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Teachers' Strategies for Developing Young Children's Social-Emotional Skills: A Qualitative Study at TKIT Ash Shiddiqiyah Berjan

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the strategies used by teachers to support young children's social-emotional skills at TKIT Ash Shiddiqiyah Berjan. The study employed a descriptive qualitative research approach involving two teachers and 24 Kindergarten B children aged approximately 5–6 years. Data were collected from November 20 to 25, 2023 through observations of children's learning activities and interviews with the two teachers responsible for the observed class. The researcher served as the primary research instrument, supported by observation and interview guidelines. Data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis, while data validity was examined through technique triangulation by comparing observation and interview findings. The results identified four main strategies used by teachers: role playing, habituation, songs, and classroom seating arrangements. Role playing provided opportunities for children to interact and communicate through contextual activities, such as acting as sellers and buyers in a market-themed activity. Habituation was implemented through queuing, hadith memorization, the use of "sorry," "please," and "thank you," and cooperative activities. Songs, particularly the Javanese song Sugeng Enjing, were used to introduce social, emotional, and cultural values, while rotating seating arrangements provided opportunities for children to interact with different peers. The study contributes an overview of how simple and culturally relevant practices can be integrated with religious and social values in an Islamic early childhood education setting. The findings imply that teachers can embed social-emotional learning within play, daily routines, songs, and classroom management rather than treating it as a separate learning activity. Further research involving multiple institutions and quantitative or mixed-method approaches is needed to examine these practices more broadly.

Keywords: teacher strategies; social-emotional skills; early childhood education; early childhood teachers.

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Introduction

Early childhood refers to a period in which children demonstrate unique characteristics of growth and development, including physical, cognitive, social-emotional, creative, language, and communication development according to their developmental stages (Augusta, 2012). This period is often referred to as the “golden age” because children’s various potentials are particularly sensitive to optimal growth and development. Patmonodewo (2003) explains that preschool children are generally between three and six years of age, with children aged four to six years commonly participating in kindergarten education in Indonesia. Kindergarten education is directed toward developing children’s potential according to their developmental stages through learning activities based on play. At this stage, the educational environment becomes an important space for children to expand their social experiences because they begin to interact not only with family members but also with teachers and peers.

One of the important aspects that needs to be developed during this period is social-emotional development. Social-emotional development is closely related to children’s ability to establish relationships with others while recognizing and managing their own emotions. Suyadi (2010: 108–109) explains that social and emotional development are two aspects that cannot be separated because both are integrated within children’s psychological development. Similarly, Morrison (2012: 221) states that positive social-emotional development enables children to interact more effectively with peers, learn more successfully, and participate in various activities within their social environment. When children enter early childhood education, they experience a transition from the emotionally secure environment of the family to a broader social environment. Therefore, children need to learn how to position themselves in relationships with peers, teachers, and other adults.

Social development in early childhood is a learning process through which children adjust themselves to the norms, morals, and traditions prevailing within a social group (Yusuf in Yahro, 2009). Piaget indicates that young children tend to demonstrate a high level of egocentrism because they have not fully developed the ability to understand other people’s perspectives (Suyanto, 2005). This condition indicates that social competence does not depend solely on children’s maturation but also develops through experiences and learning opportunities provided by their environment. Children’s social development initially develops through interactions with parents and family members and subsequently expands into the surrounding environment and school. Thus, kindergarten education has a strategic position in providing social experiences that are appropriate to children’s needs and developmental stages.

In early childhood education practices, social-emotional development needs to be facilitated through approaches that are appropriate to children’s characteristics and needs. Inappropriate approaches, including humiliating or insulting children under the justification of discipline, may instead create negative experiences for children’s emotional development. Conversely, a positive environment, supportive attention and body language, encouraging words, and expectations that correspond to children’s abilities and developmental stages can contribute to the development of positive self-esteem. This indicates that teachers do not merely function as providers of learning experiences but also serve as behavioral models and facilitators who provide children with meaningful social-emotional experiences.

Play is one of the important experiences for supporting children's social-emotional development. Through play, children have opportunities to interact, cooperate, understand their peers' feelings, and learn to adjust to rules. In contrast, learning activities that are overly dominated by teachers may limit children's opportunities to develop their social-emotional abilities. Therefore, the selection of appropriate teaching methods is an important component in creating learning experiences that support children's social-emotional development. The methods used by teachers need to provide children with opportunities to interact actively, express their feelings, understand others, and develop positive social behaviors.

