

## The Effect of Social Skill on Children's Independence

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### ABSTRACT

*The aim of this study is to identify the effect of social skills on children's independence. The method employed in this study was a survey that explained the path analysis causal relationship through a quantitative approach. In this study, it was found a significant relationship between social skills and independence. The closeness of the relationship between interpersonal skills and independence was enlightened by the testing conducted on hypothesis showing that there was direct effect of social skills on kindergarten children's independence. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is significant direct relationship of social skills on the independence of kindergarten students*

**Keywords:** Social Skills; Independence; Early Age Children, Intelligence, Interpersonal.

### INTRODUCTION

Children as the future generations of a nation are the very important human resource as they determine the success of a country's development. To achieve better qualities of humans, they need to be provided with education as early as possible as this will be the initial formation of their basic personalities.

Early childhood education is a program that is very fundamental to provide the basic framework of the formation and development of basic knowledge, attitude, and skill of children. The first 3-4 years of life are very important for kids to study and develop. Their brain experiences rapid development since they were born and healthy brain development is the foundation to learn and to make a positive social connection (Melhuish, 2011). Mental and attitude are two the most important component to get intensive supervision as they will be difficult to be reformed once children enter the school." (Heckman & Wax, 2004, Heckman,

2006). Early age is the most fundamental stage of growth and development of individual (Sylva, 2010. Vandell, 2010). This is the most important period as it is the time when individual develops critically.

This period is referred to as the golden age. In this step, most of kids' potentials are experiencing very fast and remarkable growth and development (Sauriana, 2016) including personality formation (Rasalingam, Muniandy, & Rasalingam, 2014). Experiences acquired in this stage tend to last longer and affect children during their lifetime. Therefore, the roles of educators including parents, teachers, and other adults are very necessary for the development of all potentials possessed by kids at an early age. Education is a shared responsibility among families, societies, and governments. Among all educational environments, school environment is the most important sector to provide education to children because it highly affects their life development and even may threaten their life. A

study shows that negative effect of the environment where early age children live can harm their life forever after (Knudsen et al., 2006). Then, it is clear that effect of environment is very influential in the development of children like the environment of school, which in this case is the Kindergarten as that is the place where they will know and understand their environment's demands for the first time. This then becomes indicators of attitude and behavior expected shown by teachers in a more structural situation.

Attitudes and behaviors introduced in the school environment are the disciplines. Teachers as educators hold the very big roles in integrating disciplines to students at school because they directly involve in activities aiming at raising good attitudes and habits to lead students becoming a discipline and independent through daily tasks or activities.

The independence of early age children refers to their ability to perform daily activities or tasks by themselves or with very little assistance based on their developmental stage or capacities (Rusmayadi, 2017), and must be introduced at their early age. Independence taught to students earlier in their life will allow them to be able to arrange their activities schedules and accustomed to helping and appreciate others (Sidharto et al, 2007 , (Bokko, 2014). Furthermore, children are possible to fulfill their intrinsic and physical needs by themselves fully responsibly without depending on other people. In general, children's independence can be measured by observing how they act physically, emotionally and socially. People learn how to face various situations in their social environment until they can think and take the right decision in dealing with every single situation. Shared activities can help children to develop their thinking skills and attitude to be implemented in the societies and making it their personal attribute ( Sa'diyah, 2017), and mentally, they are ready to think by themselves (Covey, 1997). Various problems will occur when independence is not trained at the early age of children. Some parents project their future goals to their kids (Idrus, 2003) causing limitation of effort to pursuing dreams by their own method. Also, dependency will negatively affect children's personalities (Sidharto et al, 2007) leading them to be not confident, chiming in others, unable to develop their potency, and finally resulting in mental

retardation (Komala, 2015). It is because positive independence can support them to deal with various things including physical activities like managing themselves and psychological activities like decision making, problem-solving, self-confident, social skill, and interpersonal intelligence.

The children's independence is highly related to their status as individuals with self-confidence, social skill and interpersonal intelligence that has affected their ability to understand the environmental demands and they adapt their behavior to them (manifested through discipline attitudes). Developing children's social skills at an earlier age can support them to think rationally, decide their future, and understand themselves and others (Suud, 2017).

The development of children's emotional and social function is highly affected by systems existing in their schools (Roeser, Wolf, & Strobel, 2001) which means that school and all of its components especially teachers are factors determining the development of children's social skills (Setiawati et al, 2016). Similarly, Kupperminc, Leadbeater & Blatt (2001) stated that school effects are not only on academical skills and achievements but also on their psychosocial development.

Social skills are the most important aspects to develop as early as possible to prepare individuals facing various problems in the world related to their status as social creatures who will continuously do interaction. Children with better social skills will run their life more effectively too because they can select and perform appropriate attitudes based on environmental demands. Children will be able to adapt with standards expected by societies, select the appropriate ways of communication, having relationship with others, and appreciating them (Bakhtiar, 2015). This shows that children with good social skills can communicate well with other children in a group based on the applicable rules (etiquette). The development of social skills is affected by children's dependence on doing interaction with their environment. This then will bring positive impact on the integration of disciplinary behavior. Therefore, this skill will also bring a very big effect on developing dependence thus the self-discipline can be achieved.

