



INNOVATIVE: Journal Of Social Science Research

Volume 5 Nomor 3 Tahun 2025 Page 7444-7463

E-ISSN 2807-4238 and P-ISSN 2807-4246

Website: <https://j-innovative.org/index.php/Innovative>

The Influence of a Child-Friendly Learning Environment on the Emotional Development Early Childhood Children at PAUD RA Al Marzuqiyah Ciracas Jak-tim

Rini Herminastiti

STKIP Kusuma Negara

Email: rini_herminastiti@stkipkusumanegara.ac.id

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh lingkungan belajar ramah anak terhadap perkembangan emosional anak usia dini di Lembaga PAUD RA Al Marzuqiyah Ciracas, Jakarta Timur. Lingkungan belajar yang ramah anak mencakup lima dimensi utama: keamanan fisik, dukungan emosional dari pendidik, partisipasi anak, inklusivitas, dan lingkungan sosial yang positif. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan metode regresi linier berganda, melibatkan 48 anak usia 4–6 tahun. Instrumen penelitian berupa kuesioner berbasis skala Likert yang diisi oleh guru kelas. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa lingkungan belajar ramah anak secara simultan berpengaruh signifikan terhadap perkembangan emosional anak, dengan nilai koefisien determinasi (R^2) sebesar 0.651. Secara parsial, tiga subvariabel yang memberikan pengaruh signifikan adalah dukungan emosional dari pendidik, partisipasi anak, dan lingkungan sosial positif. Subvariabel dukungan emosional dari guru memiliki pengaruh paling dominan terhadap perkembangan emosi anak, seperti kemampuan mengenali dan mengekspresikan perasaan, empati, serta regulasi diri. Sementara itu, dua subvariabel lainnya—keamanan fisik dan inklusivitas formal—tidak menunjukkan pengaruh signifikan secara statistik. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa aspek fisik dan kebijakan inklusi perlu diintegrasikan lebih aktif ke dalam praktik pembelajaran yang bersifat sosial-emosional. Kesimpulan dari penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya relasi afektif guru-anak dan pembelajaran partisipatif dalam menciptakan lingkungan yang mendukung kesehatan emosional anak sejak usia dini.

Kata Kunci: *PAUD, Lingkungan Ramah Anak, Perkembangan Emosional, Dukungan Emosional Guru, Pendidikan Usia Dini*

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the effect of a child-friendly learning environment on early childhood emotional development at PAUD RA Al Marzuqiyah Ciracas, East Jakarta. A child-friendly learning environment includes five main dimensions: physical safety, emotional support from educators, child participation, inclusiveness, and a positive social environment. This study used a quantitative approach with multiple linear regression method, involving 48 children aged 4-6 years. The research instrument was a Likert scale-based questionnaire filled out by classroom teachers. The results of the analysis showed that a child-friendly learning environment simultaneously had a significant effect on children's emotional development, with a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.651. Partially, the three sub-variables that have a significant effect are emotional support from educators, child participation, and positive social environment. The emotional support subvariable from teachers had the most dominant influence on children's emotional development, such as the ability to recognize and express feelings, empathy, and self-regulation. Meanwhile, the other two sub-variables-physical safety and formal inclusiveness-did not show a statistically significant effect. This suggests that physical aspects and inclusion policies need to be more actively integrated into social-emotional learning practices. The conclusion of this study emphasizes the importance of affective teacher-child relationships and participatory learning in creating environments that support children's emotional health from an early age.

Keywords: *ECD, Child-Friendly Environment, Emotional Development, Teacher Emotional Support, Early Childhood Education*

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood development is the main foundation in shaping children's personality, character and social-emotional abilities. The early childhood period, aged 0-6 years, is a golden age where children's brains develop very rapidly, reaching 80% of their adult capacity. During this period, children are very vulnerable to various environmental influences, including the learning environment (Santrock, 2018). A child-friendly learning environment refers to an educational condition that is safe, comfortable, inclusive and respectful of children's rights. This concept involves not only physical aspects such as classrooms and playground equipment, but also psychological and social aspects that stimulate feelings of safety, respect and love (UNICEF, 2021). In these environments, children have greater opportunities to express their emotions, build empathy and develop healthy social relationships.

Emotional development in early childhood includes the ability to recognize, express and manage emotions in appropriate ways. Children who are in unsupportive or stressful learning environments tend to exhibit emotional problems such as anxiety, aggressiveness

or withdrawal (Denham, Bassett, & Zinsser, 2015). In Indonesia, the implementation of child-friendly learning environments still faces various challenges, ranging from limited facilities, lack of PAUD teacher training, to minimal understanding of the importance of emotional aspects in early childhood learning. Based on the results of a study by Yulindrasari and Inayati (2020), many PAUD institutions have not fully implemented learning principles that pay attention to children's rights and emotional development optimally.

