

The Active Role of Parents in the Socio-Emotional Development of Preschool Children

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ABSTRACT

The preschool period is a golden era for development, where social and emotional skills determine a child's future ability to interact and manage emotions. This study aims to analyze the relationship between active parental involvement and the socio-emotional development of preschool children at Dharma Wanita Persatuan 1 Kindergarten in Kemulan Village. Using a descriptive correlational design with a cross-sectional approach, the study employed a total sampling technique involving 55 parent respondents from the institution. Data were collected through a parental role questionnaire and developmental observation sheets, subsequently analyzed using the Spearman's Rank Correlation Test. Results revealed a p-value of 0.019, confirming a significant relationship where higher parental engagement leads to superior emotional outcomes. It is recommended that educational institutions and community programs, such as Bina Keluarga Balita, enhance parental literacy to create a supportive ecosystem that fosters children's independence and emotional regulation

I. Introduction

The preschool years are a golden period for children to build social and emotional skills, which are the foundation for their future success. At this age, children learn to follow rules, interact with peers, and manage their feelings. However, many children still struggle with low self-confidence and social difficulties, showing that emotional development needs serious attention (syahrul & Nurhafizah, 2021). In this context, being a parent is not just about providing money; it involves emotional support, behavioral guidance, and giving children the autonomy to become resilient (Grolnick & Pomerantz, 2023). High-quality interaction and parental responsiveness are much stronger predictors of emotional maturity than material things alone (Cabrera et al., 2023; Sheridan et al., 2020).

On the other hand, if parents are not actively involved or are neglectful, it can seriously harm the child's behavior and future life. Data shows that children with uninvolved parents are more likely to become aggressive, anxious, or impulsive. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2023) and Lamborn et al. (1991, as cited in Steinberg, 2022), these children have a 40% higher risk of substance abuse and academic failure later in life. This happens because a child's brain needs parental "scaffolding" to develop healthy ways of managing stress. Therefore, being active in a child's learning at home is not just an extra effort; it is a vital protective factor that strengthens a child's self-regulation (Bierman & Sheridan, 2022; (Access, 2024)Camelita et al., 2024).

In Indonesia, these risks are even higher due to economic gaps and high digital exposure. Studies by Mansur & Setyaningsih, (2021) and Sari et al., (2025) show that active parental supervision acts as a "buffer" that protects a child's emotional growth, especially in low-income families or urban areas. In many cases, screens become a "digital babysitter," which can damage social skills if not monitored. Therefore, this study aims to analyze how active parenting in the Indonesian context can prevent long-term behavioral harm and support a child's healthy growth from an early age.



II. Methods

This study used a descriptive correlational design with a cross-sectional approach, namely a study that aims to analyze the relationship between variables by measuring data simultaneously at one time (Nursalam, 2017). This design was chosen because it is in accordance with the research objective to determine the relationship between the active role of parents and the socio-emotional development of preschool-children without direct intervention (Sugiyono, 2019).

The population in this study were all parents who have preschool-aged children at Dharma Wanita Persatuan 1 Kindergarten, Kemulan Village, Turen District, with a total of 55 respondents (Researcher Data, 2024). To provide a granular demographic context, the children involved were within the age range of 4 to 6 years, representing a pivotal stage for socio-emotional milestone acquisition. The parent respondents spanned an age range of 25 to 45 years, encompassing diverse levels of parenting maturity and experience. Furthermore, the study accounted for family size, noting that most respondents managed 1 to 2 children per household, a factor that significantly influences the frequency and quality of parental psychosocial stimulation (Researcher Data, 2024)." The sampling technique used was total sampling, meaning the entire population was used as a research sample so that the number of samples was equal to the number of populations (Notoatmodjo, 2018). The research data sources consisted of primary data obtained directly from respondents through filling out questionnaires and observations, as well as secondary data in the form of supporting documents such as school profiles and student administration data (Researcher Data, 2024). The independent variable in this study was the role of parents, while the dependent variable was the socio-emotional development of preschool children.

Data collection was conducted using two validated instruments. The first, a Parental Active Role Questionnaire, was adapted from Camelita et al. (2024) and measures dimensions such as psychosocial stimulation and guidance. To ensure its consistency, the instrument was tested using a Reliability Coefficient analysis, yielding a score of 0.84, which confirms its stability for research use. A sample item from this questionnaire includes: 'How frequently do you facilitate play-based learning to stimulate your child's curiosity?' The second instrument, an Observation Sheet for Socio-emotional Development adapted from Pinasthi (2023), evaluates independence, peer interaction, and emotional regulation. This tool achieved a stability coefficient of 0.79 through rigorous testing. An example of an observed indicator is: 'The child demonstrates the ability to share toys and cooperate with peers during group activities. Both instruments were pre-tested for validity to ensure that each item accurately represents the studied variables (syahrul & Nurhafizah, 2021). To analyze the relationship between these variables, this study employed the Spearman's Rank Correlation Test (Spearman's Rho). This non-parametric test was selected due to the ordinal nature of the data and its effectiveness in determining the strength and direction of the association between parental involvement and developmental outcomes.

