



THE CORRELATION BETWEEN PEER SOCIAL INTERACTION AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AMONG YOUNG CHILDREN

Nurhayati^{1*}, Novita Putri Fatma², Denisa Putri Maulani³

^{1,2,3} STAI Ibnu Sina Batam

Email: Nurhayati77492@gmail.com

Abstrak

Tujuan penelitian ini mengkaji hubungan antara interaksi sosial teman sebaya dengan kecerdasan emosional anak usia dini 5 hingga 6 tahun. Metodologi menggunakan kerangka kuantitatif menggunakan desain korelasional *cross-sectional*. Peserta dalam penyelidikan ini terdiri dari 72 anak yang menghadiri TK Islam Ibnu Khaldun di Bengkong, dengan akuisisi data dilakukan melalui kuesioner skala Likert yang diisi oleh orang tua mereka. Analisis data menggunakan *Product Moment Pearson* mengikuti uji instrumen dan uji normalitas serta linearitas. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan hubungan yang signifikan secara statistik antara interaksi sosial teman sebaya dan kecerdasan emosional anak-anak, dibuktikan dengan koefisien korelasi $r = 0,51$ dan tingkat signifikansi $p < 0,001$. Hasil ini menyatakan bahwa aspek interaksi sosial pada teman sebaya memiliki hubungan yang signifikan dengan peningkatan kecerdasan emosional pada anak usia dini. Koefisien penentuan ($R^2 = 0,26$) menggambarkan bahwa interaksi sosial teman sebaya menyumbang sebagian dari variabilitas kecerdasan emosional anak-anak, meskipun diakui bahwa faktor lainnya juga dapat mempengaruhi hubungan ini. Dalam implikasi praktis, temuan penelitian ini menggarisbawahi perlunya membina lingkungan pendidikan yang memfasilitasi interaksi sosial yang konstruktif, termasuk kegiatan bermain kooperatif dan praktik sosial terstruktur, sebagai komponen integral dalam mempromosikan perkembangan sosial-emosional anak kecil.

Kata Kunci: *Interaksi Sosial Teman Sebaya, Kecerdasan Emosional, Anak Usia Dini.*

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the relationship between peer social interaction and the emotional intelligence of children aged 5–6 years. The research employed a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional correlational design. The study involved 72 children from Ibnu Khaldun Islamic Kindergarten in Bengkong, with data collected through Likert-scale questionnaires completed by parents. Data analysis was carried out using Pearson's product-moment correlation after the assumptions of normality and linearity were met. The findings reveal a significant relationship between peer social interaction and children's emotional intelligence, with a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.51$ and a significance level of $p < 0.001$. These results indicate that the quality of social interaction is meaningfully associated with the development of emotional intelligence in early childhood. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.26$) suggests that peer social interaction contributes to the variation in children's emotional intelligence, although other factors beyond the scope of this study also play a role. Practically, the findings emphasize the importance of providing learning environments that support positive social

interactions – such as cooperative play activities and structured social habituation – as part of efforts to strengthen the social-emotional development of young children.

Keywords: *Peer Social Interaction, Emotional Intelligence, Early Childhood.*

Corresponding author :

Email Address: nurhayati77492@gmail.com

Received 10 August 2025, Accepted 15 January 2026, Published 30 January 2026

A. INTRODUCTION

Early childhood represents a critical juncture in an individual's developmental trajectory, serving as the foundation for the establishment of essential social, emotional, and self-regulatory competencies that influence subsequent stages of life. Throughout this developmental phase, the social interactions engaged in by children contribute significantly to the formation of behavioral patterns, attitudes, and the ways in which they respond to their social environments in future contexts.¹

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is a formal educational institution targeted at children from birth to the age of six, a period commonly referred

to as the 'golden age.' During this stage, development occurs simultaneously through the provision of stimuli aimed at enhancing every aspect of growth. The national policy framework demonstrates that ECE administration is oriented toward the holistic development of socio-emotional, linguistic, cognitive, motor, and creative dimensions. In alignment with this framework, the Foundation Phase (Fase Fondasi) within the *Kurikulum Merdeka* (Independent Curriculum) underscores the importance of social and emotional competencies as fundamental components in fostering essential values, knowledge, and skills that serve as the bedrock for lifelong learning.² Early Childhood Education

¹ Elizabeth B. Hurlock, *Psikologi Perkembangan: Suatu Pendekatan Sepanjang Rentang Kehidupan*, ed. ke-5 (Jakarta: Erlangga, 2011), hlm. 27.