RA Al Marzuqiyah Early Childhood Education Institution in Ciracas, East Jakarta, is one of the early childhood education institutions that is trying to create a child-friendly learning environment. However, there are not many academic studies that systematically evaluate the extent to which the child-friendly approach implemented at this institution affects the emotional development of students. Therefore, this research is important to fill the gap of the study. Previous research by Wulandari et al. (2022) showed that there is a positive correlation between child-friendly learning environments and the improvement of children's socio-emotional abilities. This reinforces the assumption that an environment that is inclusive, non-discriminatory, and provides a sense of security to children greatly affects their psychological development. Therefore, it is important to conduct contextual research in PAUD institutions that have certain local characteristics and culture, such as RA Al Marzuqiyah.

Research by Dockett & Perry (2017) also shows that children who are in a learning environment that respects the child voice have better self-control and are better able to build interpersonal relationships. Psychologically, Erik Erikson's theory asserts that early childhood is at the "initiative vs guilt" stage, where children learn to initiate actions and feel emotional satisfaction from social exploration. If the environment does not support the initiative, the child may feel guilty and insecure (Erikson, 1963). Therefore, an environment that provides space for exploration and positive social interaction is crucial in supporting their emotional development.

Several national programs such as Child Friendly Schools (SRA) initiated by the Ministry of PPPA since 2015 aim to encourage educational institutions to pay attention to the principles of child protection and compassion-based learning. However, implementation at the PAUD level still requires strengthening the capacity and awareness of educators regarding the impact on children's emotional aspects (KPPPA, 2023). In practice, there are still learning approaches that overemphasize cognitive and ignore children's affective needs. Children are forced to learn with drilling methods without paying attention to their emotional readiness, resulting in stress and fear of learning activities (Maulidya & Hidayah,

2019). An environment that is insensitive to children's emotions becomes an obstacle to personality development.

Conversely, an environment that provides free play activities, positive reinforcement from teachers, and two-way communication between teachers and children can strengthen emotional stability and build children's confidence early on. In a study conducted by Shonkoff & Phillips (2017), educators' emotional involvement in the learning process was shown to be a major predictor of the development of children's emotion regulation. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the influence of a child-friendly learning environment on early childhood emotional development at RA Al Marzuqiyah Ciracas. The main focus is to evaluate how much the physical environment, social interaction, and pedagogical approach contribute to the formation of children's positive emotions.

This research will also explore the dimensions of the learning environment that include open play spaces, teacher-child communication patterns, and the use of fun and non-repressive learning media. In addition, observations and interviews will be conducted to see children's emotional behavior in real learning situations. The contribution of this research is expected not only for the development of child development psychology theory, but also to provide practical recommendations for PAUD institution managers in creating a more conducive, safe and supportive learning environment for children's emotional development. The results can also be used to strengthen the implementation of child-friendly early childhood education policies in Indonesia.

Using a quantitative approach combined with qualitative observations, this study will present comprehensive empirical data on the relationship between learning environments and children's emotions. The active involvement of teachers, parents, and PAUD managers will be an important aspect in the data collection process so that the results obtained reflect the actual conditions in the field. Through this research, it is hoped that a new awareness will emerge among PAUD educators about the importance of paying attention to emotional aspects in the learning process, not only focusing on academic achievement. Thus, the early childhood education process can run in balance between cognitive and emotional development, towards a generation that is both smart and mentally healthy.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses an associative quantitative approach with a correlational design, which aims to determine the extent of the influence of a child-friendly learning environment on the emotional development of early childhood at PAUD RA Al Marzuqiyah, Ciracas, East Jakarta. This approach is considered appropriate because it is able to objectively measure

the relationship between variables based on numerical data. This research is included in the type of ex post facto research, where researchers do not manipulate variables but observe events that have taken place naturally.

The population in this study were all students at PAUD RA Al Marzuqiyah aged 4-6 years, with a total of 48 children. The sample was taken by total sampling, given the relatively small population size so that the entire population could be used as research subjects. In addition, class teachers and PAUD managers will also be involved indirectly to fill out observation sheets and assist in the implementation of filling out questionnaires, in order to ensure the validity of data obtained from early childhood who are not yet able to fill out their own instruments.

The research instrument consists of two questionnaires that have been compiled and adapted to the characteristics of early childhood. The child-friendly learning environment variable was measured using an instrument based on indicators from UNICEF (2021) and Permendikbud No. 8/2020 on Child-Friendly PAUD Units, which includes aspects of physical safety, psychological comfort, inclusive social relationships, and active participation of children. Meanwhile, children's emotional development variables were measured using an adaptation of the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA) which assesses aspects of emotion regulation, empathy, and social skills with a rating scale of 1-4 (very unsuitable to very suitable).

