the findings into a systematic narrative description so that the relationships between categories and emerging patterns could be clearly seen. The data presentation was structured to describe in detail the process of implementing social-emotional learning and the supporting and inhibiting factors at Taruna Kindergarten in Bima City (Helaluddin, 2015). The final stage drawing conclusions involves interpreting the presented data to yield a deep understanding of the effectiveness of implementing social-emotional learning and its contribution to children's positive character development. To ensure the validity of the data, the researcher also employed triangulation both methodological and source-based to ensure that the research findings are truly valid and scientifically sound.

Result and Discussion

In principle, teachers at Taruna Kindergarten in Bima City believe that learning should be designed to be engaging and enjoyable so that students can develop a deep understanding and knowledge. Social-emotional learning is viewed as a learning paradigm that teaches students to develop skills in understanding and managing emotions, with the aim of helping students develop emotional and social intelligence, as well as making them more resilient and fostering a high level of empathy. This study examines the efforts made by teachers at Taruna Kindergarten in Bima City to implement social-emotional learning that is engaging, enjoyable, and in-depth, as evidenced by the findings below:

Making Greetings, Small Talk, and Smiles a Habit as a Way to Build Positive Relationships

The practice of greeting, addressing, and smiling at Taruna Kindergarten in Bima City is implemented in a structured and consistent manner from the moment children enter the school grounds. Observations show that the practice of greeting, addressing, and smiling is carried out routinely as soon as children enter the school gate. Teachers welcome the children by calling them by name and greeting them directly. Field notes indicate that approximately 15 out of 20 children respond to greetings with eye contact and verbal replies, while some children still require guidance. Teachers also provide reinforcement, such as expressing gratitude for greeting politely. This data illustrates a consistent pattern of initial interaction between teachers and children associated with the emergence of positive social responses in the majority of children, although not yet uniformly. This routine gradually fosters stable emotional habits, where children tend to enter the classroom with a calm mood, are better prepared to engage in learning, and demonstrate improved emotional control during the early school hours.

In the classroom, the teacher continues this practice through the morning meeting ritual as a way to expand the practice of greetings, small talk, and smiling in group

interactions. The teacher begins the activity by having the children sit in a circle and then guides each child to greet the friend next to them, make eye contact, and offer a smile as a sign of social acceptance. This is consistent with what the teacher at Taruna Kindergarten described in the interview.

"Some children who were initially quiet have now started trying to say hello, even if only softly. Children who previously tended to just sit without responding when the teacher entered the classroom or during activities are now beginning to show changes in behavior. When the teacher greets them, some students have the courage to respond, even though their voices are still soft and not in unison. There are also those who have started greeting their classmates during group activities, although this is still limited. These changes became apparent after the teacher made it a daily habit to include greetings, interactions, and simple social exchanges. This is seen as progress—an initial step that needs to be continuously practiced."

From the explanation above, it is clear that this approach helps children practice emotional regulation especially those who tend to be quiet or lack self-confidence—by providing repeated opportunities to participate in safe social situations. Teachers use positive reinforcement in the form of specific praise, such as "You were brave enough to greet your friends with a clear voice," to build the children's self-confidence. This activity has been shown to improve the quality of relationships among children, as evidenced by their increased initiative to greet peers without being prompted, showing empathy when a peer appears downcast, and reducing withdrawn behavior during early learning activities. The practice of greeting, saying hello, and smiling is also reinforced during transition activities such as before meals, during playgroup changes, and before leaving school. Teachers actively organize lines, ensuring every child greets the teacher and peers as a sign of respect and to conclude positive social interactions. At this time, teachers conduct direct observations to identify children who are not yet consistent and then provide personalized guidance by modeling the correct behavior again. The school also involves parents through daily communication, asking them to continue the practice of greetings, salutations, and smiling at home so that the habit-forming process continues consistently.

The documentation, consisting of teachers' daily notes and photos of activities, indicates consistency in the implementation of this habit-forming practice both at school and through communication with parents. The teachers' notes state that some children have begun to greet others first upon arrival without being prompted, although there are still 3–4 children who are not yet consistent. Interviews with teachers also corroborate this finding: "The changes are visible, but not all children are the same; some still need guidance." This data indicates that the habit-forming practice is occurring repeatedly and is beginning to be responded to by the children in the form of simple behaviors. Analytically, these findings suggest a trend toward the development of positive social habits within the context of daily interactions; however, ongoing guidance is still required, and it cannot be concluded that the change is uniform across all children.