Based on the discussion above, it is important to carry out study about relationship

between social skills and children's independence. The latter aspect is very important to take into account by first ensuring their social interaction ability through some social skills. Social skills are influential to children's independence. The more social skills performed by children, the higher their chance to show independent behavior (Rusmayadi, 2017). Therefore, teachers should consider it in conducting learning activities for early age learners at school by designing a good learning model and interaction among students. The aim of this study is to identify the effect of social skills on children's independence at kindergartens in South Sulawesi Province.

## METHOD

This study employed a survey method with quantitative approach to explain a causal relationship or path analysis. The population of this study referred to kindergarten students at B group in Makassar city academic year 2015/2016 with the total number of 6543. 142 among them, who studied in 14 different Regional Technical Implementation Units (UPTD) at the district level were involved as samples. The sampling technique used was *cluster sampling*. Each kid invited as sample was observed using observation instrument with Likert scale to identify their attitudes by putting checklist in each item they fulfill. Data were analyzed through some techniques including descriptive analysis, requirements analysis, and inferential analysis.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

Data proceeded in this study obtained from research samples with a total number of 142. Those respondents were early age students studying at kindergarten in Makassar city, in the second-semester, academic year of 2015/2016. Samples were selected using *multistage random cluster sampling* technique. Data were calculated and analyzed descriptively to identify the mean, median, modus, deviation standard, variance, maximum score, minimum score, range, and the total of scores. The description of data of this study from all research variables is presented in the table 1,2 and 3.

**Table 1.** Distribution of Social Skill Scores

Interval Class	Absolute Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Relative Frequency
80 – 81	2	2	1.4
82 – 83	12	14	8.5
84 – 85	14	28	9.9
86 – 87	26	54	18.3
88 – 89	26	80	18.3
90 – 91	33	113	23.2
92 - 93	17	130	12.0
84 – 95	10	140	7.0
96 – 97	2	142	1.4
Total	142		100%

**Table 2.** Distribution of Independence Scores

Interval Class	Absolute Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Relative Frequency
62 – 64	3	3	2.1
65 – 67	6	9	4.2
68 – 70	21	30	14.8
71 – 73	40	70	28.2
74 – 76	33	103	23.2
77 – 79	29	132	20.4
80 - 82	10	142	7.0
Total	142		100%

In this study, we found a significant correlation between Social Skills ( $X_1$ ) and Independence ( $X_2$ ). The closeness of the correlation between  $X_1$  and  $X_2$  was emphasized by hypothesis testing showing that there is a direct positive effect of Social Skills ( $X_1$ ) on Dependence ( $X_2$ ). Social skills refer to activities that put emphasis on good interaction. The success of interaction performed by a person to others proves the social skill she/he has. This will build children's independence to do an activity related to their surrounding environment.

The test performed to the hypothesis shows that social skills ( $X_1$ ) significantly affect independence ( $X_2$ ) which is proved by statistical test results.

Based on the analysis result, the path coefficient  $X_2X_1(p_{21})$  was 0.20,  $t_{count} = 2.16$ , and  $t_{table}$  with  $\alpha = 0.05$ , and  $df = 138$  we got 1.960. Because  $t_{count} = 2.16 > t_{table} = 1.960$ ; we identified that there is a direct effect of social skills ( $X_1$ ) on independence ( $X_2$ ).

**Table 3.** Path Coefficient of Social Skills toward Independence

Between Variables	Path Coefficient	t count	t table ( $\alpha=0.05,137$ )	Test Result
X <sub>2</sub> X <sub>1</sub>	0.20	2.16	1.96	Significant

Based on the table 3, it is clear that there was direct effect of Social Skills (X<sub>1</sub>) on kindergarten students' Independence (X<sub>2</sub>). Based on the analysis result, the path coefficient X<sub>2</sub>X<sub>1</sub>( $\rho_{21}$ ) was 0.20,  $t_{count} = 2.16$  and  $t_{table}$  with  $\alpha = 0.05$  and  $df = 138$  we got 1.960. Because  $t_{count} = 2.16 > t_{table} = 1.960$ ; it can be regarded that there was direct correlation of social skills (X<sub>1</sub>) on independence (X<sub>2</sub>). Statistically, independence is indicated with the score of  $(\rho_{y_2 \times \rho_{y_2}}) = 0.20 \times 0.20 = 0.04$  or 4%. This value shows that around 4% of changes variation in kindergarten learners' independence can be directly represented by their social skills. The finding interprets that social skills directly positively affect independence. In other words, social skills can lead the improvement of kindergarten students' independence.