Previous studies have demonstrated the importance of developing young children's social-emotional skills through various approaches. Tatminingsih (2019) examined young children's social-emotional abilities, while Muthmainah (2022) highlighted the role of teachers in helping children manage their emotions. Musyarofah (2017) examined the development of children's social aspects, whereas Nurjannah (2017) emphasized the importance of role modeling in developing children's social-emotional intelligence. In addition, Nurmalitasari (2015) and Yenti (2021) provided perspectives on children's social-emotional development through developmental and literature-based approaches. Although these studies provide important foundations for understanding social-emotional development and the role of educational environments, most of them focus on particular aspects or approaches separately. There remains limited research that specifically describes how role playing, habituation, songs, and classroom arrangement are integrated as everyday practices for developing children's social-emotional skills, particularly within Islamic early childhood education settings. This is important because children's social-emotional development occurs not only through structured learning activities but also through habituation, peer interaction, cultural expression, and classroom environmental arrangements. Therefore, this study seeks to describe how teachers integrate these practices into everyday learning at TKIT Ash Shiddiqiyah Berjan as an Islamic early childhood education setting.

At the age of four to six years, social development begins to become evident through children's ability to participate in group activities and engage in cooperative play with peers (Rahman, 2002). Children gradually learn to recognize rules, follow regulations, become aware of other people's interests, and play with peers. Play activities also provide opportunities for children to understand the feelings and perspectives of others. Interactions and conflicts that emerge during play can become valuable experiences through which children learn that other people may have different desires and perspectives. Kostelnik, Soderman, and Waren (in Yahro, 2009) categorize social development into social competence and social responsibility. Social competence refers to children's ability to adapt effectively to their social environment, such as taking turns with peers, whereas social responsibility refers to their ability to fulfill tasks, respect differences, pay attention to their environment, and perform their social roles. Children's social-emotional development is also strongly influenced by the quality of environmental responses. Optimal social development requires healthy social responses and opportunities for children to develop a positive self-concept. From the perspective of Carl Rogers, childhood experiences and evaluations from others are factors that influence children's self-development. Children need positive regard from others as well as self-respect.

Children with positive self-esteem tend to be more capable of dealing with problems, accepting failure and sadness, and being open to others. In contrast, low self-esteem may be associated with tendencies to avoid problems, become defensive, and withdraw from others. Therefore, families and educational institutions have an important role in creating experiences that enable children to feel valued, heard, and accepted.

The novelty of this study does not lie in the use of role playing, habituation, songs, or classroom arrangement as individual teaching practices, as each of these practices has been widely recognized in early childhood education. Rather, the contribution of this study lies in describing their integration as a set of simple, culturally relevant, and interconnected practices within the everyday learning environment of an Islamic kindergarten. These practices are viewed not as separate instructional techniques but as complementary components that provide children with opportunities to interact with peers, follow social routines, express and regulate emotions, cooperate with others, and participate in a socially supportive classroom environment. By examining this pattern of integration in TKIT Ash Shiddiqiyah Berjan, this study offers a contextual perspective on social-emotional development in Islamic early childhood education and highlights how everyday classroom practices can function collectively as an ecosystem for supporting children's social-emotional experiences.

TKIT Ash Shiddiqiyah Berjan is a preschool education institution located in Gintungan Village, Gebang District, Purworejo Regency. The institution provides educational services for young children before they enter primary education. This context is important to examine because children's social-emotional development does not occur naturally but is also influenced by their learning experiences and the teaching methods implemented by teachers in the school environment. Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the strategies used by teachers at TKIT Ash Shiddiqiyah Berjan to develop children's social-emotional skills according to their developmental stages. This study is expected to provide an overview of teachers' instructional practices in supporting early childhood social-emotional development and contribute to the development of early childhood education practices that are more responsive to children's developmental characteristics.

Methods

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research approach. This approach was selected because the study focused on gaining an in-depth understanding of the methods used by teachers to develop young children's social-emotional abilities based on learning conditions and activities occurring naturally within the school environment. The research data consisted of words obtained through interviews as well as observable behaviors and activities during the learning process.

The study was conducted at TKIT Ash Shiddiqiyah Berjan, Gintungan Village, Gebang District, Purworejo Regency, Indonesia, for six days, from November 20 to 25, 2023. The research site was selected based on the researchers' interest in examining teachers' practices in developing children's social-emotional abilities within an early childhood education setting.