The image above shows that although there are still 3–4 children who have not yet consistently followed the practice, the majority of the children have been able to consistently follow this routine and demonstrate positive character development, including increased friendliness, the ability to take turns, a willingness to help peers, and the ability to control their emotions when facing minor conflicts.

Thus, this simple routine serves as an effective foundation for fostering positive character traits in children at Taruna Kindergarten in Bima City.

Morning Circle Activities to Foster Children's Self-Awareness

The morning circle activity, as observed in the findings of the study, is conducted as a daily routine with children sitting in a circle. The teacher begins with an emotion identification activity using an emotion board. Field notes indicate that approximately 12 out of 20 children were able to select emotion cards and name simple feelings such as happy or sad, while the rest were still following their peers. The teacher then responds to children showing specific emotions, for example by saying, "It's okay to feel sad today; we'll play together later." This data illustrates the concrete practice of emotion recognition. This activity relates to the emergence of children's initial ability to recognize and name emotions, although not all children can do so independently and consistently yet. Through this step, children are trained to recognize, accept, and manage their emotions gradually. This consistent practice fosters strong early self-awareness and encourages children to enter learning with a more stable emotional state and readiness to participate.

During sharing time, the children were given the opportunity to share simple experiences. Observations revealed that only some of the children were able to form complete sentences, while others still used single words or needed the teacher's help. Interviews with the teachers revealed that:

"Children who were usually quiet are now starting to speak, although they still need some help. Students who previously remained silent when asked questions or during activities are now beginning to answer the teacher's questions, even though they still need guidance. When the teacher asks a question, the children are willing to answer after being given an example or prompted with a simple question. During group discussions, the children are also beginning to express their opinions, although they still speak slowly and often look at their classmates or the teacher to confirm their answers. Teachers usually help by providing a starting word or answer choices to help the children feel more confident speaking. This progress is evident in daily classroom activities."

The results of interviews with teachers at Taruna Kindergarten indicate that this process helps children understand the connection between the events they experience and the emotions that arise. Teachers observe children's body language, tone of voice, and word choices to assess their developing level of self-awareness. The researchers' observations indicate that children are increasingly able to describe their feelings using more appropriate words, reducing the tendency toward tantrums and improving their ability to express their needs directly. This activity demonstrates that the morning circle not only fosters communication but also strengthens children's sense of self and helps them recognize personal values.

Teachers also use the morning circle to foster children's social self-awareness—that is, their ability to understand their role within the group. Teachers guide children to state their goals or expectations for a particular day; these goal statements help children connect their self-awareness with concrete actions they will take. Teachers then follow up by providing specific praise when children are seen acting on the goals they have expressed, so that children understand the connection between intention and behavior. Throughout the activity, teachers maintain the flow by providing clear instructions, such as arranging

seating positions, managing speaking turns, and ensuring every child has an equal opportunity to express themselves. The school also provides supporting materials like daily goal cards, small reflection journals, and commitment boards to reinforce the sustainability of this activity. Teachers also provide scaffolding by repeating or clarifying the children's statements. This data indicates a process of self-expression practice through the teacher's verbal support.

Analytically, these findings indicate that morning circle activities provide a space for children to begin connecting experiences with feelings; however, this development remains gradual and context-dependent, rather than a uniform outcome across all students. The notes reveal that some children were able to recall the objectives during the activity, although not all implemented them consistently. Documentation in the form of daily reflection notes also reveals variations in children's ability to assess their own behavior. Based on the overall data, this activity can be linked to the emergence of social self-awareness and efforts to understand one's own behavior within a group context. However, these findings do not necessarily indicate a causal improvement; rather, they describe developmental trends influenced by repeated learning practices and teacher guidance.

Emotional Regulation Strategies Using a Calming Corner

The Calming Corner at Taruna Kindergarten in Bima City serves as an emotion regulation space, specifically designed to help children control themselves when experiencing emotional distress. According to the researchers' observations, the Calming Corner is set up as a designated area within the classroom equipped with soft mats, pillows, emotion cards, and calming tools. Teachers routinely explain the function of this corner as a place to calm down, not as a punishment. Field notes also indicate that children who are crying or showing signs of frustration are guided to the Calming Corner with teacher supervision, and most are able to sit quietly within a few minutes. During this process, teachers were observed giving simple instructions such as taking a deep breath or holding a sensory object. This data indicates the presence of emotion regulation practices directly facilitated by teachers. Interpretatively, the use of the quiet corner is associated with efforts to help children reduce the intensity of their emotions in specific situations, although children's responses still vary and depend on teacher support.

