

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background Problem

Early childhood is bound between the age of 0-6 years old (Papalia & Feldman 2012). Where in this age, children require stimulus in order for them to grow and develop in areas of physical, emotional, and cognitive (Sukatin, et al. 2020). Many mention that this is the golden age of a person. This also explains the need for stimulation due to being in the golden age. External factors must play a role in giving them these stimuli in order for children to develop and mature (Qistia et al. 2019). When children are exposed to manipulatives they should be able to grow and mature based on their designated milestones. According to Pem (2016), there are numerous factors that support a child's growth, such as nutrition, financial, parental relationships, social and cultural practices, physical growth, and cognitive abilities. The results in his research mentions that a healthy child should have better thinking skills, learning abilities, and have a productive adulthood.

As another note, parents and teachers play an important role in triggering or sparking curiosity in children, as stated by Novianti, 2012 in Qistia et al. 2019. With that being said, the school system becomes another crucial place where children or students should be able to develop themselves by giving the right tools and strategies in order to have that actualisation in the child.

According to Vasileva, Alisic and De Young (2021), emotional regulation is important even early in life. Thus, it becomes important for children to learn this skill at a young age. The first term to suggest about Emotional Intelligence (EI) was

Salovey and Mayer in 1990, which later on Daniel Goleman reframed the theory in 1995. However, both psychologists define EI as an ability to monitor or observe one's emotions as well as others, being able to differentiate the emotions, and use that information to guide their way of thinking and deciding on their behavioural action (Kanesan and Fauzan 2019). Goleman later on mentions that any action of behaviours that are not in a way mentioned as cognitive, can be included as part of EI. Thus, his focal point to EI lays on the dimensions of self-awareness, self-management, internal motivation, empathy, and managing relationships. There have been positive correlations between EI and self-confidence in children around the world (None Jayadi, Novianti Rahmawati, and Dewi Rahmawati 2020). Other articles mentioned that with higher EI, children would have skills that are needed to identify their own emotions and feelings (Singh 2023); having less negative behaviours, for instance, lower aggression, higher empathy, higher self-esteem, and less likely to feel lonely (Poulou 2014). Rahmi (2019, 25) mentioned that EI can be developed over time, then it's important that children learn these kinds of skills early on in life as a basic foundation to regulating their emotions.

In order for children to be able to have good emotional regulation, another adeptness to control is their self-confidence. As children live and grow, they are constantly learning and developing. And learning is a continuous process that requires internal and external factors, such as environment, relationship with adults (parents and teachers), and also peers. With self-confidence, it helps children to be able to achieve their full potential and having the ability to conquer what needs to be done. Abdullah, Isnanto, and Vidiyanti (2019) mentioned that when a child has good self-confidence, it will enable them to succeed in their challenges, overcoming

difficult situations through managing feelings, having a more positive outlook, and being able to solve obstacles or problems with certainty that it can be done. In another article, having self-confidence meant that children have high curiosity, questioning new information, having critical thinking, and having the initiative to do something that needs to be done. (Nurmaniah and Damayanti 2018). With that being said, self-confidence becomes an underlying key in order for children to be able to develop their emotional and social skills.

On another note, another trait that helps children grow and develop is independence. It is defined as being able to do daily tasks on their own, and dependent on no one; appropriate to their milestones. When a child is taught to have a good sense of independence, they have a more positive outlook in life and are able to build their self confidence, and better social interaction with others. Independence is also needed to give a child a sense of ownership and knowing how to act and behave although no adults (parents or teachers) are present (Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia 2014). Including children in daily activities will help to build this trait so by the age of 4-5 years old, a child should be able to have personal care (going to the toilet, eating, putting on/off clothes, putting on/taking off shoes), writing, pasting and cutting on their own. This trait is built on how the child is raised in the environment, at home and at school. Thus, a child with high independence will have a more positive future rather than a child who is dependent on someone.

To view the child as a whole, social emotional skills play an important part in a child's development. Through social interactions and emotions children can put definition and understanding to what is happening with their life. And in early

childhood, it's the most crucial moment for children to expand and enlarge their skills in this area (Meilina, Sugiyono, and Astuti 2021). There are growing studies on the impact of social emotional learning (SEL) from early on. Yale University came up with a method to teach and measure social and emotional skills that leads to improved academic achievement (Brackett et al. 2012). RULER was created, which stands for Recognizing, Understanding, Labelling, Expressing, and Regulating emotions. It is evidence-based research that can be applied from pre-kindergarten all the way to grades 5 and 6 ("RULER Approach - CASEL Program Guide," n.d.). In the research, results show that this method incorporates the role of emotional skills, and it focuses on how to apply appropriate emotional skills that can be applied in daily life, which includes to aid children in areas of academics, having quality relationships, and personal growth (Rivers & Brackett 2011).