² Republik Indonesia, *Undang-Undang Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 tentang Sistem*

Pendidikan Nasional; Kementerian Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah, Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah Nomor 13 Tahun 2025 tentang Kurikulum pada Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, Pendidikan Dasar, dan Menengah (Jakarta:

(ECE) is a formal educational institution targeted at children from birth to the age of six, a period commonly referred to as the 'golden age.' During this stage, development occurs simultaneously through the provision of stimuli aimed at enhancing every aspect of growth. The national policy framework demonstrates that ECE administration is oriented toward the holistic development of socio-emotional, linguistic, cognitive, motor, and creative dimensions. In alignment with this framework, the Foundation Phase (Fase Fondasi) within the *Kurikulum Merdeka* (Independent Curriculum) underscores the importance of social and emotional competencies as fundamental components in fostering essential values, knowledge, and skills that serve as the bedrock for lifelong learning.

According to Gillin and Gillin, social interaction is defined as the

existence of reciprocal relationships between individuals, characterized by effective communication within social roles. Peer social interaction is conceptualized as a reciprocal relationship distinguished by the frequency of engagement, the quality of interpersonal relations, the capacity for cooperation, the presence of empathy, and proficiency in social conflict resolution.³

At the developmental stage of 5 to 6 years, children begin to demonstrate an advanced ability to understand others' perspectives, regulate their emotional responses, and adapt their behavior to social norms. Engagement in play activities serves as the primary context in which these developmental processes manifest, as it is through such interactions that children acquire negotiation skills, role-sharing abilities, and emotional management within naturalistic settings.⁴

Kemendikdasmen, 2025); Badan Standar, Kurikulum, dan Asesmen Pendidikan, *Keputusan Kepala BSKAP Nomor 046/H/KR/2025 tentang Capaian Pembelajaran Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini Fase Fondasi* (Jakarta: BSKAP, 2025); Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi, *Capaian*

Pembelajaran PAUD: Fase Fondasi (Jakarta, 2022)

³ John Lewis Gillin and John Philip Gillin, *Cultural Sociology: A Revision of An Introduction to Sociology* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1954), p.509.

⁴ John W. Santrock, *Life-Span Development*, 13th edn (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2011).

This study adopts the Ability Model of Emotional Intelligence framework proposed by Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso, which conceptualizes emotional intelligence as a cognitive ability to process emotional information. This model comprises four primary branches, specifically: (1) the child's ability to identify and perceive emotions in themselves and others; (2) the ability to utilize emotions to facilitate cognitive processes; (3) the ability to understand and interpret complex emotional states; and (4) the ability to regulate and manage emotions effectively.⁵ In children aged five to six years, these competencies are manifested through the identification of fundamental emotional expressions, the application of basic emotional terminology, the regulation of emotions during play activities, and the demonstration of empathic reactions toward peers.

Extensive scientific research indicates that peer social interaction constitutes a significant framework for the development of emotional intelligence during the preschool years. Engaging in play scenarios with peers offers a diverse range of emotional experiences, thereby facilitating a child's ability to modulate their behavior, fostering empathy, and gradually cultivating social competence.⁶ Consequently, social engagement plays a pivotal role in the development of prosocial behavior and the modulation of a child's emotional responses.

Empirical evidence in the domain suggests that not all children possess the capacity for adaptive social interaction. Certain children continue to manifest aggressive behaviors, exhibit challenges in emotional regulation, or face obstacles in collaborating with their peers. This phenomenon underscores the critical

⁵ Peter Salovey, John D. Mayer, and David R. Caruso, 'The Positive Psychology of Emotional Intelligence', *Handbook of Positive Psychology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 159-171.

⁶ Siti Astuti and Lilis Handayani, 'Hubungan Interaksi Sosial Teman Sebaya dengan Kecerdasan Emosional Anak Usia Dini', *Jurnal Obsesi: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 5.2 (2021), 1789-1799.

need for enhanced socio-emotional education through systematically designed and sustainable learning methodologies, applicable within both educational institutions and the family environment. The role of educators is paramount in establishing a safe and nurturing classroom atmosphere while simultaneously promoting constructive social interactions.