The activities conducted by teachers at Taruna Kindergarten in Bima City involve implementing more structured emotion regulation strategies by using expression cards and step-by-step guides for calming down in the quiet corner. Teachers encourage children to identify the emotions they are feeling by selecting the appropriate card, such as angry, disappointed, afraid, or anxious. Afterward, teachers assist children in following a simple script containing self-calming steps, including breathing exercises, finger-massage techniques, and squeezing a sensory ball. This strategy not only helps children experience a spontaneous reduction in their emotions but also enables them to understand the process of emotional regulation through concrete actions they can repeat on their own when needed. Teachers document the children's behavior while in the Calm Corner as observational data to track the development of their emotional regulation skills over time. The results of these observations show an improvement in the children's ability to recognize their emotional triggers and choose appropriate calming strategies without needing to wait for instructions from the teacher. Therefore, the Calm Corner serves not only as a place to calm down but also as a structured and ongoing tool for emotional learning.

In addition to being used when a child is experiencing an emotional outburst, the quiet corner is also utilized as a tool for fostering positive character through simple reflection once the child has calmed down. Teachers guide the child to revisit the event that triggered their emotions and then help them formulate a more appropriate response for similar situations in the future. This process is conducted using very concrete language. This step strengthens the child's ability to connect emotions, actions, and consequences, so they better understand how to behave positively. The school also ensures the calm corner is always ready for use by checking the stress-relief tools daily and adding new materials as needed by the children. The presence of the quiet corner significantly contributes to the development of children's positive character, as evidenced by their increased ability to think before reacting, take the initiative to calm themselves without being told, and show empathy toward peers experiencing strong emotions. This strategy creates a more conducive learning environment and supports the development of stable prosocial behavior at Taruna Kindergarten in Bima City.

Fostering Collaboration and Empathy Through Group Work

Teachers at Taruna Kindergarten in Bima City use group work activities as a systematic strategy to foster collaboration and empathy in children. Observations show that group work activities are conducted with diverse group compositions. Teachers assign tasks such as stacking blocks, assembling puzzles, or creating simple posters. Field notes indicate that each group consists of 4–5 children with different roles; however, not all children immediately carry out their roles without guidance. In some cases, teachers were observed demonstrating how to ask for help, as described by one of them in an interview.

"If not guided, children usually fight over supplies. During learning activities that use materials such as scissors, glue, or colored pencils, children tend to grab them immediately without waiting their turn. When the teacher distributes a limited number of supplies, some students rush forward and pull at each other to get them first. This situation often occurs if the teacher does not establish clear rules from the start. To address this, teachers usually guide students by establishing agreements, such as taking turns or sharing with a neighbor. Teachers also provide direct reminders and supervise the use of materials to ensure the activity remains orderly and the children learn discipline."

The data, as explained above, indicate that collaborative practices do not emerge automatically but are facilitated through teacher guidance and intervention. Interpretatively, these activities are associated with the emergence of basic cooperative behavior, although they still require guidance in their implementation. During group work, observations revealed moments when children began helping their peers, such as holding materials or demonstrating how to arrange them. However, the records also indicate that not all children consistently engage in such behavior. Teachers provide reinforcement to emphasize the expected behavior. This data suggests a tendency for empathetic behavior to emerge in specific situations. Analytically, these findings indicate that empathy begins to manifest in simple actions, though it remains influenced by teacher guidance and the context of the ongoing activity.

Teachers also utilize group work to foster empathy directly through role-sharing and mutual support activities. When a child encounters difficulty, the teacher encourages other group members to provide concrete assistance such

as holding tools, demonstrating steps, or helping to tidy up the results of the activity. The teacher then offers specific praise, such as "You helped your friend patiently," so that the child understands the value of empathetic actions. Teachers can guide children to listen to their peers' opinions before making group decisions so they learn to consider others' perspectives. Observations show that children begin to take the initiative to help without waiting for instructions such as offering tools to a struggling peer or comforting a friend who seems frustrated. These activities strengthen their ability to understand others' feelings through tangible actions, not just verbal expressions.