Prior to data analysis, all instruments were tested for validity and reliability. The validity test was conducted by Pearson correlation analysis on an item-by-item basis, while the reliability test was calculated using the Cronbach's Alpha formula. To ensure that the data met the assumptions of parametric statistics, a normality test with Shapiro-Wilk and a homogeneity test using Levene's Test were conducted. After that, the main data analysis was conducted using simple linear regression test, as the independent variable (learning environment) consists of only one main construct that influences the dependent variable (emotional development).

Data collection was conducted within two weeks through direct observation and questionnaire completion by teachers, with the assistance of the researcher. Observations were conducted to complement the quantitative data and strengthen the interpretation of the results, especially in looking at children's emotional behavior in the context of play and learning. During the data collection process, the researcher ensured that the principles of research ethics were carried out properly, such as requesting written permission from the school and parents, and maintaining the confidentiality of the child respondents' data.

The entire research process was carried out with the principles of objectivity, transparency and reliability in mind. The results of this study are expected to provide an empirical contribution to the development of a learning environment model that supports the emotional aspects of early childhood, as well as a practical reference for PAUD teachers and managers of other early childhood education institutions in creating a more friendly and humane learning atmosphere for students.

Table 1. Relationship between Variables and Research Indicators

Variable	Sub-variables/Dimensions	Indicator	Data Type
X (Child Friendly Learning Environment)	1. Physical Safety and Comfort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe and clean classrooms • Availability of ventilation and lighting • Physical violence-free environment 	Likert scale
	2. Emotional Support from Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher does not verbally scold • Teacher gives praise and motivation • Teacher understands the child's feelings 	Likert scale
	3. Child Participation and Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are allowed to choose activities • Children are given the opportunity to express their opinions • Activities are based on children's interests. 	Likert scale
	4. Inclusiveness and Anti-Discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No preferential treatment • All children are treated equally 	Likert scale

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are encouraged to work together in groups 	
	5. Positive Social Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harmonious relationships between children • Teachers facilitate social interactions • There is a culture of greeting and sharing with each other 	Likert Scale
Y (Children's Emotional Development)	1. Emotion Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are able to calm themselves • Children are not easily angered • Children can postpone temporary desires 	Likert scale
	2. Emotion Expression and Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children can express feelings of joy, sadness, anger • Children recognize their basic emotions 	Likert scale
	3. Empathy for Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child shows concern • Child does not hurt friends • Child shows sympathy for friends who are sad 	Likert scale
	4. Positive Social Interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child is able to cooperate in groups • Child is able to greet and establish communication • Child is able to share toys 	Likert Scale

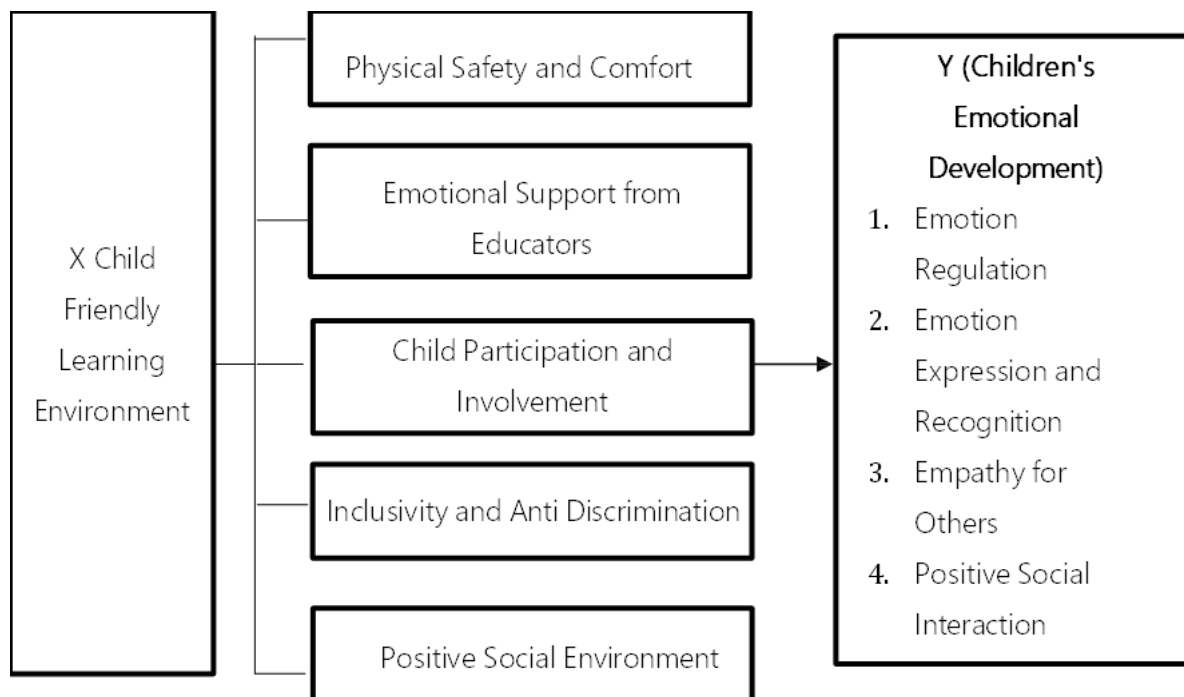


Figure. Framework of Relationship between Variables

To analyze the influence of the five dimensions of a child-friendly learning environment on early childhood emotional development, a multiple linear regression model is used with the following equation form:

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + b_4X_4 + b_5X_5 + e$$

Where Y is the early childhood emotional development variable, while X_1 to X_5 each represents an indicator of a child-friendly learning environment. The coefficient value (b) will show how much influence each indicator has on children's emotional development, which was estimated using the SPSS version 25 program".

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Descriptive statistics are used to provide an overview of teachers' perceptions of the conditions of a child-friendly learning environment and the level of children's emotional development in PAUD RA Al Marzuqiyah. This data was obtained from the results of filling out questionnaires by teachers to all child respondents (N = 48), using a Likert scale of 1-4 (1 = very unsuitable; 4 = very suitable). Indicators in variables X and Y were analyzed to obtain the mean, standard deviation, and minimum and maximum values.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable/Subvariable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Physical Safety and Comfort (X_1)	3.42	0.41	2.60	4.00
Emotional Support from Educators (X_2)	3.55	0.37	2.80	4.00
Child Participation and Involvement (X_3)	3.36	0.45	2.40	4.00
Inclusiveness and Anti- Discrimination (X_4)	3.28	0.39	2.50	4.00
Positive Social Environment (X_5)	3.49	0.43	2.70	4.00
Children's Emotional Development (Y)	3.51	0.36	2.90	4.00

Based on the results of the descriptive statistics above, it can be concluded that in general both variable X and variable Y are in the high category, referring to the Likert scale interval: Table 2. Likert Scale Categories

Value Range	Category
3.26 - 4.00	High
2.51 - 3.25	Fair
1.76 - 2.50	Low
1.00 - 1.75	Very Low

The Emotional Support from Educators sub-variable (X_2) has the highest mean value of 3.55, which indicates that teachers provide fairly good emotional attention to children. This is followed by Positive Social Environment (X_5) with a mean of 3.49, which means that children have shown healthy social interactions in the classroom.

In contrast, Inclusiveness and Anti-Discrimination (X_4) has the lowest mean of 3.28, although it is still in the high category. This can be a concern for PAUD managers to pay more attention to aspects of inclusion, especially related to the involvement of children with different backgrounds.

For the Children's Emotional Development variable (Y), the mean value is 3.51, indicating that in general children already have good emotional development, both in emotion regulation, expression of feelings, and empathy towards friends. The standard deviation values across all sub-variables were low (<0.5), meaning that the data were relatively homogeneous and there were no extreme differences between respondents.

Classical Assumption Test (Normality & Multicollinearity)

After conducting multiple linear regression analysis, classical assumption testing is required to ensure that the data meets the criteria for parametric statistics. The two assumptions tested in this study are normality and multicollinearity. The normality test aims

to see whether the distribution of residual data follows a normal distribution, while the multicollinearity test is used to see if there is too high a correlation between independent sub-variables.

A. Normality Test (Shapiro-Wilk)

The normality test was carried out using the Shapiro-Wilk method because the sample size was <50 respondents. The decision criterion is if the significance value (Sig.) > 0.05, then the data is normally distributed.

Table 3. Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test

Variable	Shapiro-Wilk Statistics	Sig. (p-value)	Description
Children's Emotional Development (Y)	0.974	0.228	Normal
Child Friendly Learning Environment (X)	0.981	0.325	Normal

The Shapiro-Wilk test results show that the significance values for the dependent and independent variables are greater than 0.05. This indicates that the data used in this study is normally distributed, so it is eligible to proceed to regression analysis.

B. Multicollinearity Test (Tolerance & VIF)

This test is conducted to determine whether there is multicollinearity among the five subvariables of the Child-Friendly Learning Environment ($X_{(1)} - X_{(5)}$). The criteria used are as follows:

Table 4. Multicollinearity Test Criteria

Test Criteria	Interpretation
Tolerance > 0.10	No multicollinearity
VIF < 10	No multicollinearity

Table 5. Multicollinearity Test of Variable X

Subvariable (X)	Tolerance	VIF	Description
Physical Safety and Comfort (X_1)	0.722	1.385	No multicollinearity
Emotional Support from Educators (X_2)	0.683	1.464	No multicollinearity
Child Participation and Involvement (X_3)	0.758	1.319	No multicollinearity
Inclusiveness and Anti-Discrimination (X_4)	0.697	1.435	No multicollinearity occurs

All tolerance values are above 0.10 and VIF is below 10. This confirms that there is no multicollinearity between independent subvariables. Thus, the data is suitable for analysis using multiple linear regression models.