Research Subjects and Researcher's Role

The research subjects consisted of 2 teachers and 24 children in Kindergarten B at TKIT Ash Shiddiqiyah Berjan. The children were approximately 5–6 years old. The two teachers were selected as research informants because they were the teachers responsible for the observed Kindergarten B class. The teachers served as the primary sources of information regarding the methods used to develop children's social-emotional skills, while the 24 children were observed during the learning process and the implementation of these methods.

In this qualitative study, the researcher served as the main research instrument. The researcher was directly involved in data collection through observation and interviews. The researcher's presence was necessary to obtain information about learning activities and to understand the implementation of teaching methods for developing children's social-emotional abilities within the natural context of the school environment.

Data Collection Techniques and Instruments

Data were collected through observation and interviews during the six-day research period from November 20 to 25, 2023. Observations were conducted during the learning process to examine the activities and observable behaviors of the 24 children in Kindergarten B, particularly those related to social-emotional development and their responses to the methods implemented by the teachers. Interviews were conducted with the two teachers responsible for the observed Kindergarten B class to obtain information about the methods they used to develop children's social-emotional skills. The researcher served as the primary research instrument, while observation and interview guidelines were used as supporting instruments to ensure that the data collected remained aligned with the research focus.

The researcher served as the primary instrument in the study. Observation and interview guidelines were used as supporting instruments to ensure that the data collected remained aligned with the research focus. No specialized tools or materials were used in the study; therefore, no specific technical specifications of equipment or materials were required.

Data Analysis Technique

The data obtained from observations and interviews were analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis. Observation data were used to describe children's activities and behaviors during the learning process, while interview data were used to identify the methods implemented by teachers to develop children's social-emotional abilities. Data obtained from both techniques were subsequently examined, compared, and presented descriptively according to the research focus, namely the methods used by teachers to develop young children's social-emotional abilities.

Data Validity

Data validity was ensured through technique triangulation by comparing data obtained from observations and interviews. Observation data regarding children's social-emotional behaviors and the methods implemented by teachers were compared with information obtained through interviews with the two teachers. The researcher also conducted repeated observations during the learning process to confirm the consistency of the observed findings. This process was used to ensure that the findings represented the conditions observed in the research setting.

Result

Based on observations and interviews conducted at TKIT Ash Shiddiqiyah Berjan, the study found that teachers used four main methods to develop young children's social-emotional abilities: role playing, habituation, songs, and classroom seating arrangements. These methods were implemented through learning activities and daily routines to provide children with opportunities to interact, cooperate, manage emotions, understand others' feelings, and develop positive social behaviors. This finding was also reflected in the interview with one of the teachers, Ibu Damayanti, who explained that the use of role playing, habituation, songs, and classroom seating arrangements was considered useful in supporting children's social-emotional development. This information was consistent with the observed implementation of these practices in the children's daily learning activities. The findings regarding the implementation of these four methods are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Teachers' Methods for Developing Children's Social-Emotional Abilities.

No.	Method	Implementation	Social-Emotional Abilities Developed
1	Role playing	Children played the roles of sellers and buyers in a market-themed activity	Interaction, communication, cooperation, emotional expression, and understanding others' roles
2	Habituation	Queuing, hadith memorization, three "magic words," and cooperative activities	Patience, respect for others, emotional regulation, politeness, cooperation, and prosocial behavior
3	Songs	Sugeng Enjing, containing cultural etiquette and the expressions "sorry," "please," and "thank you"	Emotional expression, politeness, respect for others, and social-cultural values
4	Seating arrangement	Rotating seating arrangements	Interaction with peers, cooperation, acceptance of others, and reducing friendship selectivity

1. Role-Playing as a Contextual Social Experience

Observation findings showed that role playing was used by teachers to actively involve children in the learning process. One implementation occurred during a market-themed activity in which children were given opportunities to play the roles of sellers and buyers. Children who acted as sellers actively offered the items they had to their peers, while children who acted as buyers selected items and interacted with the sellers during the activity (Smits-van der Nat et al. 2024).

This activity provided children with opportunities to engage in direct social interaction through situations resembling everyday life. Children learned to communicate, express opinions or feelings, understand other people's roles, and interact with peers. Thus, role playing served as a method through which teachers provided active and enjoyable social-emotional learning experiences.

2. Habituation as Everyday Social-Emotional Practice

The habituation method was implemented through various routines conducted repeatedly in daily activities. Based on observations and interviews, four main forms of habituation were identified at TKIT Ash Shiddiqiyah.