In the final stage, the teacher facilitates reflection by asking the children to name positive behaviors exhibited by their peers. The teacher asks the children to mention specific acts of kindness performed by their groupmates, such as helping to organize materials or waiting patiently for their turn. Through this step, children learn to recognize their peers' positive contributions while developing a sense of appreciation for others. Observations revealed that some children could provide concrete examples, such as "he helped me," while others remained silent or repeated their peers' answers. The teacher also provides feedback during minor conflicts, such as when children argue over roles. Based on the overall data from observations, interviews, and documentation, group work activities can be linked to the development of basic social interaction skills, such as sharing and communicating. These findings do not indicate a definitive cause-and-effect relationship but rather describe a gradual process influenced by the teacher's guidance and classroom group dynamics.

Teaching Responsible Decision-Making Through Project-Based Learning

Teachers at Taruna Kindergarten in Bima City use project-based learning as a strategy to develop children's ability to make responsible decisions. Observations conducted during the learning process indicate that project-based learning is implemented through activities such as creating a classroom garden or making miniatures from recycled materials. Teachers offer several theme options, and children are then asked to make a choice in groups. In practice, teachers continue to provide guidance when children become confused. As stated in interviews with teachers:

"Children can make choices, but sometimes they still need help so they don't just grab things randomly. When the teacher offers choices—such as selecting a book, writing materials, or activity supplies the children are already willing to decide for themselves. Some children still tend to grab things quickly without considering their needs or the rules. For example, a child might take the same color as a friend or take more than one item without permission. In these situations, the teacher usually helps by reminding them of the rules, demonstrating the correct way to choose, and guiding the child to take only what they need. This guidance is provided directly so that children become accustomed to making choices in an orderly and responsible manner."

During the project implementation phase, the teacher consistently guides the children to consider the reasoning behind each decision so that they do not simply make spontaneous choices, but rather base their decisions on rational considerations. The teacher asks about the reasons for their choices using open-ended questions. This interaction helps the children get into the habit of articulating their reasons and taking responsibility for their actions. Throughout the process, teachers also monitor group dynamics and help children solve problems when they encounter difficulties. When the selected materials are insufficient, teachers ask children to find alternatives by

rearranging the use of available materials. This process teaches children not to rely on teachers when making decisions, but rather to assess situations and determine the most appropriate choices. Research results show that children become more confident in making decisions and are able to evaluate their work more objectively.

At the end of the activity, the teacher conducts a structured reflection session to reinforce responsible decision-making skills. The teacher guides the children to review each decision they made during the project and then discuss its impact on the final outcome. Teachers use concrete prompts such as "Name a decision that made your work go faster" or "Identify a choice that helped your group work more efficiently." Through this activity, students learn to observe cause-and-effect relationships directly and internalize the value of responsibility in the decision-making process. Teachers also provide non-material rewards in the form of specific praise to students who demonstrate thoughtful consideration when selecting appropriate materials or completing tasks without needing further guidance. The school also maintains project documentation in the form of photos and portfolios to be used as materials for assessing children's development. Research findings indicate that project-based learning not only enhances motor skills and creativity but also shapes children's mindset to make conscious choices, think critically, and complete tasks with full responsibility, thereby supporting the development of sustainable positive character at Taruna Kindergarten in Bima City.

The implementation of social-emotional learning for children is intended to foster positive character traits. This is considered urgent because young children are at a highly sensitive stage of development and are easily shaped by their daily experiences. Social-emotional learning provides children with the opportunity to recognize emotions, build positive relationships, and develop empathy and responsibility. Through the consistent implementation at Taruna Kindergarten in Bima City, children not only learn academically but also grow into individuals of good character, who are confident and capable of interacting healthily with others. Research findings indicate that the impact of implementing social-emotional learning on the development of positive character in children at Taruna Kindergarten in Bima City is as follows.