## Discussion

Research findings show that social skills help children to start or to manage social interaction with other people according to the applicable rules. With good social skills, children's social interaction can be better managed. This will influence the activities they performed so that their independence will be built. Children grow with activities performed together with others leading them to get insight into how to think and behave in societies and making it their personal ways to act (Sa'diyah, 2017), and mentally, they can think by themselves (Covey, 1997). Findings of current study are in line with research found that the social skills of early age children in Kindergarten ABA IV Mangli Jember, allow them to mingle, socialize, and communicate well with their friends and teachers, to work together, to be patient waiting for a turn, to have the empathy to help friends facing difficulties dealing with task in the classroom, to share their food and toys, to succumb to their friends, and to show responsibility (Musyarofah, 2017).

Social skills refer to activities that focus on good interaction. Successful interaction with other people proves the quality of social skills a human has. This will build independence in children to do an activity related to their

environment. Independence is the ability of a person not to rely or continuously seek help to others in maintaining their physical needs indicated by the ability of the early age children to perform various skills in daily basis without assistance from others like feeding themselves, put on the shocks and clothes by their own, and go the toilet alone (Suardani, 2016). The higher the social skills children have, the easier they socialize and interact with people around them. This interaction is a form of social independence. This can be trained by inviting kids to play together in the break time, teach them how to work together with other friends through playing in a group, ask them to help others who are in trouble, ask them to share their food or drinks when there is a student forgetting bringing their meals, suggest them to share the toys when playing together, and ask them to share the stationery (pencils, erasers, sharpeners) and crayon with friends who forgot to bring theirs (Khairunnisa, Mering, & Fadillah., 2019). Absolutely, teachers have a very big role in improving children's independence by integrating it into the learning activities. Teachers must be able to integrate independence values into their learning activities both inside and outside classroom so that they can be stimulated to work together (Yamin & Sanan, 2013).

Guidance that can be provided by the teacher include giving student understanding, information, and advice, and let them be accustomed to activities showing their independence (Suryameng, 2019). Teachers have to facilitate children to experience fun environment (Hidayatulloh, 2014). They should always integrate each learning activity with independence training and create interesting learning conditions (Yamin & Sanan, 2013). Some supporting factors to train children's independence are academic curriculum applied in that kindergarten, teachers' motivation and awareness, and adequate infrastructure to train independence. Teachers' efforts to deal with difficulties which might hamper them can be by engaging children with problem-solving training and maintaining harmonious relationship with kids. Through togetherness, children will build their ability to share ideas and do activities based on what they perceive they should do which are in accordance with their ability. In other words, social skills enable them to exchange opinions to produce new thoughts

based on their ability leading them to be independent.

An independent person will show their initiatives, do hard work to get achievement, have high self-confidence, hardly ever seek protection to other people and have high curiosity (Susan, Fiske, Lindzey, et al, 2010). Independence is a condition when an individual can manage their own life and not be a burden of others. It is not egoism or living alone yet they are ready and able to build their own life with togetherness basis. Then, Gordon and Browne (2008) mentioned that social skills are strategies that can be utilized by children to learn and allow them to act appropriately in their environment. Social skills assist them to start or manage social interaction with other people based on the applicable rules. With good social skills, social interaction performed by kids will be well controlled and influence every activity they perform based on their ability leading them to independently behave.

Independence cannot be achieved without any effort, yet it must be trained through a long process. One of the strategies to achieve it is by creating conducive environment that can allow children to develop their independence. Independence should not be limitedly defined as the ability to do everything by their won, but it also means that children actively experience and carry our social activities. Through the involvement of social activities in a conducive environment, children's social skills will be created as they give positive responses through good attitude and behavior to others. Social skills help children to start or manage social interaction with other people based on the applicable rules. A good social skill allows children to carry out a well managed social interaction affecting their daily activities conducted based on their ability which then leads them to behave independently.

Therefore, children's independence is important to receive attention by first ensuring their social interaction trained through their social skills. Then it can be concluded that children's social skills give an influence on children's independence. The more social skills children perform, the higher their chance to be independent.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This research shows that there is a direct impact of social skills on children's

independence in kindergarten. Testing on hypothesis shows that the hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is significant direct effect of social skills on kindergarten students' independence.

After analyzing the findings, conclusion, and implication of this study, some suggestions are as follows: (1) teachers and other educational practitioners should provide more attention and develop the social skills and independence of children. This is highly crucial considering that training children to be discipline is an effort which aims to develop attitudes, habits, self-confidence, social skills, independence, or to develop those humans with particular characteristics especially to improve their mental quality and moral, and their interpersonal intelligence; (2) Parents should monitor children's discipline as it is very important for their development. By understanding applicable rules in their societies, children will feel safer because they know activities that should and should not be performed; (3) Researchers in the educational sector are suggested to research and reinvestigate and develop the result of this study to improve the discipline of early age children.

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