

Literature Studies: The Effectiveness of Early Childhood Learning in Cognitive and Social-Emotional Development

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Abstract

Early childhood, especially between 3 and 6 years old, is a crucial period with rapid development in various aspects, including cognitive and social-emotional. Effective learning at this time plays an important role in laying the foundation for a child's future. This literature study aims to examine early childhood social behavior and its causal factors. This study uses the systematic literature review (SLR) method in the last ten years, namely 2014-2024 and obtained ten articles that are in accordance with critical appraisal tools from Google Scholar, Schopus, taylor & francis online, national library of madicine, and Publish or Perish 7. The approaches discussed include interacting with others, managing emotions, and developing early childhood confidence. The effectiveness of early childhood learning is also influenced by other factors such as teacher skills and expertise, learning environment, and parental involvement. Further research is needed to examine the effectiveness of different approaches and learning strategies in different contexts, as well as to develop a more holistic and integrated learning model. Various learning approaches and strategies have been shown to be effective in improving early childhood cognitive and social-emotional development, but the selection of the right approach needs to consider the child's specific context and needs. Further research is needed to examine the effectiveness of different approaches and learning strategies in different contexts, as well as to develop a more holistic and integrated learning model.

Keywords: Early Childhood, Cognitive Development, Social-Emotional Development, Learning Strategies

INTRODUCTION

The existence of early childhood education institutions is very important in order to foster and shape quality future generations. This effort aims to maximize the great potential of children during its formative years. Emotions play an important role in shaping behavior, often appearing as a reaction to external and internal stimuli. Emotions are closely related to physiological changes and a variety of thoughts, making them an important aspect in early childhood development. Every child experiences a period of growth and development in various dimensions. When children are faced with the enrichment of educational experiences in their environment, early childhood is better prepared to fulfill their developmental tasks. Development is an inherent process experienced by every individual, from childhood to adulthood. Although progress cannot be measured, the impact is very felt. Development takes place progressively, systematically, and continuously. Early childhood is a critical period for children's growth and development, especially on children's social and emotional development, and the early learning environment is important (Bardhoshi, Swanston, & Kivlighan, 2020).

Childhood, especially children between the ages of 3 and 6, is like a golden period marked by a rapid spike in child growth and development. In this crucial phase, their brains are like sponges ready to absorb various stimuli and experiences. Therefore, parents and teachers have an essential role to provide full attention and optimal support to maximize children's potential in the future. More than just physical growth, this golden age is the foundation for children's cognitive and socio-emotional development. This is where they begin to build a foundation of intelligence, learn to think logically, solve problems and control emotions. Social interaction is also the key to moral development, empathy and the ability to communicate well. Understanding the importance of this golden age, parents and teachers need to work together to create a conducive and stimulating environment. Provide space for children to explore, learn through play and interact with others. Encourage their curiosity by providing storybooks, educational games and opportunities for adventure in nature. Golden times are a priceless gift. With the right guidance and compassion, parents and teachers can help children step towards a glorious future. A time when they are ready to become intelligent, creative, resilient, and loving individuals. A time when they are ready to contribute positively to the world and become pride for the nation. One aspect of child development is the child's social-emotional development, which includes children's behavior towards their environment. Similarly, the discussion of children's social development must concern the development of children's emotions, which describe different but interrelated aspects (Ummah & Fitri, 2020).

Although the golden age is important in children's growth and development, there are still challenges that hinder children's progress at their developmental stage. Positive social-emotional development makes it easier to be able to interact socially and train children in society. It is very urgent to help children understand their own feelings and the feelings of their peers. The family is the first environment that affects the growth and development of a child so that he can behave socially well (Kholifah & Alwiyah, 2022).

METHOD

This study uses the *Systematic Literature Review* (SLR) method to identify, review, evaluate, and interpret all relevant research related to the effectiveness of early childhood learning in improving cognitive and social-emotional development. SLR is carried out in a structured manner following the steps that have been set (Triandini et al., 2019). The search for research sources was carried out through two platforms, namely Google Scholar, Schopus, taylor & francis online, National library of madicine, and Publish or Perish 7.