Improved Ability of Children to Manage Their Emotions in a Calmer Manner

Research findings indicate that the practice of social-emotional learning at Taruna Kindergarten in Bima City is effective not merely because of the types of activities involved, but because of the consistent, contextual, and repetitive nature of their implementation in daily interactions. Strategies such as the morning circle, the use of a calming corner, and the cultivation of positive interactions reveal a prominent pattern: a cycle of emotional experiences where children recognize emotions, practice appropriate responses, and then reflect on those experiences with the teacher's guidance. This pattern explains why these practices can contribute to emotional regulation because children are not merely given knowledge but also direct opportunities to try and repeat these actions in real-life situations. Compared to previous studies that emphasized the general effectiveness of programs, these findings suggest that success is more determined by the quality of micro-interactions between teachers and children, such as providing scaffolding, verbal reinforcement, and empathetic responses (Sukatin et al., 2020). This aligns with the CASEL framework, which emphasizes a

supportive learning environment, but differs in its emphasis on the local context, where practices are implemented flexibly in response to classroom dynamics rather than based on standardized modules (Jaya et al., 2025). Thus, the success of this strategy can be understood as the result of the integration of the structure of the activities and the teachers' sensitivity to the children's emotional needs.

Taruna Kindergarten in Bima City plays a significant role in shaping the implementation of social-emotional learning. A social environment that still values community spirit and communal interaction allows practices such as group work, shared reflection, and socialization to occur more naturally. This explains why certain behaviors, such as helping one another or greeting others, were observed, even though they were not yet consistent among all children. Compared to previous studies, many of which were conducted in urban settings using a programmatic approach, these findings suggest that a habit-based approach within a local context can serve as a relevant alternative (Idhayani et al., 2023). This study also identified a key finding: children's skill development does not proceed uniformly and is highly dependent on the intensity of teacher support. This reinforces the view that emotional regulation in early childhood is situational and develops through repeated social interactions, rather than as a result of a single intervention (Endedijk et al., 2018). Thus, the main contribution of this study lies in explaining how simple practices carried out consistently in a local context are able to form meaningful emotional learning experiences for children.

The Development of Empathy and Concern for Friends

The findings on the emergence of empathy and concern in TK Taruna Kota Bima can be understood through patterns of social experience that are repeated and mediated by direct interaction between children. Observational Data suggest that behaviors such as helping a friend or responding to emotions appear in the context of shared activities, especially group work and time sharing. A prominent pattern is the presence of repeated exposure to social situations that demand a response that is then reinforced by teacher feedback. This explains that the strategies used can contribute to the development of empathy because the child not only observes, but also engages in social practice directly. When compared to Hoffman's theory, these findings are in line with the importance of concrete experiences in building empathy, but this study shows that the emergence of empathic behavior is not entirely spontaneous, but often comes after an example or reinforcement from the teacher (Syarifuddin et al., 2025). Therefore, the success of the strategy is more correctly understood as the result of the interaction between the child's social experience and the facilitative role of the teacher. Compared to previous studies that emphasized structured programs, these findings highlight that consistent simple practices in the classroom context can facilitate gradual, albeit uneven, development of empathy across children (Irbathy et al., 2025).

Judging from the social context, Taruna Kota Bima kindergarten makes an important contribution in strengthening the practice of empathy through the value of togetherness that already exists in the children's environment. Intense interaction between children in daily activities creates a natural opportunity to recognize and respond to the emotions of friends. The Data showed that children began to show concern in certain situations such as taking a friend to play or helping tidy up tools, but the frequency and quality of responses still varied. This suggests that empathy develops as a situational process influenced by context and mentoring (Khadijah, 2024).

These findings are in line with Eisenberg's view that empathy develops through involvement in prosocial experiences, but differ in terms of the degree of consistency because the study found that children's responses are highly dependent on classroom conditions and teacher intervention (Boeriswati, 2024). Compared to Atkinson's study, which emphasizes the improvement of cooperative behavior in general, this result is more indicative of the process of forming such behavior in specific situations (Budiarti, 2023). Thus, the contribution of this research lies in elucidating how local contexts and repetitive learning practices shape the opportunities for the emergence of empathy, not as an immediately formed result, but as a gradually developing tendency.