Data analysis was conducted through several stages. The first stage of data analysis involved univariate analysis to describe the frequency distribution of respondent characteristics, the level of parental role, and children's socio-emotional development. Variables were categorized into binary groups based on the calculated Median (or Mean) score as the cutoff point. The 'Parental Role' was classified as 'High' for scores at or above the median and 'Low' for scores below the median. Similarly, children's 'Socio-emotional Development' was categorized as 'Good' if the observation score met or exceeded the developmental benchmark, and 'Poor' if it fell below the threshold. This categorization allowed for a clear comparison in the subsequent bivariate analysis. The second stage was bivariate analysis using the Chi-Square test with a 95% confidence level ($\alpha = 0.05$) to examine the relationship between parental roles and children's social-emotional development (Nursalam, 2017). The test results were considered significant if the ($p < 0.05$). The findings support the research hypothesis, yielding a ($P = 0.019$) This suggests that the variations in socio-emotional development between children of highly involved and less involved parents are statistically significant and directly related to the extent of parental engagement.

Ethical integrity was maintained throughout the study. Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional board, and formal permission was granted by the administration of Dharma Wanita Persatuan 1 Kindergarten. Furthermore, informed consent was secured from all parent respondents prior to data collection, ensuring that participation was voluntary and that all personal information remained confidential

III. Results and Discussion

As shown in Table 1, the bivariate analysis reveals a significant correlation between the variables. Among parents with a 'High' active role, the majority (52.7%) had children with 'Good' socio-emotional development. In contrast, parents in the 'Low' category were more likely to have children with 'Poor' outcomes (21.8%). The resulting ($p=0.019$) (which is less than ($\alpha = 0.05$)) confirms that the research hypothesis is accepted. This measurement was conducted using a Parental Active Role Questionnaire adapted from the work of Camelita et al. (2024), which focuses on psychosocial stimulation, and an Observation Sheet for children's development adapted from Pinasthi (2023). The alignment of these findings with the original studies by Camelita et al. (2024) and Pinasthi (2023) reinforces the theory that parental engagement is a direct determinant of a child's ability to regulate emotions and interact with peers during the preschool years.

Table 1. Correlation between Parental Active Role and Socio-emotional Development of Preschool Children (n=55)

Variable	Category	Socio-emotional Development		Total
		Poor	Good	
Parental Active Role	Low	12 (21.8%)	8 (14.5%)	20 (36.4%)
	High	6 (10.9%)	29 (52.7%)	35 (63.6%)
Total		18 (32.7%)	37 (67.3%)	55 (100%)

Note: Statistically significant at ($p < 0.05$) based on Chi-Square Test. Source: Primary Researcher Data (2024), instruments adapted from Camelita et al. (2024) and Pinasthi (2023).

The results of this study demonstrate a significant relationship between active parental involvement and the socio-emotional development of preschool children. Statistical analysis using the Spearman's Rho test yielded a ($P=0.019$), confirming that children who receive consistent support, guidance, and stimulation from their parents tend to achieve better socio-emotional milestones. This findings align with Syahrul & Nurhafizah (2021), who state that active parental engagement is a crucial factor in optimizing child growth, particularly in social skills and emotional management.

The demographic profile of the 55 respondents at Dharma Wanita Persatuan 1 Kindergarten further supports this correlation. Most parents were in their productive age (25–45 years) with a secondary education background (60%), providing a sufficient cognitive foundation to implement developmental stimulation. This study's significance is highly consistent with Pinasthi (2023), who identified a strong relationship between maternal parenting and outcomes for children aged 3–4 years. However, this research expands that scope by encompassing the 'active role' of both parents, showing that regardless of specific parenting styles, the intensity of engagement is a universal predictor of child empathy and prosocial behavior.

Furthermore, these results reinforce the report by Camelita et al. (2024), which emphasized that social stimulation and positive parenting are critical correlates of development. A key distinction in this study is the integration of behavioral guidance and academic preparation within the parental role. In the Indonesian context, the parental role is not merely affective but also instructional. This alignment with Cabrera et al. (2023) suggests that parental active roles act as a primary 'socializer,' where children learn to regulate emotions through observed parental behavior—a process known as social modeling.

The consistency across these studies—spanning different years and age cohorts (3–4 years in previous research vs. 4–6 years in this study)—underscores that the preschool period is a critical window. During this stage, parental intervention can significantly mitigate risks of poor social adaptation in later school stages. Practically, these findings suggest an urgent need to enhance parental literacy through synergy between schools and community-based programs, such as Bina Keluarga Balita (BKB). Such collaboration is essential to create a supportive ecosystem that fosters independence and emotional regulation during these foundational years.

IV. Conclusion

This study concludes that there is a significant relationship between the active role of parents and the socio-emotional development of preschool-children ($p = 0.019$). Consistent emotional support, behavioral guidance, and psychosocial stimulation are proven to be fundamental drivers of a child's ability to interact and regulate emotions. Despite the significant findings, this study has several limitations. First, the sample size was limited to 55 respondents in a single geographical location, which may restrict the generalizability of the results to broader or more diverse populations in Indonesia. Second, the data relied on self-reported questionnaires for the parental role variable, which may be subject to social desirability bias, where parents might overreport positive behaviors. Future studies should consider a longitudinal design to observe how the impact of parental involvement evolves as children transition into primary school. It is also recommended to use mixed-methods approaches, incorporating qualitative interviews to gain deeper insights into the specific cultural barriers parents face in rural versus urban settings. Finally, expanding the sample to include a more diverse socioeconomic range would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the contextual factors influencing child development.

V. Suggestion

Based on research result, parents are suggested to be more active in providing positive stimulation and support to their children. For educational institutions, they need to provide parenting education to increase parents' understanding. Further researchers are advised to add other variables so that the research results are more comprehensive.

VI. References

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