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Writer article journal is an Indonesian or foreign writer	The author of the journal article is not an Indonesian writer or overseas

Published in 2014-2024

Published under 2014

Related research, Cognitive and Social Early Childhood Learning Effectiveness

Research is not related to the effectiveness of cognitive and social-emotional early childhood learning

Published in reputable international journals

Published in proceedings and unreputable national or international journals

Table 1. Journal Criteria

The search for articles began by entering keywords into two databases (ProQuest and SAGE) and then searching with the keywords Preschool OR childhood OR children or young children AND counselling models OR counselling strategy OR counselling approach AND social emotional skills or social emotional development obtained results of 35 articles. Articles that were selected by automation tools so that there were 20 articles left. The 10 articles issued did not meet the inclusion criteria because they were irrelevant based on the title, abstract, research design and irrelevant access, leaving 10 articles, thus obtaining the final result of 10 articles. There are 10 articles that are further analyzed.

DISCUSSION

Based on the exploration of the data base, 35 articles were obtained based on the keyword will analyze 10 articles. The results of the database exploration can be illustrated through the following table:

Title/Author/Year	Data Collection Methods	Result
<i>Supporting K-12 Students to Learn Social-Emotional and Self-Management Skills for Their Sustainable Growth with the Solution-Focused Kids' Skills Method</i> (Huanghong Jenny Niu, Hannele Niemi & Ben Furman, 2022) <i>Scopus</i>	<i>Qualitative</i>	Using the KS method, it is possible to help students identify specific skills that they can learn to overcome their problems. This method also allows students to discover the strengths, resources, and details necessary to learn new skills.
A Study of Early Childhood Social-Emotional Development (Systematic Literature Review) (Rizki Amalia et al, 2023) <i>Publish or perish</i>	<i>Systematic Literature Review (SLR)</i>	According to the predictive relationship found between emotion regulation and behavior and emotional states among preschool students, there was a positive and linear relationship.

Estimation and linkage between behavioral problems and social emotional competence among Pakistani young school children (Arooj Najmussaib & Asia Mushtaq, 2023)
Scopus

Quantitative cross-sectional study of the Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL) and

The prevalence of behavioral problems overall reached 65.4% (4-6 years) and 36.2% (6-8 years) in the range of abnormal total problems (borderline and clinical). Social-emotional competency scores were found to be negatively correlated significantly with children's behavioral problems. The high prevalence requires the provision of mental health services to school-age children

Analysis of Cognitive and Emotional Development of Children in Coastal Area-Based Play Groups (Yaswinda et al, 2021)
Google scholar

Literature studies, observations, interviews, and documentation

Based on the analysis of the Child Development Report document in semester 1 and semester 2 of the 2019/2020 school year, a comparative analysis of the cognitive and emotional development of children in the coastal based integrative holistic play group was obtained. Based on the results above, it can be concluded that the cognitive and emotional development program of the Play Group children at PAUD Pasia Mutia has been successful because it has been able to show the cognitive and emotional development of children according to the developmental stage.

Emotional and Behavioural Problems among Preschool Children in Northeast Peninsular Malaysia: Parent Report Version (Mohamad Hazni Abdul Rahim et al, 2023)
National Library of Medicine

Descriptive quantitative

Peer problems were the most common attribute, with a percentage of 19.7%. Behavioral problems were found in 5.2%, hyperactivity problems at 5.6%, prosocial behavior at 13.5%, and emotional problems at 6.8%. 6.8%. Girls showed significant improvements in behavioral and emotional problems compared to boys. Having one parent working, having more than two siblings, and having a single-parent family deals with emotional and behavioral issues. The prevalence of emotional and behavioural problems in children in Malaysian children is relatively low compared to data from previous studies and other Asian countries, but is consistent with studies in Europe. Measuring mental health disparities in young people helps stakeholders to launch early intervention programs.