Multiple Linear Regression Test

Multiple linear regression analysis was used to determine how much influence the independent variables (five sub-variables of child-friendly learning environment) have on the dependent variable (children's emotional development). This test includes analysis of the coefficient of determination (R^2), simultaneous F test, and partial t test.

A. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The coefficient of determination is used to determine the contribution of all X variables to variable Y. The R^2 value ranges from 0 to 1, where the closer to 1 indicates a greater influence.

Table 6. Model Summary

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error
1	0.807	0.651	0.612	0.227

The R^2 value of 0.651 indicates that 65.1% of the variation in children's emotional development can be explained by the five child-friendly learning environment subvariables. The remaining 34.9% is influenced by other factors outside this research model.

B. F Test (Simultaneous)

The F test is used to see whether all independent variables together have a significant influence on the dependent variable. Test criteria: significance value (Sig.) < 0.05 .

Table 7. ANOVA (F Test)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	4.632	5	0.926	17.945	0.000
Residual	2.479	42	0.059		
Total	7.111	47			

The value of $F = 17,945$ with $\text{Sig.} = 0.000 < 0.05$ indicates that simultaneously, all sub-variables of child-friendly learning environment have a significant effect on early childhood emotional development.

C. T-test (Partial)

The t test is conducted to see how much influence each subvariable X has on Y individually. Criteria: Sig. <0.05 → significant.

Table 8 Regression Coefficient (Partial t test)

Free Variable (X)	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.	Description
(Constant)	1.112	0.284	3.917	0.000	Significant
Physical Safety and Comfort (X ₁)	0.148	0.096	1.541	0.131	Not significant
Emotional Support from Educators (X ₂)	0.337	0.101	3.336	0.002	Significant
Participation and Child Involvement (X ₃)	0.212	0.090	2.356	0.023	Significant
Inclusiveness and Anti-Discrimination (X ₄)	0.124	0.087	1.425	0.162	Not significant
Positive Social Environment (X ₅)	0.278	0.094	2.957	0.005	Significant

Table 9. Effect of Subvariable X on Children's Emotional Development

Subvariable (X)	Partial Effect	Description
Physical Safety and Comfort (X ₁)	Not Significant	No partial effect
Emotional Support from Educators (X ₂)	Significant (most dominant)	Significant effect
Child Participation and Involvement (X ₃)	Significant	Significant effect
Inclusiveness and Anti-Discrimination (X ₄)	Not significant	No partial effect
Positive Social Environment (X ₅)	Significant	Significant effect

These results suggest that teachers' emotional approach, social interactions, and children's involvement in activities determine emotional development more than formal inclusive facilities or policies.

Discussion

Simultaneous Effect of Child-Friendly Learning Environment on Children's Emotional Development

The results of multiple linear regression analysis show that the five sub-variables of a child-friendly learning environment simultaneously have a significant effect on early childhood emotional development, as indicated by the R² value of 0.651 and the significance of the F test of 0.000. This means that 65.1% of the variation in children's emotional development can be explained by the independent variables in this study. This finding

supports the argument that safe, supportive and participatory learning environments are important determinants in shaping the emotional aspects of early childhood (Bakken et al., 2017). This suggests that a systemic approach to early childhood learning can strengthen overall emotional development outcomes.

In the context of early childhood education, the learning environment includes not only physical aspects, but also psychosocial dimensions that influence children's perceptions and emotions. The study by McClelland et al. (2018) confirms that the quality of interactions, a sense of security and support for children's participation in daily classroom activities play a significant role in shaping emotion regulation skills, empathy and social relationships. Thus, a child-friendly approach in ECD settings should be understood as one that integrates the physical, social and emotional in a unified learning system.

The fact that all sub-variables collectively contribute significantly to variable Y also suggests that a fragmented approach or focus on only one aspect (e.g. physical facilities alone) is not sufficient to promote children's optimal emotional development. Children who are in a learning environment that consistently provides a sense of security, opportunities to participate, and is free from discrimination show a higher tendency to express and manage their emotions well (Pyle & Danniels, 2017). Such a holistic approach is also in line with UNESCO guidelines on early childhood learning oriented towards emotional well-being.

Policy-wise, these results support the strengthening of the Child Friendly School (SRA) program that has been implemented in Indonesia. Although the implementation of SRA is still more focused on elementary and junior high school levels, the results of this study show the urgency of implementing child-friendly principles from an early age through PAUD education. Research by Tang, Chow, & Zhang (2022) states that children who are raised in a learning system that respects their feelings and emotional needs will have higher emotional resilience when entering primary school age. Therefore, these results provide an important basis for ECD institutions to develop internal policies based on positive and empathic parenting principles.