2.1. Queuing Culture

Children were habituated to queue during various activities, such as washing their hands before and after meals, attending Qur'anic learning activities, and receiving stars from teachers. This habituation provided opportunities for children to learn to wait for their turn, exercise patience, and respect others who were already waiting in line.

2.2. Hadith Memorization

Habituation was also implemented through memorizing short surahs, hadiths, and daily prayers. Several of the hadiths contained social-emotional values, including brotherhood among Muslims, smiling as an act of charity, the virtue of giving gifts, the prohibition of anger, and the prohibition of spreading conflict or harmful rumors.

Teachers did not merely ask children to memorize the hadiths but also explained their meanings using simple language appropriate to the children's level of understanding. Thus, memorization activities were directed not only toward recall but also toward understanding and applying social-emotional values in everyday life.

2.3. Three "Magic Words"

Another form of habituation involved the use of three "magic words": "sorry," "please," and "thank you." Children were habituated to apologize when they made mistakes, say "please" when requesting help, and say "thank you" when receiving assistance or something from others. This habituation was used by teachers to foster polite behavior and help children develop positive interactions with others.

2.4. Cooperative Activities

Children were also habituated to carrying out various activities together. For example, they arranged and folded the carpet together after Qur'anic learning activities, arranged their seats before lessons, and tidied eating utensils, learning materials, and toys after use. These activities provided children with experiences in cooperation, responsibility toward their environment, and completing activities together with peers.

3. Songs as Cultural and Emotional Learning Media

Songs were used to introduce and practice social-emotional values through classroom activities. One of the songs used was Sugeng Enjing, which contains cultural etiquette and the expressions "sorry," "please," and "thank you."

The song was not merely used as a singing activity but was also intended to encourage children to apply the values contained in it in their daily lives, both at school and outside school. The use of songs provided a means of connecting children's emotional development with the social and cultural values practiced in their environment (Gaudette-Leblanc et al. 2021).

4. Classroom Arrangement as a Peer-Interaction Strategy

The classroom seating method was implemented through a rotating seating system. The findings indicated that some children tended to choose particular friends when playing. Therefore, teachers used rotating seating arrangements to provide children with opportunities to become acquainted and interact with different peers.

The rotation system was implemented through agreements with the children so that the seating changes could take place appropriately. This method provided opportunities for children to broaden their social interactions, learn to cooperate with different peers, and reduce the tendency to choose particular friends during play.

5. Summary of Findings

The four methods demonstrated different forms of implementation but shared interconnected objectives in supporting children's social-emotional development. A summary of the research findings is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of Social-Emotional Development Findings.

Method	Main Activity	Abilities Developed
Role playing	Sellers and buyers in a market-themed activity	Communication, interaction, cooperation, and understanding roles
Habituation	Queuing, hadith memorization, three "magic words," and cooperative activities	Patience, politeness, emotional regulation, and prosocial behavior
Songs	Sugeng Enjing	Cultural etiquette, emotional expression, and social-cultural values
Seating arrangement	Rotating seating system	Interaction, cooperation, and acceptance of peers

Overall, the findings indicate that social-emotional development at TKIT Ash Shiddiqiyah was supported through the integration of learning activities and daily habituation. Teachers did not merely provide verbal advice but also gave children opportunities to experience, practice, and repeatedly demonstrate social-emotional behaviors through role playing, habituation, songs, and the management of peer interaction.

Discussion

The findings indicate that the development of children's social-emotional abilities at TKIT Ash Shiddiqiyah Berjan was supported through four main methods: role playing, habituation, songs, and classroom seating arrangements. These methods were not implemented merely through verbal instruction but through direct experiences, repeated behaviors, enjoyable activities, and the management of peer interaction. This pattern is consistent with the characteristics of young children, who learn through concrete experiences, observation, imitation, and interaction with their environment. Thus, the methods used by teachers can be understood as strategies for transforming abstract social-emotional values into behaviors that children can experience and practice directly.

1. Role Playing as a Contextual Social Experience

The findings show that role playing was implemented through a market-themed activity in which children acted as sellers and buyers. The activity actively involved children in communication and interaction with their peers. Rather than simply receiving explanations about appropriate social behavior, children directly practiced social behaviors through situations resembling everyday life.