Investigation of Pre-School Childrens' Self-Concept in terms of Emotion Regulation Skill, Behavior and Emotional Status (Emel Arslan, 2021)
Scopus

Qualitative relational survey method

There is a positive linear relationship between self and behavior and emotional state and there is a positive linear relationship between self-concept and emotional regulation in preschool students.

The Effect of Story Telling-Based and Play-Based Social Skills Training on Social Skills of Kindergarten Children: An Experimental Study (Pinar Aksoy & Gülen Baran, 2020)
Scopus

Qualitative

The social skills of children who take part in storytelling-based social skills training, and the social skills of children who take part in play-based social skills training are at a much higher level than children in teaching how to be calm, treat people with compassion, practice courage, and practice patience.

From the discussion above, there are also several problems that must be faced in early childhood emotional development, therefore the role of parents, the surrounding environment and family is very important to stimulate children's emotional and social intelligence.

<i>Social– Behavioral Stories in the Kindergarten Classroom: An App-Based Counseling Intervention for Increasing Social Skills</i> (Gerta Bardhoshi, Jeremy Swanston & Martin Kivlighan, 2020) <i>Google scholar</i>	Qualitative survey method	relational	The results showed that receiving the intervention plus TAU significantly improved students' social skills and problematic behaviors, as reported by their teachers, compared to TA
Children's Social-Emotional Development During Learning from Home and School at Kindergarten Muslimat NU 42 Nurul Ulum Manyar Gresik Without Playgroup Education (Tri Hartati Wijayati et al, 2023) <i>Google scholar</i>	Descriptive approach	qualitative	The results of the study showed that the impact of the social-emotional development of children without playgroup education during learning from home and at school, especially in the indicators of being cooperative with friends, respecting the rights/opinions/works of others, sensitivity to help others, and a sense of not wanting to win alone showed that the results were almost equivalent to those of children who attended the previous playgroup school. It is influenced by several factors, including: family factors, maturity factors, educational factors, mental capacity factors, and learning environment factors.
Jean Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development and Its Problems in Elementary School Children (Leny Marinda, 2020) <i>Google scholar</i>	Systematic Review (SLR)	Literature	In this theory, children are predicted to have maturity in a quantity and quality based on the stages they go through. Cognitive development at one stage is a continuation of the cognitive development of the previous stage. Cognitive problems that arise in elementary school age children are seen from Piaget's theory of cognitive development, including dyslexia, dysgraphia and dyscalculia.

Table 1.2 List of Journals Reviewed

Early Childhood

According to Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 20 of 2003 Article 1 what is meant by early childhood is a child aged 0 to 6 years. However, the current literature provides a different definition of the early childhood age range (Nurmalitasari, 2015; Sunanih, 2017). The United Nations Commission on the Rights of the Child states that early childhood is the period of life before the age of eight (Woodhead, 2014). In this study, researchers used the age range of 0 to 8 years to define early childhood. Childhood is the golden age of human development. During this period, children experience a period of rapid growth and sensitivity to various environmental stimuli (Martani, 2012; Nurmalasari, 2015). Early childhood stimulation affects children in many ways, for example it can affect development (Özkan & Baydar, 2021) and social sentiment (Iruka et al., 2018). Children's cognitive development includes the ability to think, understand, learn and remember. In addition, physical development is related to height growth, gross and fine motor development, and the development of control over the child's own body. Language development, in turn, is related to verbal communication skills and Nonverbal.

Social-emotional development, on the other hand, refers to the child's ability to recognize and express his emotions, recognize his own concepts, and form relationships with others (Vorsah, 2015). In general, children's skills developed at an early age affect their future lives, ranging from social life, welfare, career and education (Onyango et al., 2021). A study by Jones et al. (2014) found that early childhood prosocial skills are predictors of children's success in attending high school, completing college education, and maintaining a stable job in early adulthood. And the skills associated with early childhood executive function are thought to be relevant in the areas of schoolwork, behavior, and self-regulation (Jacobson et al., 2011).