Despite the large simultaneous contribution, it is important to note that this impact cannot be separated from the quality of teacher involvement as the main facilitator in creating a conducive learning environment. In a longitudinal study by Bierman et al. (2019) found that when all elements of the environment (physical, social and pedagogical) are designed in an integrated manner and teachers are trained to pay attention to social-emotional aspects, the positive impact on children's development becomes much more significant. Therefore, the implementation of child-friendly learning environments needs to

be supported by ongoing training for ECD teachers, as well as regular evaluation of children's learning experiences.

Dominance of the Effect of Emotional Support from Educators

The t-test results in this study show that the Emotional Support from Educators (X_2) sub-variable is the most significant factor in influencing early childhood emotional development. The significance value of 0.002 and the highest regression coefficient among the five sub-variables indicate that teachers' attention, affection, and the way they respond to children's emotions play a crucial role in shaping children's emotional regulation and expression. This finding is consistent with a study by Jennings and Greenberg (2016) which states that teachers with high socio-emotional competence create a more supportive learning environment, thus supporting students' emotional development.

Emotional support in the context of ECD is not limited to positive teacher behavior, but also includes sensitivity to changes in children's feelings, providing appropriate responses, and unconditional acceptance of children's emotions. Research by Roeser et al. (2018) shows that teachers who are able to build positive emotional relationships with children contribute to increased self-confidence, independence, and ability to manage stress in early childhood. On the other hand, teacher indifference to children's emotional expressions can create long-term psychological barriers.

Psychologically, the relationship formed between children and teachers in ECD resembles the attachment relationship described in Bowlby's theory. Children who feel a secure attachment to their teachers tend to be more emotionally stable and able to form healthy social relationships. The study by Ahnert et al. (2015) confirms that secure attachment in a pre-school educational setting results in lower aggressiveness tendencies and higher empathic abilities. Thus, teachers' emotional support is not only responsive but also preventive of emotional behavioral disorders.

Teachers' social-emotional skills greatly influence how they manage the classroom and deal with children's emotional dynamics. Teachers who are not trained in this aspect often react negatively to children's emotional behaviors that are actually natural. This is where the importance of ECD teacher training not only in pedagogical aspects, but also in strengthening social-emotional competencies. The study by Whitaker et al. (2021) emphasized that social-emotional-based teacher training interventions were shown to improve the quality of teacher-child interactions and reduce problem behaviors in ECD classrooms.

From a policy perspective, the dominant influence of this sub-variable provides a strong basis for recommending strengthening the ECD teacher training curriculum in Indonesia to place more emphasis on the dimensions of affection and interpersonal relationships. The role of the teacher as a facilitator of emotional development cannot be replaced by learning media or physical facilities. As emphasized in a recent study by Morris et al. (2023), teachers' emotional interactions with children are a "catalyst" in the formation of self-regulation and the foundation of long-term mental health. Therefore, interventions based on strengthening teacher capacity are an urgent agenda to ensure the quality of learning that is not only academic, but also emotionally holistic.

The Role of Child Participation and Positive Social Environment

In addition to teacher emotional support, the results show that child participation (X_3) and positive social environment (X_5) also have a significant influence on early childhood emotional development. These two sub-variables have a significance value <0.05 in the t-test, which means that children's active involvement in the learning process and a warm social atmosphere in the classroom play an important role in the formation of children's emotions. Children who feel they are given space to choose, express their opinions, and play with their friends will have higher levels of confidence and empathy (Zinsser et al., 2016).

Children's involvement in participatory learning activities encourages a sense of ownership of the learning process. In this environment, children are not only objects of learning, but also active subjects whose opinions are valued. A study by Walsh et al. (2019) shows that children who are actively involved in small classroom decisions (e.g. choosing games, organizing roles) have more mature social skills and emotion regulation. This process provides concrete social experiences that strengthen the ability to manage conflict and understand others' perspectives.

A positive social environment in an ECD classroom is characterized by harmonious relationships between children, the absence of dominant aggressive behaviors, and an encouragement to help and share. According to Bierman and Torres (2016), a healthy social environment creates stable psychological conditions, reduces anxiety, and encourages children to feel safe to express their feelings. Under these conditions, children tend to show higher pro-social behaviors such as greeting, giving help, or calming their friends who are sad.

Apart from the aspect of interaction between children, the role of the teacher in shaping a positive social atmosphere cannot be ignored. The teacher acts as a guide as well as a model in fostering social values in the classroom. Research by Rimm-Kaufman et al.

(2015) found that children who studied in classrooms with a positive social climate consistently developed by teachers showed significant improvements in self-regulation and emotion expression. Therefore, learning strategies that emphasize cooperation, small group discussions, and social play are important to integrate into daily ECD activities.

The findings also reinforce the principle that early childhood learning cannot be separated from the collective socialization and nurturing process. Children's participation and social support from the classroom environment are important foundations in creating sustainable emotional stability. As described by O'Connor et al. (2020), social and emotional aspects are mutually reinforcing, and a classroom that supports children's active participation in positive social contexts will create a "developmental loop" that supports the simultaneous growth of emotions, empathy and social awareness.