Fostering a Sense of Responsibility in Completing Daily Tasks

From the results of research on the development of the attitude of responsibility in kindergarten Taruna Kota Bima can be understood through the pattern of integration between self-regulation, task structure, and reflection that is done repeatedly. Observation Data show that children engage in activities that have a clear flow, prepare tools, complete tasks, and tidy up again with teacher assistance at an early stage. A prominent pattern is the existence of guided practice which gradually shifts to more independent participation. Field records show some children started setting up tools without being reminded, but others were still waiting for directions. This suggests that responsibility does not arise instantly, but develops through habituation in the context of real tasks. When compared with the CASEL framework, these findings are in line with aspects of self-management, especially in the ability to regulate behavior to achieve simple goals (Boeriswati, 2024). Unlike the Clarke study, which emphasizes consistency results, this study shows that consistency still varies and depends heavily on the structure of activities and teacher reinforcement (Afandi, 2023). Analytically, this strategy works not because of the complexity of the method, but because of the clarity of the flow of tasks, their repetition, and the active involvement of the child in each stage of the activity.

In other contexts, responsibility develops in concrete social situations, not merely as a normative instruction. Children learn to understand simple consequences, such as unfinished tasks or unmade tools, through hands-on experience in the classroom. Observations show that some children begin to return to completing tasks after being reminded, while others still need intensive accompaniment. This suggests that the development of responsibility is gradual and situational. When compared to Lickona's theory, these findings are in line in terms of the importance of real experiences in shaping character, but the study highlights that internalization of values has not been completely stable in all children (Amelia et al., 2023). Compared to previous studies that emphasized the end result of independence, this study shows the process of how responsibility begins to form through interaction, reflection, and repetition. The contribution of this study lies in explaining that routine practices structured in a local context can open up opportunities for the development of responsibility, although they still require ongoing assistance (Armadi et al., 2024).

The Development of Positive Behavioral Habits Through Reinforcement and Appreciation

Based on the results of research on the emergence of good behavior habits through strengthening appreciation in TK Taruna Kota Bima can be explained through a consistent pattern of interaction between child behavior,

teacher response, and repetition in a real context. The results of the observations show that appreciation is given specifically and directly after the behavior appears, for example, when the child helps a friend or tidies up the tools. The most prominent pattern is a clear association between action and feedback, so that the child can recognize which behavior is expected. The field notes also showed that not all children immediately repeated the behavior without further reinforcement. This shows that the success of this strategy lies not only in the provision of rewards, but in the consistency and context of the provision. These findings are in line with Skinner's operant conditioning theory which emphasizes the role of reinforcement in forming habits, but this study shows that effective reinforcement is contextual and accompanied by social interaction, not merely stimulus-response. Compared with the Sabatino study which emphasizes the increase in intrinsic motivation (Sabatino et al., 2024), the results of this study indicate that the motivation is still developing gradually and is influenced by the intensity of reinforcement from the teacher. This strategy can be understood as successful because it provides a direct experience that links the behavior with meaningful social consequences for the child (Hamzah, 2015).

In the practice of reflection after giving appreciation is an important factor that distinguishes this finding from several previous studies. The Data showed that teachers not only gave praise, but also invited children to discuss the reasons behind the behavior. For example, the child is asked why help a friend and how he feels after that. This pattern indicates a shift from external reinforcement to internal understanding, although it has not occurred equally in all children. This is in line with the views of Durlak and Weissberg on the importance of value internalization in socio-emotional learning, but this study shows that the process is highly dependent on the quality of dialogue between teachers and children (Permatasari et al., 2020; Purwati et al., 2023). In the context of Cadet kindergarten, an environment that favors intensive interaction allows reflections to be carried out naturally in daily activities. Compared to Arifin's research that emphasizes the effectiveness of appreciation-reflection, this finding shows that the results are still contextual and develop gradually (Arifin et al., 2025). Thus, the main contribution of this study lies in explaining that the combination of direct reinforcement and simple reflection can open up opportunities for the formation of good behavioral habits, although it requires consistency and continuous accompaniment.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the implementation of social-emotional learning at Taruna Kindergarten in Bima City demonstrates consistent and integrated practices within daily activities that contribute to the emergence of various positive social-emotional behaviors in children. The key finding is that strategies such as greeting routines, morning circles, calming corners, group work, projects, and reinforcement of appreciation are effective because they are implemented repeatedly, contextually, and accompanied by direct interaction between teachers and children. Theoretically, this finding reinforces the view that social-emotional learning develops through real-life experiences and a supportive environment, rather than merely through formal instruction. The contribution of this research lies in

explaining how simple practices integrated into routines can facilitate children's social-emotional development within the local context of early childhood education. Practically, these results imply for teachers and schools that the success of social-emotional learning does not depend on complex programs, but on consistency, the quality of interactions, and continuous reflection carried out in daily classroom activities.