Children with behavioral and emotional problems in preschool are more likely to experience mental health challenges throughout childhood and adolescence. The golden age refers to a critical period in a child's development, especially between the ages of 3 and 6 years. In this phase, the child's brain develops rapidly and is ready to absorb various stimuli and experiences. This period is an important foundation for the cognitive and socio-emotional development of children in the future (Rahim et al., 2023). The development of children's emotional balance also affects their sense of self significantly. Therefore, healthy emotional development is the foundation of healthy personality and social development, establishing positive social relationships in children with adults and their peers, regulating their emotions and expressing them according to environmental conditions becomes one of the most important elements of preschool socio-emotional development. Parents' attitudes also play an important role in children's social and emotional development (Arslan, 2021). From the literature review conducted, there are three journals that discuss early childhood social behavior and its causative factors.

Early childhood, especially between 3 and 6 years old, is like a golden period marked by a rapid spike in child growth and development. In this crucial phase, their brains are like sponges ready to absorb various stimuli and experiences. Therefore, parents and teachers have an essential role to provide full attention and optimal support to maximize children's potential in the future. More than just physical growth, this golden age is the foundation for children's cognitive and socio-emotional development. This is where they begin to build a foundation of intelligence, learn to think logically, solve problems, and control emotions. Social interaction is also the key to moral development, empathy, and the ability to communicate well. Understanding the importance of this golden age, parents and teachers need to work together to create a conducive and stimulating environment. Provide space for children to explore, learn through play, and interact with others. Encourage their curiosity by providing storybooks, educational games, and opportunities for adventure in nature. The role of parents is no less important. Be an accomplished storyteller, a loving playmate, and an enviable role model. Create open communication and provide a sense of security for children to express themselves. Remember that every child has their own uniqueness and learning speed. Be patient and give praise for every achievement they have, no matter how small. Golden times are a priceless gift. With the right guidance and compassion, parents and teachers can help children step towards a glorious future. A time when they are ready to become intelligent, creative, resilient, and loving individuals. A time when they are ready to contribute positively to the world and become pride for the nation.

Cognitive Development

Cognitive abilities can be improved through play activities (Ayuningtyas & Wijayaningsih, 2020; Kurniati et al., 2020). This is because all early childhood activities are always related to play activities. Play is a staple activity for children. Playing will make all activities that children do feel fun. Through play, learning indirectly occurs in children. Play is not only used to make activities fun. It covers the logical process and helps children configure events, relationships, and connections. A game encompasses including thinking, producing, creativity, discovering the process, is very meaningful. The results of Tatminingsih (2019) research found that there was a significant improvement in children's cognitive abilities after the implementation of comprehensive game-based learning. Upon further study, it was found that each child showed a difference in indicators that improved.

Supported by the opinion that we as educators are entrusted with the responsibility to fully engage children's minds and bodies in the way they learn well. In line with the opinion of (Mustika & Nurwidaningsih, 2018) suggests teachers to be able to improve children's cognitive abilities by using variations and innovations of methods in various games so that children's cognitive abilities can be further improved. Meanwhile, Yani & Jazariyah (2020) using claps and singing will be able to develop cognition which is still part of play activities.

From the results of the relevant research, even though they use different methods and techniques, they still use the principle of play in the implementation of the learning process. This strengthens the results of research conducted by researchers to improve cognitive abilities through play activities in circles. Playing in a circle is an activity that is carried out outdoors and done together. Before the circle play activity, the children were first introduced to the learning theme used, namely the animal theme. Then children are introduced to various kinds of animal pictures, how the animal behaves (how to walk), the physical characteristics of the animal, and what the animal's food is. After that, the activity of playing in a circle is carried out outdoors. With the activity of playing in a circle, it proves that children are more able to develop their memory. Children are able to answer questions about the type of animal according to their physical characteristics, children are also able to count and count numbers, and children are also able to imitate the movements of animals shown. Overall, children's cognitive abilities can develop well.