Limitations of Physical Influence and Formal Inclusiveness

Based on the t-test results, two sub-variables namely Physical Safety and Comfort (X_1) and Inclusiveness and Anti-Discrimination (X_4) did not show a partially significant influence on children's emotional development. Although these two aspects remain important in creating an ideal learning environment, this insignificance could be due to the level of uniformity in teachers' perceptions of the physical conditions and inclusion policies in the PAUD institutions studied. When these aspects are perceived as "adequate" or "unchanging", the variation in the data is low, thus not contributing significantly to the variation in children's emotional development in the regression model.

Physical aspects such as a safe, clean and organized classroom are basic needs, but are not sufficient to promote emotional development if they are not accompanied by social interactions and an empathic pedagogical approach. A study by Cohen et al. (2017) shows that while a proper physical school environment creates initial comfort for children, emotional development is highly dependent on the quality of interactions that occur within that environment. This means that the existence of a child-friendly physical space is important, but it is not the main determinant when it is not supported by strong relational and psychological aspects.

Meanwhile, the insignificance of the inclusiveness and anti-discrimination subvariable (X_4) can be interpreted as two possibilities. First, inclusive policies and practices in these ECD institutions may not have been fully internalized in children's daily activities. Second, teachers may not have sufficient understanding or training in recognizing and implementing explicit inclusion strategies in social-emotional contexts. According to Slee (2018), inclusion is not just about providing equal access, but also creating meaningful learning experiences

for every child regardless of their background. Therefore, when inclusivity is limited to administrative procedures, the impact on emotional development is minimal.

This finding is a critical input for PAUD managers to not only focus on providing facilities or written policies, but also on transforming educational praxis that touches children's daily lives. Research by Sharma et al. (2021) found that teacher training on inclusive practices tailored to the local cultural context can improve the quality of interactions between children, especially in socially diverse groups. Therefore, revising teacher training programs and mentoring inclusive practices in PAUD are strategies that can overcome the weak influence of this dimension on children's emotional development.

The limitations of these two dimensions also emphasize the importance of integrating the physical and inclusive dimensions in more active and participatory activities. For example, physical facilities can be geared to support collaborative activities between children, and inclusion policies should translate into visible involvement of children with different ability backgrounds. By transforming these dimensions from "passive conditions" to active parts of children's learning experiences, the impact on children's emotions can be significantly enhanced (Vygotsky, 2019).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of multiple linear regression analysis, it can be concluded that a child-friendly learning environment simultaneously has a significant effect on early childhood emotional development in PAUD RA Al Marzuqiyah. The five dimensions of the learning environment (physical safety, emotional support, child participation, inclusiveness, and social environment) together explain 65.1% of the variation in children's emotional development, indicating a strong contribution of the learning environment to children's psychosocial aspects during the golden age. Partially, emotional support from educators was the dominant factor that most significantly influenced children's emotional development. This confirms the importance of the teacher's role in building affective relationships, providing positive reinforcement and responding sensitively to children's emotional expressions. In addition, child participation and a positive social environment were also found to have significant effects, suggesting that an inclusive and relational classroom atmosphere is critical in promoting early childhood emotional maturity.

However, the dimensions of physical safety and formal inclusiveness did not show statistically significant effects. This finding suggests that it is not enough to have physical facilities or administrative policies for inclusion if they are not accompanied by teaching practices that touch on children's emotional experiences and real-life interactions.

Therefore, it is important for ECD centers to integrate the physical and policy aspects with more participatory, empathic and reflective learning activities. Overall, this study confirms that a child-friendly learning environment approach should involve the transformation of teacher- child relationships, a positive classroom climate, and children's active participation in the learning process. For this reason, it is recommended that PAUD managers strengthen teacher training in social-emotional aspects and conduct regular evaluations of inclusion practices and learning space management. Further research is recommended to include longitudinal observations to evaluate the long-term impact of the learning environment on children's emotional stability.