This finding is consistent with Piaget's view of play as an activity through which children gain enjoyment while developing various abilities, including social-emotional abilities (Fadilah, 2012). In the present study, role playing provided children with opportunities to communicate, express opinions, understand others' roles, and adjust their behavior to social situations. The children's active participation as sellers and buyers suggests that direct involvement can provide meaningful opportunities for practicing social-emotional behaviors.

The finding can also be understood from Vygotsky's (1978) perspective, which places play as an important component of children's development. Through play, children have opportunities to make decisions, regulate emotions and impulses, consider other people's perspectives, and negotiate differences of opinion. Therefore, role playing at TKIT Ash Shiddiqiyah functioned not only as a thematic learning method but also as a form of social simulation through which children practiced social roles and developed peer relationships. The implication of this finding is that early childhood teachers can use role playing as a social-emotional learning strategy by selecting themes that are close to children's everyday experiences, such as markets, families, schools, and their surrounding environment. In this way, social-emotional values are not limited to conceptual understanding but can be practiced through concrete experiences.

2. Habituation as Reinforcement of Social-Emotional Behaviors

In addition to role playing, the findings show that teachers implemented habituation through queuing, hadith memorization, the use of three "magic words," and cooperative activities. Unlike role playing, which provides experience through simulation, habituation gives children opportunities to repeatedly practice social-emotional behaviors within daily routines. This indicates that social-emotional development at TKIT Ash Shiddiqiyah was integrated into everyday activities rather than being limited to specific learning sessions (Khairiah, 2018).

This finding is consistent with Funk and Ho (2018), who suggest that emotional skills can be incorporated into daily classroom schedules and routines. In the present study, queuing provided children with opportunities to practice waiting for their turn, exercising patience, and respecting others. Similarly, cooperative activities provided concrete experiences of working together and taking responsibility for a shared environment.

The finding further supports Thorndike's behaviorist perspective, particularly the law of exercise, which suggests that behaviors become stronger and more mastered when they are repeatedly practiced and exercised (Rahyubi, 2004). Similarly, Ulwan (2013) identifies habituation and practice as methods of character education, while Attaran (2015) emphasizes that emotional regulation skills are developed not only through understanding but also through habituation.

Thus, the findings indicate that the strength of habituation lies in the consistency of its implementation. Rather than merely being told to be patient, polite, or cooperative, children were repeatedly given opportunities to practice these behaviors in real situations. An important implication is that social-emotional development requires a consistent school culture. Teachers need to ensure that values introduced during learning activities are also reflected in classroom routines, rules, and daily interactions.

3. Integration of Religious Values into Social-Emotional Development

One distinctive characteristic of habituation at TKIT Ash Shiddiqiyah was the use of hadith memorization as part of social-emotional development. Hadiths concerning brotherhood, smiling, giving gifts, controlling anger, and avoiding harmful speech were not merely memorized but were also explained by teachers using simple language appropriate to the children's level of understanding.

This finding indicates that social-emotional development in the institution is closely connected to religious values. Values such as brotherhood, kindness, anger regulation, and maintaining positive relationships with others were translated into messages that children could understand and practice. Therefore, social-emotional education was not implemented separately from the institution's religious orientation but was integrated with values that were meaningful within the children's educational environment.

This finding implies that social-emotional education in Islamic early childhood institutions can integrate children's social experiences with religious values that are relevant to their daily lives. However, the findings also emphasize the importance of teachers' delivery. Memorization becomes more meaningful when teachers do not stop at recalling the text but also explain its meaning and connect it to children's everyday behavior.

4. Songs as a Medium for Strengthening Social and Cultural Values

Songs were used through Sugeng Enjing, a Javanese-language song containing expressions of politeness and the three "magic words": "sorry," "please," and "thank you." The lyrics include expressions such as *matur dalem* when being called, *maturnuwun* when receiving something, *nderek langkung* when passing someone, and *nyuwun pangapunten* when making a mistake. The findings indicate that the song was not merely used as entertainment but also as a medium for introducing social and cultural values through an activity that was familiar and easy for children to remember.

This finding can be understood through the perspective of Greenspan, Fischer, and Saarni, who describe children's emotional development as involving the ability to regulate and coordinate emotions, reflect on their own and others' feelings, and connect emotions with social and cultural values. In the present study, Sugeng Enjing provided a context for connecting verbal expressions of politeness with social and cultural practices familiar to children. The use of Javanese expressions allowed social-emotional values such as politeness, gratitude, asking permission, and apologizing to be introduced through language that was connected to the children's cultural environment.

