



Analysis of Early Childhood Social Interaction Difficulties: A Content Analysis

Dina Nanda Putri¹, Vebionita Megi Putri¹, Denny Rahmalia²

¹STAI-YDI Lubuk Sikaping Pasaman Sumatera Barat, Indonesia

²STAI Yayasan Tarbiyah Islamiyah (YASTIS) Lubuk Bagalung Padang, Indonesia

✉ dinanandaputri.04@gmail.com *

Article Information:

Received February 15, 2025

Revised March 8, 2025

Accepted April 19, 2025

Keywords: *Social interaction difficulties, early childhood, content analysis*

Abstract

Social interaction is an important aspect of early childhood development that affects their ability to build relationships with others. However, not all children are able to interact optimally, so an in-depth understanding of the barriers and appropriate strategies to support their social development is needed. This study examines social interaction difficulties in early childhood, the factors that influence them, and strategies to support the development of positive social interactions. Using a qualitative method with a content analysis approach, this study analyzed 15-25 sources of scientific literature from databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, Sinta, and Garuda published in the last ten years. The results show that social interaction is a fundamental aspect of early childhood development that influences communication skills, character building and social readiness. Factors that influence children's social interactions include parenting, the environment in which they grow up, interactions with peers, and the use of digital technology. Social interaction problems that are often encountered include withdrawn behavior, aggressiveness, difficulty sharing, and inability to understand the feelings of others. Strategies that can be applied to overcome social interaction difficulties include providing opportunities to play with peers, direct social skills training, avoiding coercion and comparing children, and increasing self-confidence. This study emphasizes the importance of the role of adults in creating an environment that supports optimal early childhood social development.

INTRODUCTION

Early age for humans is the most crucial stage in life because in this phase children have begun to experience various stimuli from the outside world (Sukatin et al., 2019). Based on this, at an early age it is very important to provide stimulation so that all aspects of child development can be facilitated. One of the aspects of early childhood development that must be fulfilled is the social emotional development of children and social emotional includes how children are able to relate and interact with others . But not all children can easily adapt to new people or new environments, because each child processes in such a way that is distinctively different from one child to another (Setiyowati, 2020). Social interaction is a relationship between individuals, individuals with groups, or groups with groups. This act of social interaction occurs when there are social

How to cite:

Putri, D. N., Putri, V. M., Rahmalia, D. (2025). Analysis of Early Childhood Social Interaction Difficulties: A Content Analysis. *Bunayya: Journal of Islamic Early Childhood Education*, 1(1), 21-27.

E-ISSN:

xxxx-xxxxx

Published by:

The Institute for Research and Community Service

relations that communicate either directly or indirectly through intermediaries, this is why social is two fundamental aspects in social interaction (Sagala & Yarni, 2023).

Social interaction is very important in the development of children from an early age. During this period, children begin to learn to understand themselves and others through social relationships with family, peers and teachers. Through these interactions, children develop various abilities such as communicating, sharing, cooperating, and understanding the norms and values that apply in their environment (Salman et al., 2020). Early childhood is often referred to as the golden age, because the stimulation provided during this period will have a major impact on children's future development.

Therefore, it is very important for adults around children, both parents and educators, to create an environment that supports healthy social interactions (Snow & Matthews, 2016). Lack of opportunities to interact can cause various obstacles in children's social development, such as difficulty establishing relationships, lack of confidence, and can even lead to aggressive behavior. In the world of early childhood education, social interaction does not only occur spontaneously, but can also be improved through appropriate learning methods. Teachers and parents play an important role in directing and facilitating children's social interactions, for example through games, group discussions, or other collaborative activities (Febriani et al., 2022; Humairoh & Agustina, 2021; Khotimah et al., 2025). Therefore, it is important for us to understand the challenges children may face in interacting, the factors that influence their social skills, and the strategies that can be applied to support the creation of positive social interactions from an early age.

However, in reality, not all young children are able to demonstrate optimal social skills. Some children experience barriers in building social relationships, such as difficulty starting conversations, showing empathy, or cooperating with peers. This condition is often influenced by various factors, such as the child's innate character, parenting, traumatic experiences, and limitations in their social environment (Arianti et al., 2024; Fuadia, 2022). Difficulties in social interaction can have an impact on children's emotional development and can hinder their adaptation process in the educational environment. Children who do not receive appropriate treatment tend to withdraw, become passive, or even show further deviant behavior.