As young children are starting to return to situations where they have to adapt to new environments, meet other people, separate from their parents, and to regulate their emotions, especially by coming to school. It is clear that there is a gap that children have to adapt to more than before. In social interactions, students lack good and correct ways to greet teachers or friends. They have an attitude that tends to be more egocentric. In his writing, Rahmi (2019, 25) said that emotional management can start from an early age because at this time, children are more responsive to the stimuli they receive from their environment. As the writer observed Kindergarten 1 class of Preschool ABC in Jakarta, results showed that it aligned with what Rahmi (2019) has written in his article. For example, students' discomfort with interactions with other people, how to make friends, waiting for their turn, how to speak with correct terms, language style, tolerance, respect for

elders, and actions that are accepted by social norms. Lack of etiquette when talking to other people, for example; students cannot wait their turn to speak, interrupt other people's conversations, do not understand the boundaries given, and impulsive behaviour when doing something, giving vent to their emotions when they are feeling emotional strength such as frustration, anger, or stress. Not to mention that there seems to be lower levels of self-confidence as it can be noticed when they are given the spotlight, children can hardly perform, as they tend to keep quiet or to themselves. Not to mention struggling to overcome difficult challenges given, and easily giving up or asking for assurance of their work. Overall, it indicates a low level of emotional intelligence in social interactions and low self-confidence shown.

Therefore, it can be seen that there seems to be a relationship between high self-confidence with social attitudes and emotional intelligence in early childhood. Social-emotional learning has been proven to increase social behaviour and emotional control in early childhood (Helaluddin and Alamsyah 2019, 7). From the results of these observations, writers want to implement strategies social-emotional learning (SEL) which has been described by CASEL (2012) through RULER-approach where students will be taught to know, recognize, label and how to overcome the negative or positive emotions they are experiencing. The experiment of this class will last for 8 weeks, where students will be observed and measured while being taught techniques of RULER-approach.

1.2. Problem Identification

From what has been elaborated in the previous section, the writer conducted an observation and achieved a results from Kindergarten 1 (K1) students in ABC Preschool as following:

1. Lack of attention and focus throughout the learning process.
2. Having difficulties in placing themselves in class and when interacting with peers.
3. Showing insensitivity towards other people's feelings and expressing their own emotions accordingly.
4. Presenting with low levels of self-confidence by diminished attitude when being asked by the teachers, asking for assurance when completing their work, and struggling to overcome challenges during school.

1.3. Formulation of Problem

Stated below are the formulation of problem in this research:

1. Is there any difference in self confidence in students of Preschool ABC before and after going through SEL strategy?
2. Is there any difference in the independence in students of Preschool ABC before and after going through SEL strategy?
3. Is there any difference in levels of emotional intelligence in students of Preschool ABC before and after going through SEL strategy?

1.4. Purpose of Research

The purpose of this research are:

1. To know the difference in self confidence in students of Preschool ABC going through SEL strategy.
2. To know the difference in the independence in students of Preschool ABC going through SEL strategy.
3. To know the difference in levels of emotional intelligence in students of Preschool ABC going through SEL strategy.

1.5. Benefits of Research

1.5.1. Theoretical Benefits

With this research, the author hopes to give more insight for future research to continue with the same topic as there is still a lack of research for SEL with early childhood, especially in Indonesia. Next, the author hopes that the findings in this research can be beneficial for the readers to gain theoretical insights that have been outlined.

1.5.2. Practical Benefits

The author hopes, all the findings here can aid in practical use for:

- a) Teachers, to gain more awareness of the importance of teaching social-emotional skills from an early age.
- b) Aiding teachers to gain more teaching strategies, especially teaching social-emotional cues.
- c) Teachers have more information about development and social-emotional development in early childhood.

- d) Future research to expand the research in the similar topic. Keeping in mind the limitations, flaws, and findings in this class action research.
- e) Teachers and parents, to help build children's self-confidence, emotional intelligence, and independence from an early age.

1.6. Writing Schematics

Chapter I, Introduction, discusses the background problem that arises as the topic of this research, concluding that the independent variable is SEL to build self confidence, independence, and emotional intelligence in early childhood, specifically ages 4-5.

Chapter II, Theoretical Framework, is the breakdown of the theories that will be used to prove and analyse the findings in the research.

Chapter III, Research Methods, is the breakdown of methods and instruments that will be used to measure the variables in the research. It will also contain the breakdown of settings, planning, execution, data taking, data processing, and breaking down of the analysis.

Chapter IV, Results, it will discuss all the findings that have been conducted to measure the variables along with the discussion of the findings.

Chapter V, Conclusion, is a summary of the entire paper where further discussions will be laid out, together with recommendations for future research and readers.