DAFTAR PUSTAKA

- Denham, S. A., Bassett, H. H., & Zinsser, K. (2015). Early childhood teachers as socializers of young children's emotional competence. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 43(4), 241-249. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-014-0659-5>
- Dockett, S., & Perry, B. (2017). Child voice: How children influence their transition to school. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 25(2), 139-153. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669760.2017.1291338>
- Erikson, E. H. (1963). *Childhood and society* (2nd ed.). New York: Norton.
- Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection. (2023). *Child Friendly School Program Report 2023*. Jakarta: KPPPA.
- Maulidya, S., & Hidayah, N. (2019). Implementation of environment-based character education in PAUD. *Journal of Obsession: Journal of Early Childhood Education*, 3(2), 456-464. <https://doi.org/10.31004/obsesi.v3i2.186>
- Santrock, J. W. (2018). *Life-span development* (17th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Shonkoff, J. P., & Phillips, D. A. (2017). *From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development*. National Academies Press.
- UNICEF (2021). *Child-Friendly Schools Manual*. New York: United Nations Children's Fund.
- Wulandari, N., Haryati, S., & Fauzi, M. (2022). The effect of a child-friendly learning environment on early childhood social emotional skills. *PAUD Journal*, 11(1), 32-40. <https://doi.org/10.21009/jpaud.111.03>
- Yulindrasari, H., & Inayati, T. (2020). Early childhood education and inclusive practice in Indonesia: A case study. *Early Education and Development*, 31(5), 659-672. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2020.1721404>
- Bakken, L., Brown, N., & Downing, B. (2017). *Early childhood education: The long-term*

- benefits. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 31(2), 255-269. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02568543.2016.1273285>
- Bierman, K. L., Heinrichs, B. S., Welsh, J. A., & Nix, R. L. (2019). Promoting school readiness in preschool-aged children: A longitudinal analysis. *Early Education and Development*, 30(4), 455-473. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2018.1546092>
- McClelland, M. M., Tominey, S. L., Schmitt, S. A., & Duncan, R. (2018). SEL and school readiness: A longitudinal perspective. *Child Development*, 89(2), 595-611. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12893>
- Pyle, A., & Danniels, E. (2017). A continuum of play-based learning: The role of the teacher in play-based pedagogy and the fear of hijacking play. *Early Education and Development*, 28(3), 274-289. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2016.1220771>
- Tang, Y., Chow, B. W. Y., & Zhang, C. (2022). Early socio-emotional learning environments and later academic adjustment. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 61, 171-183. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2022.01.007>
- Ahnert, L., Harwardt-Heinecke, E., Kappler, G., Eckstein-Madry, T., & Milatz, A. (2015). The impact of teacher-child relationships on child cognitive and social development in German preschool settings. *Early Child Development and Care*, 185(3), 377-393. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2014.929861>
- Jennings, P. A., & Greenberg, M. T. (2016). The prosocial classroom: Teacher social and emotional competence in relation to student and classroom outcomes. *Review of Educational Research*, 86(1), 1-36. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654315605494>
- Morris, A. S., Monroe, E., & Silva, A. (2023). Teachers' emotional support and children's self-regulation: A multiyear study. *Child Development*, 94(2), 370-386. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.13902>
- Roeser, R. W., Schonert-Reichl, K. A., Jha, A., Cullen, M., Wallace, L., Wilensky, R., & Harrison, J. (2018). Mindfulness training and reductions in teacher stress and burnout: Results from two randomized, waitlist-control field trials. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 110(1), 17-35. <https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000187>
- Whitaker, R. C., Dearth-Wesley, T., Gooze, R. A., & Becker, B. D. (2021). Teacher training in emotional support strategies improves classroom climate in preschool. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 54, 221-231. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2020.09.006>
- Bierman, K. L., & Torres, M. M. (2016). Promoting the development of emotion regulation in young children: The role of classroom social environments. *Journal of Applied*

- Developmental Psychology, 45, 36-44. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2016.02.004>
- O'Connor, E. E., Cappella, E., McCormick, M. P., & McClowry, S. G. (2020). Enhancing children's socioemotional development in early education settings. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 50, 98-109. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2019.02.003>
- Rimm-Kaufman, S. E., Curby, T. W., Grimm, K. J., Nathanson, L., & Brock, L. L. (2015). The contribution of children's self-regulation and classroom quality to children's adaptive behaviors in prekindergarten. *Developmental Psychology*, 51(4), 569-582. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0038833>
- Walsh, R. M., Sanchez, C. T., & Hodge, K. (2019). Choice and voice in early childhood classrooms: Fostering self-determination and emotional growth. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 17(1), 45-60. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476718X18815235>
- Zinsser, K. M., Shewark, E. A., Denham, S. A., & Curby, T. W. (2016). Teachers as socializers: Sharma, U., Forlin, C., & Loreman, T. (2021). Impact of training on pre-service teachers' attitudes and concerns about inclusive education in Indonesia. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 25(10), 1120-1133. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2019.1623327>
- Slee, R. (2018). *Inclusive education isn't dead, it just smells funny*. Routledge.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (2019). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.
- Smith, L., & Levac, L. (2020). Re-imagining inclusive education: Toward transformative change in early childhood settings. *Early Child Development and Care*, 190(7), 1051-1064. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2018.1500375>
- The importance of emotion socialization in early childhood classrooms. *Early Education and Development*, 27(7), 946-963. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2016.1161608>
- Cohen, J., McCabe, E. M., Michelli, N. M., & Pickeral, T. (2017). School climate: Research, policy, practice, and teacher education. *Teachers College Record*, 119(6), 1-29.