For this reason, an appropriate and targeted approach is needed to identify and overcome social interaction difficulties in early childhood (Giordano et al., 2020). This can be done through collaboration between teachers, parents and professionals who understand child development. Strategies that can be applied include structured social stimulation, the use of play-based learning methods, and the application of an individualized approach to children who show certain obstacles. By understanding the unique conditions and needs of each child, interventions can be more effective in helping children develop their social skills gradually and in accordance with their developmental stages (Furqan, 2019). This research will focus on the various forms of social interaction difficulties experienced by early childhood and the efforts that can be made by the surrounding environment in overcoming them.

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative method with a content analysis approach (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Engkizar et al., 2023; Ramli et al., 2017). This method is carried out by collecting, analyzing, and reviewing various sources of literature related to the topic of social interaction in early childhood. The sources used came from scientific journal articles, reference books, reports on previous research results, and other academic publications published within the last ten years. The data collection process was conducted through searches in various scientific databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and accredited national journal portals such as Sinta and Garuda

(Langputeh et al., 2023; Zaitun et al., 2023). The keywords used in the search included: “early childhood social interaction”, ‘child social development’, ‘early childhood education’, and ‘social stimulation’.

From the search results, around 15 to 25 primary sources were selected that were considered the most relevant, up-to-date and of good scientific quality. The data collected was then analyzed descriptively-qualitatively, by grouping the information found into several themes, such as the definition of social interaction, factors that influence early childhood social interaction, and learning strategies that support their social development. The results of this analysis form the basis for formulating the conclusions and recommendations presented in this article. The literature review method was chosen because it is considered capable of providing an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the concept of social interaction in early childhood, while presenting various findings and best practices that have been applied in various educational contexts (Bullock et al., 1995; Mohammed et al., 2020).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Social interaction is a very important part of a child's development from an early age. During this time, children begin to establish their first social relationships with the adults around them, such as parents and educators, as well as with peers. These interactions occur through verbal and nonverbal communication, such as talking, gazing, touching, playing together, sharing and responding to others' emotions. The process becomes an important foundation in building various abilities, ranging from social, emotional, to cognitive skills (Mislia et al., 2019; Tari & Rosana, 2019; Uçan, 2022).

According to Thies et al (2016), social interaction is a reciprocal process between two or more individuals who influence and respond to each other. In the context of early childhood, social interactions occur in various situations both structured and unstructured and often through play activities. Santrock (2012) asserts that early childhood is a very sensitive period for social development, as it is during this time that children learn a lot about empathy, cooperation, communication and building relationships. Meanwhile, Vygotsky's theory (1978) emphasizes the importance of social interaction in cognitive development, especially through the concepts of scaffolding and zone of proximal development. In this view, children learn optimally when they interact with older or more competent people, who can guide them in reaching their next developmental potential.

The typical characteristics of social interaction in early childhood include spontaneous, emotional, and imitative children tend to imitate the behavior of adults or their peers. These interactions also usually occur in the context of play, which is the main activity of early childhood. As children get older and have more social experiences, their interaction skills develop. They begin to understand simple social rules, show empathy and learn to resolve conflicts socially. However, not all young children have optimal social interaction skills. There are still many children who face challenges in forming and maintaining social relationships. Nisa et al (2021) stated that some children tend to withdraw from the social environment, show aggressive behavior when playing, have difficulty cooperating, or have not been able to recognize and understand the feelings of others. These children often experience obstacles in the adaptation process in the school environment and the wider community.

Difficulties in social interaction in early childhood can be caused by various factors. First, inconsistent or unresponsive parenting can affect children's social development. Parents who are too authoritarian or too permissive tend not to provide enough space for children to learn to be independent and socialize (Rukayah et al., 2024). Children raised in such an environment may become insecure,

dependent or, conversely, overly dominating in social relationships. Second, lack of social stimulation from the environment is also a major factor. Children who are rarely invited to interact, are not used to playing with friends, or live in a closed environment are likely to not have enough opportunities to practice their social skills (Kurnia, 2020). Third, communication limitations, such as speech delays, also have an impact on how children form social relationships. Children who experience language barriers often feel frustrated when interacting and prefer to withdraw.

Another factor that is becoming increasingly influential is the use of technology, especially gadgets. In many cases, young children spend too much time in front of a screen, either playing games, watching videos, or other digital activities. This indirectly reduces their time to interact directly with the surrounding environment. Batinah et al (2022) noted that overexposure to screens leads to decreased face-to-face communication skills, reduced empathy, and difficulty establishing healthy social relationships. Children's success in establishing social interactions is not only determined by internal factors such as temperament or innate character, but is strongly influenced by modifiable external factors, such as the quality of parenting, play environment, and support from educators (Syahrul & Nurhafizah, 2021). Warm, open, and consistent parenting known as democratic parenting can create a sense of security in children. Children who feel loved and valued usually grow up to be confident and easy to socialize.