This study has several limitations, including a sample scope limited to a single institution, a relatively short observation period, and a reliance on contextual qualitative data, which precludes broad generalizations. Furthermore, variations in children's development

indicate that the impact of learning is not uniform and is heavily influenced by teacher guidance and the individual child's circumstances. Therefore, further research is recommended to involve more institutions, employ a longitudinal approach, and combine quantitative methods to strengthen the validity of the findings. Practical implications for researchers and practitioners include the importance of designing social-emotional learning models that are adaptable to local contexts and strengthening collaboration between teachers and parents. Thus, social-emotional learning can continue to be developed as a relevant approach for the sustainable character development of young children.

References

- Afandi, I. (2023). Metode Mengembangkan Spiritual Quotient (Kecerdasan Spiritual) Anak Usia Dini. *Al-Ibrah : Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Keilmuan Islam*, 8(1), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.61815/alibrah.v8i1.216>
- Ardila, N., Ruslan, R., & Kusumawati, Y. (2024). Pembelajaran Konstruktivisme Dalam Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila Pada Mata Pelajaran IPAS SDN 28 Melayu Kota Bima. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran Indonesia (JPPI)*, 4(2), 422–433. <https://doi.org/10.53299/jppi.v4i2.501>
- Asfiati, Muslim, & Ramadhan, S. (2025). Strategi Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila Berbasis Budaya Lokal Bima pada Anak Usia Dini. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran Indonesia (JPPI)*, 5(2), 790–804. <https://doi.org/10.53299/jppi.v5i2.1445>
- Boeriswati, E. (2024). *Sosial Emosi Dalam Pembelajaran*. CV. Adanu Abimata.
- Budiarti, E. (2023). *Asesmen Pendidikan Karakter Anak*. Perkumpulan Rumah Cemerlang Indonesia.
- Cahyati, C., & Ahmadi, S. R. (2024). Creativity Of Driving Teachers in Developing Students' Social-Emotional Competence (SEC) On An Independent Learning Curriculum. *Jurnal WANIAMBAY: Journal of Islamic Education*, 5(2), 255–271.
- Hamzah, N. (2015). *Pengembangan Sosial Anak Usia Dini*. IAIN Pontianak Press.
- Helaluddin. (2015). *Analisis Data Kualitatif dan Kuantitatif: Sebuah Tinjauan Teori dan Praktik*.
- Hermansyah, Putri, N., Febriyanti, P., Elyani, N., Sarfian, S., & A. (2024). Strengthening Students' Social-Emotional Competence Through IPS Learning In Primary School. *Jurnal Waniambey: Journal of Islamic Education*, 5(2), 346–360.
- Hidayat, M., Suyanto, B., Sugihartati, R., Sirry, M., & Srimulyo, K. (2024). Sociomental of Intolerance: Explaining the Socio-Cognitive Dimensions of Religious Intolerance Among Indonesian Youths. *J-PAI: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 12(4), 2215–2236. <https://consensus.app/papers/sociomental-of-intolerance-explaining-the-hidayat-suyanto/535ed1a271d95647bfe3c1a6db35e0e9/>
- Isya, D., Kusumawati, Y., & Bima, U. M. (2024). The Application Of The Values Of The Profil Pelajar Pancasila Is Concept Of Kurikulum Merdeka. *El-Muhbib: Jurnal Pemikiran & Penelitian Pendidikan Dasar*, 8(2), 328–338. <https://doi.org/10.52266/el-muhbib.v8i2.3844>
- Khadijah. (2024). *Urgensi Pengembangan Sosial Emosional Bagi Anak Usia Dini*. CV Merdeka Kreasi Group.
- Luthfiyah, M. F. (2017). Metodologi Penelitian: Penelitian Kualitatif, Tindakan Kelas dan R&D. *Metologi Penelitian*, 2(November), 26.