Social-Emotional Development

Golden Age is a crucial period in a child's development for several reasons, including Rapid Brain Development: Children's brains at the age of 3 to 6 years experience rapid development, especially in areas related to learning and memory. This makes this the right time to provide optimal stimulation and learning. Ability to Absorb Information: Children at this age have an amazing ability to absorb new information. They learn quickly and easily imitate what they see and hear. High Curiosity: Children at this age have a high curiosity and enjoy exploring their surroundings. This curiosity can be a powerful driver for learning. Adaptability: Children at this age are very adaptable to new situations. This makes it easier for them to learn and thrive in a new environment. Parents and teachers have an important role to play in helping children make the most of their golden age. Here are some things parents and teachers can do to support early childhood development: Create a safe, comfortable, and stimulating environment where children can learn and play freely. Provide stimulation that is appropriate for the child's age and interests. This can be done through various activities, such as playing, reading books, and telling stories.

Provide emotional support to children and help them to feel loved and valued. Be a good example for children and show them how to learn and behave well. Work with other parents and teachers to ensure that children receive a holistic and quality education. First, emotional and behavioral problems among preschool children in the Northeast Peninsula of Malaysia in the study of Rahim et al., (2023) showed that children's problems include Page 459 of 461 Aulad : Journal on Early Childhood, 2023, 6(3), problems with peers (19.7%), followed by prosocial behavior (13.5%), emotional problems (6.8%), hyperactivity problems (5.6%), and doing problems (5.2%). Peer problems occur when preschoolers experience it, having difficulty working with others and making friends.

Several factors affect children's social-emotional relationships: there is a significant association between one working parent with a higher incidence of emotional and behavioural problems compared to both working parents, children who have more than two siblings have fewer emotional and behavioural problems than children who have only one sibling and these findings contribute to the knowledge of evidence that Children who live in homes with single parents are much more likely to experience emotional and behavioral difficulties than children who live in nuclear families. Second, estimation and relationship between behavioral problems and social-emotional competence among young Pakistani schoolchildren, research conducted by Najmussaib & Mushtaq (2023) explains the social-emotional behavior of children with problems including feelings of anxiety, withdrawal, aggression, disobedience, denial, difficulty socializing.

Third, the investigation of self-concept of preschool children is reviewed from the regulation of emotions, skills, behavior, and emotional status (Arslan, 2021). Based on the findings obtained, the predictive relationship between self and behavior and emotional state in preschool students shows a positive linear relationship. Another finding from this study is that the predictive relationship between self-feeling and emotional regulation in preschool students shows a positive linear relationship. One of the other findings of this study is that according to the predictive relationship found between emotional regulation and behavior and emotional states among preschool students, there is a positive and linear relationship. Families and people who work with children should be informed about the fact that the preschool years are important years in children's development in a variety of ways (through education, social media, and technological tools).

Learning Strategies

Learning strategies for early childhood need to be designed with their cognitive and social-emotional development in mind. Several effective approaches have been identified through various studies, namely using a counseling model. The counseling model for dealing with children's social-emotional problems from the literature review conducted, there are three journals that discuss, namely first, supporting K-12 students to learn social-emotional and self-management for sustainable growth with children's skills methods that focus on skill solutions (Niu & Niemi, 2022). The Kids Skills (KS) method, which is based on solution-focused psychology, can be used to help students overcome emotional or behavioral problems through the learning of relevant skills. To achieve this goal, we investigated 23 case stories using content analysis. Our main finding is that by using the KS method, it is possible to help students identify specific skills that they can learn to overcome their problems. This method also allows students to discover the strengths, resources, and details necessary to learn new skills.