The environment also plays an important role. A stable home environment, a pleasant school atmosphere, and a supportive community can be a positive platform for children's social development. Hanifah & Farida (2023) showed that an environment rich in social stimulation and providing space for children to explore will shape meaningful social experiences. One effective strategy is through play-based learning approaches and collaborative projects. Fitri & Rusdiani (2024) revealed that group play activities in early childhood education institutions are proven to be able to improve children's abilities in terms of cooperation, communication, and conflict resolution. Playing with peers is a very effective means of social learning. In play activities, children learn to share, take turns, manage emotions, and solve problems collectively (Maulida, 2020). Children who are active in group play activities usually show more mature social and emotional development, and are better prepared to face the socially demanding world of school (Arianti et al., 2024).

However, in today's digital era, the challenges of shaping healthy social interactions are growing. Children who use gadgets for too long without supervision are at risk of social isolation, sleep disorders, and even digital dependence (Afdalia & Gani, 2023). In some cases, children can also experience negative exposure such as cyberbullying or age-inappropriate content. Therefore, parental and teacher assistance in the use of technology is very important. To help children develop healthy social skills, there are several strategies that can be applied. First, provide sufficient opportunities to play with peers. Play is the main means by which children learn to interact. Parents and teachers need to provide time, space and situations that support children to play in groups, both inside and outside the classroom (Nurhayati et al., 2020).

Second, practicing social skills directly. Young children do not fully understand social norms, so they need concrete examples from adults. Teachers and parents can guide children in simple ways, such as teaching how to greet, apologize, say thank you, or take turns talking. This training can be done through role plays, picture stories, or simulations of everyday situations. Third, avoid comparing children with other children. Each child is unique and has a different pace of development. Comparisons will only damage a child's self-confidence and make him feel less valued. Instead, parents and teachers should focus on each child's potential and progress. By creating a safe, loving and stimulating environment, children will be

better equipped to build positive social interactions. Adult support, as well as collaboration between parents and teachers, is key to supporting children's success in their social world.

CONCLUSION

Based on the literature review, it can be concluded that social interaction is a crucial component in early childhood development that plays a role not only in the formation of social skills, but also in children's cognitive, emotional and moral development. Early childhood as a golden age period is an important momentum in laying the foundation of social skills that will affect children's lives in the future. Social interaction difficulties in early childhood are influenced by a variety of factors, both internal and external. The dominant external factors include parenting, the environment in which children grow up, opportunities to interact with peers, and the use of digital technology. Democratic parenting that provides a balance between boundaries and freedom has been shown to be more effective in supporting children's social development than authoritarian or permissive parenting.

An environment that is rich in social stimulation and provides a safe space for exploration is also very influential in children's success in building positive social interactions. The role of parents, teachers and other adults is crucial in creating a supportive environment and providing appropriate stimulation for children's social development. Collaboration between families and early childhood education institutions is also needed to ensure consistency of approach in helping children overcome social interaction difficulties. Overall, efforts to support the development of early childhood social interaction require a holistic approach that considers the various factors that influence it, as well as the active involvement of all parties who play a role in the child's growth and development process. Thus, children will have adequate social skills to face future challenges and develop into socially competent individuals.

REFERENCES

- Afdalia, A. P., & Gani, I. (2023). Dampak Pengaruh Gadget Terhadap Interaksi Sosial Anak Usia Dini. *Al-Irsyad Al-Nafs, Jurnal Bimbingan Penyuluhan Islam*, 10(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.24252/al-irsyad>
- Arianti, N. A., Izzah, R. H. N., Aulia, A. S. D., & Mintowati. (2024). Peran Penting Interaksi Sosial Dalam Pemerolehan Bahasa Pertama Pada Anak Usia Dini. *PENEROKA: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra Indonesia*, 04(2), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.30739/peneroka.v4i2.3041>
- Batinah, B., Meiranny, A., & Arisanti, A. Z. (2022). Faktor-Faktor Yang Mempengaruhi Interaksi Sosial Pada Anak Usia Dini: Literatur Review. *Oksitosin: Jurnal Ilmiah Kebidanan*, 9(1), 31–39. <https://doi.org/10.35316/oksitosin.v9i1.1510>
- Bullock, M., C., L., & D.N., D. (1995). Is Giftedness Socially Stigmatizing? The Impact of High Achievement on Social Interactions. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 18(3).
- Elo, S., & Kyngäs, H. (2008). The qualitative content analysis process. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 62(1), 107–115. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2007.04569.x>
- Engkizar, E., Jaafar, A., Taufan, M., Rahman, I., Oktavia, G., & Guspita, R. (2023). Quran Teacher: Future Profession or Devotion to the Ummah? *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research of Higher Education (IJMURHICA)*, 6(4), 196–210. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.24036/ijmurhica.v6i4.321>
- Febriani, A., Otilapoyil, S., Zulfikri, Z., & Mayesta, M. (2022). Model of Parents' and Teachers' Cooperation in Developing Learners' Religious Character. *International*