The use of songs also demonstrates that social-emotional learning can be incorporated into simple media that are appropriate to young children's characteristics. Repeated expressions of social values through songs provide children with opportunities to encounter and recall these values in a familiar form. Therefore, songs can function as a supporting medium that connects social-emotional learning with local culture and social etiquette. The contribution of this practice lies not in the use of songs as a new teaching method, but in the integration of a culturally familiar Javanese song into children's everyday social-emotional learning experiences.

5. Seating Arrangements and the Expansion of Social Interaction

The classroom seating method was implemented through a rotating seating system to reduce children's tendency to select particular friends. This finding indicates that teachers supported children's social-emotional abilities not only through learning activities but also through classroom environmental management. Rotating seating arrangements provided children with opportunities to interact with different peers and broaden their social experiences.

This finding is related to indicators of prosocial behavior in early childhood as outlined in Ministerial Regulation No. 137 of 2014, including the ability to play with peers, understand and respond to feelings, share, respect others' rights and opinions, cooperate, demonstrate tolerance, and behave politely. It is also consistent with Hurlock's description, cited in Susanto (2011), of children's social behaviors, including imitation, cooperation, sympathy, empathy, sharing, and friendly behavior.

In this context, rotating seating can be understood as a simple strategy for creating more diverse opportunities for social interaction. By not continuously placing children within the same friendship groups, teachers provided opportunities for children to become acquainted with, cooperate with, and adapt to different peers. The implication is that classroom management can be considered part of social-emotional development strategies rather than merely a way of organizing children's positions during learning activities.

6. Implications for Early Childhood Education Practice

When the four methods are considered together, a pattern emerges in which teachers support children's social-emotional development through four complementary forms of experience: experiencing through play, reinforcing through habituation, recalling values through songs, and expanding social interaction through classroom management. This pattern indicates that social-emotional development can be understood as a continuous process occurring across various school activities (Rahma et al., 2023).

The findings reinforce the view that kindergarten education plays an important role in supporting children's social development. Kindergarten environments allow children to move, play, and interact with peers in a setting that remains relatively close to family experiences (Harini & Al-Halwani, 2003). Therefore, teachers have an important role in creating environments in which children can obtain social experiences that are safe, structured, and appropriate to their developmental stages.

Practically, the findings suggest that teachers do not necessarily need complex methods or expensive media to support children's social-emotional development. Simple activities such as role playing, queuing, saying "sorry," "please," and "thank you," cooperating in cleaning the classroom, singing, and rotating seats can provide meaningful opportunities for children to practice social-emotional behaviors when implemented consistently and supported by teacher modeling.

7. Directions for Future Research

This study provides an overview of social-emotional development practices in one early childhood education institution. Because the study employed a qualitative approach and focused on a single institution, the findings are context-specific and cannot be generalized to all early childhood education settings. Future research could expand the research sites and number of participants to compare the implementation of similar practices across institutions with different characteristics.

Further research could also quantitatively examine changes in children's social-emotional abilities following the implementation of individual methods or their integrated use. Quantitative or mixed-method approaches could complement qualitative findings with measurable data on children's social-emotional development. In addition, future studies could specifically examine the effects of integrating religious values and local cultural practices, such as hadith-based activities and culturally relevant songs, on young children's social-emotional development.

Conclusion

This study found that teachers at TKIT Ash Shiddiqiyah Berjan supported young children's social-emotional development through four complementary practices: role playing, habituation, songs, and classroom seating arrangements. These practices provided children with opportunities to experience social interaction through play, repeatedly practice social behaviors in daily routines, encounter social and cultural values through songs, and interact with different peers through classroom management. The findings suggest that social-emotional development was embedded across everyday learning experiences rather than implemented as a separate activity.

The main contribution of this study lies not in introducing new teaching methods, but in showing how simple and contextually relevant practices can be integrated to support social-emotional learning in an Islamic early childhood education setting. The integration of religious values through habituation and culturally familiar expressions through the Javanese song Sugeng Enjing also demonstrates how social-emotional learning can be connected with children's religious and cultural environment. In practice, teachers can incorporate social-emotional learning into play activities, daily routines, songs, and classroom management while providing consistent modeling and opportunities for children to practice social behaviors.

As this study was limited to one institution and employed a qualitative approach, future research could involve more diverse institutions and participants. Quantitative or mixed-method studies could also examine changes in children's social-emotional abilities and investigate the effects of integrating religious and local cultural values into early childhood learning.

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