Social support is important throughout the process. This method helps them acquire relevant skills and desired outcomes. It also offers them a way to strengthen their skills to ensure long-term effects. We conclude that the KS method can support students in learning self-management and social-emotional skills to achieve sustainable growth. Second, the effect of story-based and play-based social skills training on social skills of kindergarten children: an experimental study (Aksoy & Baran, 2020). The results of this study concluded that the social skills of children who participated in storytelling-based social skills training, and the social skills of children who participated in play-based social skills training were at a much higher level than children in the control group.

These social skills include the dimensions of "communication", "adaptation", "self-control", "prosocial behavior" and total social skills for storytelling-based social skills training. Meanwhile, these social skills include the dimensions of "communication", "adaptation", "self-control", "prosocial behavior", "assertiveness", and total social skills for play-based social skills training. In addition, it was seen that storytelling-based social skills training was significantly more effective than play-based social skills training on social skills related to the dimensions of "communication" and "prosocial behavior" as well as play-based social skills training significantly. It is more effective than social skills training based on storytelling about social skills related to the dimensions of "self-control" and "assertiveness".

Thus, it can be concluded that the impact of storytelling and play-based social skills training is permanent. Third, social-behavioral stories in kindergarten classrooms: an app-based counseling intervention for social skills improvement (Bardhoshi, Swanston, & Kivlighan, 2020) shows that SOBE Stories is a potentially effective intervention to improve social skills and reduce problematic behaviors in kindergarten students. Our results showed that students who received this additional treatment showed better social skills and a decrease in problematic behaviors, as perceived by their teachers, compared to students who received only TAU social skills. When emphasis is placed on school-based interventions for children, school counselors can contribute by providing effective services that support students' social/emotional and academic success. Interventions that focus on improving the social skills of young students provide an important foundation for healthy development and future outcomes and are an important job function for school counselors.

Learning Effectiveness

Effective learning in early childhood has a significant impact on their cognitive and social-emotional development. In the context of cognitive development, the right learning method can stimulate rapid brain growth, improve logical thinking skills, and strengthen problem-solving skills (Rahim et al., 2023). Children who received appropriate cognitive stimulation tended to show improvements in language skills, concept comprehension, and memory. Additionally, learning that involves active exploration and hands-on experiences can help children develop curiosity and critical thinking skills that are essential for future academic success.

In terms of social-emotional development, effective learning can help children develop emotional regulation skills, empathy, and positive social interactions. Methods such as play-based learning and storytelling have been shown to be effective in improving children's social skills (Aksoy & Baran, 2020). Children who follow learning programs that emphasize social-emotional development tend to show better prosocial behavior, higher adaptability, and decreased behavioral problems (Bardhoshi, Swanston, & Kivlighan, 2020). Learning that pays attention to the social-emotional aspect can also help children build a positive self-concept and improve their communication skills (Arslan, 2021).

To improve the effectiveness of early childhood learning, several recommendations can be implemented. First, it is important to create a safe, comfortable, and stimulating learning environment. Second, the use of varied and interactive learning methods, such as the solution-focused Kids' Skills method, can help children develop social and self-management skills (Niu & Niemi, 2022). Third, collaboration between parents and educators is essential to ensure consistency in learning approaches and emotional support. Fourth, the use of appropriate technology and learning applications can enrich children's learning experience. Finally, it is important to conduct periodic evaluations of the learning methods used and make adjustments according to the individual needs of each child. By implementing these recommendations, it is hoped that the effectiveness of early childhood learning can be improved, providing a solid foundation for their future cognitive and social-emotional development.

CONCLUSION

Early childhood social-emotional development is very important, where they begin to learn to interact with others, manage emotions, and develop self-confidence. However, some children may experience social-emotional problems, such as difficulty getting along with friends, hyperactivity, aggression, anxiety, withdrawal, disobedience, or difficulty socializing. This can be influenced by various factors, such as economic conditions, parents' education level, number of siblings, and parenting style, especially in single-parent families.

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