- Journal of Islamic Studies Higher Education*, 1(2), 133–150.
<https://doi.org/10.24036/insight.v1i2.19>
- Fitri, U., & Rusdiani, N. I. (2024). Analisis Kemampuan Interaksi Sosial Anak Usia Dini di Tempat Penitipan Anak (Pocenter). *BUHUTS AL ATHFAL: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Anak Usia Dini*, 4(1), 16–27.
<https://doi.org/10.24952/alathfal.v4i1.10584>
- Fuadia, N. (2022). Perkembangan Sosial Emosi Pada Anak Usia Dini. *Wawasan: Jurnal Kediklatan Balai Diklat Keagamaan Jakarta*, 3(1), 31–47.
<https://doi.org/10.53800/wawasan.v3i1.131>
- Furqan, M. (2019). Surau Dan Pesantren Sebagai Lembaga Pengembang Masyarakat Islam Di Indonesia (Kajian Perspektif Historis). *Jurnal Al-Ijtima'iyah*, 5(1), 1.
<https://doi.org/10.22373/al-ijtima'iyah.v5i1.5132>
- Giordano, F., Caravita, S. C. S., & Jefferies, P. (2020). Social-Ecological Resilience Moderates the Effectiveness of Avoidant Coping in Children Exposed to Adversity: An Exploratory Study in Lithuania. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11.
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.536353>
- Hanifah, R., & Farida, N. A. (2023). Peran Keluarga dalam Mengoptimalkan Perkembangan Anak. *Az-Zakiy: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 1(01), 23–33.
<https://doi.org/10.35706/azzakiy.v1i01.9951>
- Humairoh, M. F. N., & Agustina, F. R. (2021). Studi Kasus Pemerolehan Bahasa Pertama Pada Anak Usia Empat Tahun. *GENIUS Indonesian Journal of Early Childhood Education*, 2(1), 31–39. <https://doi.org/10.35719/gns.v2i1.40>
- Khotimah, K., Ihlas, Abdurrahman, & Salam, A. (2025). Analisis Peran Guru dalam Mengembangkan Kemampuan Interaksi Sosial Anak di TK IT Harapan Islam Dompu. *Action Research Journal Indonesia (ARJI)*, 7(2), 182–196. [10.61227 7 2 328. https://doi.org/10.61227/arji.v7i2.328](https://doi.org/10.61227/arji.v7i2.328)
- Kurnia, L. (2020). Dampak Interaksi Sosial Anak Usia Dini Akibat Latar Belakang Orangtua Tuna Wicara. *Jurnal Aksioma Al-Asas: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini*, 1(1), 39–54. <file:///C:/Users/ASUS/Downloads/615-1253-1-SM.pdf>
- Langputeh, S., Andika, S., Ulfah, O., & Agusti, F. A. (2023). A Content Analysis: Values of Islamic Marriage in the Movie of Ayat-Ayat Cinta. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research of Higher Education*, 6(3), 106–114.
<https://doi.org/10.24036/ijmurhica.v6i3.142>
- Maulida, S. (2020). Pengaruh Permainan Tradisional Bakiak terhadap Kemampuan Sosial Anak Usia Dini. *PEDAGOGI: Jurnal Anak Usia Dini Dan Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 6(1), 50–60.
- Misliya, T. S., Indartono, S., & Mallisa, V. (2019). Improving Critical Thinking among Junior High School Students through Assessment of Higher Level Thinking Skills. *Joint Proceedings of the International Conference on Social Science and Character Educations (IcoSSCE 2018) and International Conference on Social Studies, Moral, and Character Education (ICSMC 2018)*. <https://doi.org/10.2991/icosce-icsmc-18.2019.58>
- Mohammed, Husam, S., & Kinyo, L. (2020). The Role of Constructivism in the Enhancement of Social Studies Education. *Journal of Critical Reviews*, 7(07), 249–256. <https://doi.org/10.31838/jcr.07.07.41>
- Nisa, A. R., Patonah, P., Prihatiningrum, Y., & Rohita, R. (2021). Perkembangan Sosial Emosional Anak Usia 4-5 Tahun: Tinjauan Pada Aspek Kesadaran Diri Anak. In *Jurnal Anak Usia Dini Holistik Integratif (AUDHI)* (Vol. 4, Issue 1, p. 1).
<https://doi.org/10.36722/jaudhi.v4i1.696>
- Nurhayati, S., Pratama, M. M., & Wahyuni, I. W. (2020). Perkembangan Interaksi Sosial Dalam Meningkatkan Kemampuan Sosial Emosional Melalui Permainan Congklak Pada Anak Usia 5-6 Tahun. *Jurnal Buab Hati*, 7(2), 125–137.