- Mandasari, D., Salam, A., Ramadhan, S., & Dohny, Q. (2025). Implementation of Differentiated Learning at Early Childhood Level at M Hilir Ismail Kindergarten, Bima City. *Hadlonah: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pengasuhan Anak*, 6(1), 41–57. <https://doi.org/10.47453/hadlonah.v6i1.3147>
- Mashar, R. (2015). *Emosi Anak Usia Dini dan Strategi Pengembangannya*. KENCANA.
- Muthoharoh, M. (2022). The Role Of Religious Education Teachers In Shaping The Profile Of Pancasila Students. *AT-TA'DIB: Jurnal Ilmiah Prodi Pendidikan Agama Islam*. <https://doi.org/10.47498/tadib.v14i1.987>
- Nurhidaya, & Syahrul Ramadhan, N. (2025). Penanaman Nilai Kecerdasan Emosional Siswa Melalui Model Pembelajaran Kooperatif Tipe Achievement Division Pada Kelas VI MIN Kota Bima. *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar*, 10(2), 212–222.
- Permatasari, T., Hapidin, H., & Karnadi, K. (2020). Pengaruh Permainan Kooperatif dan Kecerdasan Interpersonal terhadap Regulasi Emosi Anak. *Indonesian Journal of Educational Counseling*, 4(1), 31–40. <https://doi.org/10.30653/001.202041.120>
- Purwati, N. N. M., Ardini, P. P., & Juniarti, Y. (2023). Pengaruh Plasticine Art Therapy Terhadap Kemampuan Regulasi Emosi Anak Usia 5-6 Tahun. *Student Journal of Early Childhood Education*, 3(2), 59–72. <https://doi.org/10.37411/sjece.v3i2.2533>
- Rahmani, S. S., Ramadhan, S., Rahmani, S. S., & Ramadhan, S. (2025). Implementasi Nilai-Nilai Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila (P5) di TK M. Hilir Ismail Kota Bima. *AL-AFKAR: Journal for Islamic Studies*, 8(2), 187–204. <https://doi.org/10.31943/afkarjournal.v8i2.2196>
- Ramadhan, S., Ihlhas, H., Muslim, Y. K., Uliah, R., & Ahmad, F. (2024). *Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran Dalam Kurikulum Merdeka di Sekolah Dasar*. K-Media.
- Ramadhan, Mt. (2017). *Metode Penelitian*. Cipta Media Nusantara.
- Retno Utami, N. (2019). Pengembangan Instrumen Kecerdasan Emosional Usia 5-6 Tahun. *Jurnal Pelita PAUD*, 4(1), 124–138. <https://doi.org/10.33222/pelitapaud.v4i1.839>
- Sawong, K. S. A., Andrias, D. R., Muniroh, L., Reddy, C., Purnawita, W., Rahayu, W. P., Nurjanah, S., & RI, K. (2019). Pelatihan Regulasi Emosi Anak Usia Prasekolah (3-4 Tahun) Christopora. *Psikologi AUD*, 53(9), 167–169.
- Sidiq, U., & Choiri, M. (2018). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif Di Bidang Pendidikan*. Nata Karya.
- Sugiono. (2020). *Metodologi Penelitian Pendidikan*. Alfabeta.
- Sukatin, S., Choffah, N., Turiyana, T., Paradise, M. R., Azkia, M., & Ummah, S. N. (2020). Analisis Perkembangan Emosi Anak Usia Dini. *Golden Age: Jurnal Ilmiah Tumbuh Kembang Anak Usia Dini*, 5(2), 77–90. <https://doi.org/10.14421/jga.2020.52-05>
- Susanti, A., Darmansyah, A., Tyas, D. N., Hidayat, R., Syahputri, D. O., Wulandari, S., & Rahmasari, A. (2023). The Implementation of Project for Strengthening the Profile of Pancasila Students in the Independent Curriculum for Elementary School Students. *IJECA (International Journal of Education and Curriculum Application)*. <https://doi.org/10.31764/ijeca.v6i2.15474>
- Syarifuddin, U., Fuaduddin, S. R., Abdussahid, I. M., Hermansyah, A. I., Kusumawati, Y., Farhin, N., & Haris, A. (2025). *Deep Learning dan Deep Teaching (Teori dan Praktik Pembelajaran Abad 21)*. CV. Global Aksara Pers.
- Wuri, D. A., & Nurhidayah, S. (2023). Pelatihan Regulasi Emosi Untuk Menurunkan Perilaku Agresivitas Pada Anak. *An-Nizam*, 2(2), 167–173. <https://doi.org/10.33558/an-nizam.v2i2.6261>