- <https://doi.org/10.46244/buahhati.v7i2.1146>
- Ramli, A. J., K, M., & Hamzah, M. I. (2017). Implementation and Development of Qur'an Learning Method in Malaysia and Indonesia: An Analysis. *Khalifa: Journal of Islamic Education*, 1(1), 51. <https://doi.org/10.24036/kjie.v1i1.6>
- Rukayah, S., Rachman, A., & Novitawati, N. (2024). Pengaruh Pola Asuh dan Tingkat Pendidikan Orang Tua melalui Perilaku Sosial Anak terhadap Kesiapan Sekolah Anak. *Journal of Education Research*, 5(3), 2791–2801. <https://doi.org/10.37985/jer.v5i3.1266>
- Sagala, H., & Yarni, L. (2023). Pengaruh Perilaku Overprotective Orangtua Terhadap Interaksi Sosial Remaja. *Educativo: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 2(1), 57–64. <https://doi.org/10.56248/educativo.v2i1.106>
- Santrock, S. (2012). Bermain Dan Pemanfaatannya Dalam Perkembangan anak Usia Dini. *Jurnal Tarbawi*, 13(2), 2088–3102. <https://doi.org/10.34001/tarbawi.v13i2.590>
- Setiyowati, E. (2020). Pembentukan Kepribadian Islami Pada Anak Usia Dini. *Al-Mabsut*, 14(2), 159–163.
- Snow, C. E., & Matthews, T. J. (2016). Reading and Language in the Early Grades. *The Future of Children*, 26(2), 57–74. <https://doi.org/http://www.jstor.org/stable/43940581>
- Sukatin, Qomariyyah, Horin, Y., Afrilianti, A., Alivia, & Bella, R. (2019). Analisis Psikologi Perkembangan Sosial Emosional Anak Usia Dini. *Bunayya: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak*, VI(2), 156–171. <https://jurnal.ar-raniry.ac.id/index.php/bunayya/article/view/7311>
- Sulman, H., Alhadad, B., & Arfa, U. (2020). Penerapan Metode Proyek Dalam Mengembangkan Sosial Anak Usia 5-6 Tahun. *Jurnal Ilmiah Cahaya Paud*, 2(1), 45–58. <https://doi.org/10.33387/cp.v2i1.1956>
- Syahrul, S., & Nurhafizah, N. (2021). Analisis Pengaruh Pola Asuh Orang Tua Terhadap Perkembangan Sosial dan Emosional Anak Usia Dini Dimasa Pandemi Corona Virus 19. *Jurnal Basicedu*, 5(2), 683–696. <https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v5i2.792>
- Tari, D. K., & Rosana, D. (2019). Contextual Teaching and Learning to Develop Critical Thinking and Practical Skills. *Journal of Physics: Conference Series*, 1233(1), 12102. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1742-6596/1233/1/012102>
- Thies, F., Wessel, M., & Benlian, A. (2016). Effects of Social Interaction Dynamics on Platforms. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 33(3), 843–873. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/07421222.2016.1243967>
- Uçan, A. D. (2022). Use of “Philosophy for Children” Approach for Developing Critical Thinking Skills in Religious Culture and Ethics Course. *Journal of The Near East University Faculty of Theology*, 8(2), 161–178. <https://doi.org/10.32955/neu.ilaf.2022.8.2.01>
- Zaitun, Z., Armita, P., & Mohd Saad, M. F. (2023). Early Children Character Education: Analysis of The Message of The Quran in Forming Human Morality. *Afkaruna: Indonesian Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Studies*, 19(2), 282–297. <https://doi.org/10.18196/afkaruna.v19i2.18203>

Copyright holder :

© Putri, D. N., Putri, V. M., Rahmalia, D.

First publication right:

Bunayya: Journal of Islamic Early Childhood Education

This article is licensed under:**CC-BY-SA**