While numerous scientific studies have examined the correlation between emotional intelligence and child development, research specifically addressing the correlation between peer social interaction and emotional intelligence among children aged 5 to 6 years within an Islamic educational framework remains relatively scarce. Indeed, educational environments grounded in religious principles indeed, educational environments grounded in religious principles possess distinct social and cultural attributes that potentially shape interaction dynamics and the development of children's character.⁷

⁷ Retno Susilowati, 'Kecerdasan Emosional Anak Usia Dini', *Bunayya: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak*, 6.1 (2018), 45–56.

Given the aforementioned conditions, this study plays a pivotal role in expanding empirical investigations concerning the correlation between peer social interaction and early childhood emotional intelligence, particularly within the context of Ibnu Khaldun Islamic Kindergarten in Bengkong, Batam City. It is anticipated that this research will yield both theoretical and practical insights that contribute to the advancement of socio-emotional learning in accordance with the principles of the Independent Curriculum (*Kurikulum Merdeka*) and the values of Islamic Education.

B. METHODS

This study was conducted using a quantitative method with a cross-sectional correlational design to analyze the association between peer social interaction and emotional intelligence in children aged 5–6 years. The selection of a cross-sectional design was based on its capacity to examine the relationships between variables simultaneously at a single point in time, without any manipulation or intervention of the research subjects.⁸

The research population encompasses all students aged 5–6 years, categorized as

⁸ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th edn (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2014), pp. 155–158.

Group B, at Ibnu Khaldun Islamic Kindergarten in Bengkong, Batam City. The researcher employed a total sampling technique (saturated sampling), utilizing the entire population of 72 children as the research sample. The unit of analysis in this study is the individual child. The research instruments were completed by parents or guardians, who are deemed to possess an adequate level of involvement and observational intensity regarding the children's social and emotional behavioral development in their daily activities.⁹

This study involves several study groups, indicating the potential for data clustering. However, the analysis was conducted at the individual level, with these limitations taken into careful consideration during the interpretation of the research findings.

The independent variable in this study is peer social interaction, defined as the quality of reciprocal relationships between a child and their peers. This variable is reflected through the levels of social engagement, cooperative ability, empathic attitudes, and the child's competence in resolving social conflicts. Meanwhile, the

dependent variable is emotional intelligence, which refers to the Ability Model of Emotional Intelligence popularized by Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso; specifically, the child's personality capacity to perceive, observe, understand, and manage emotions adaptively.¹⁰

Among children aged 5–6 years, emotional intelligence is reflected in the ability to identify emotions, regulate emotional expressions, demonstrate empathy, and establish positive social relationships.¹¹

The research instrument employed in this study is a structured, closed-ended questionnaire utilizing a four-point Likert scale, where a score of 1 represents 'never' and a score of 4 represents 'always.' The development of the instrument was guided by a theoretical foundation aligned with the variables under investigation. Subsequently, the instrument underwent a series of testing procedures, including content validity assessment by competent experts, as well as empirical validity and reliability testing. Based on the reliability test results, the instrument was declared to

⁹ DeVellis, R. F., *Scale Development: Theory and Applications*, 4th edn (Los Angeles: Sage, 2017), pp. 85–90.

¹⁰ John D. Mayer, Peter Salovey, and David R. Caruso, 'Emotional Intelligence: Theory,

Findings, and Implications', *Psychological Inquiry*, 15.3 (2004), 197–215.

¹¹ Denham, S. A., *Emotional Development in Young Children* (New York: Guilford Press, 1998), pp. 45–60.

meet the feasibility criteria, with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of $\alpha \geq 0,70$.¹²

Data collection was conducted by distributing questionnaires to parents or guardians after obtaining formal permission from the educational institution. Prior to the administration of the instrument, respondents were provided with a comprehensive explanation regarding the research objectives and a guarantee of data confidentiality. Data analysis was performed using statistical software through several stages, commencing with statistical assumption tests, specifically normality and linearity tests. Subsequently, the data were analyzed using Product Moment Correlation analysis, with significance testing conducted via the t-test and the calculation of the coefficient of determination (R^2).

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Research Results

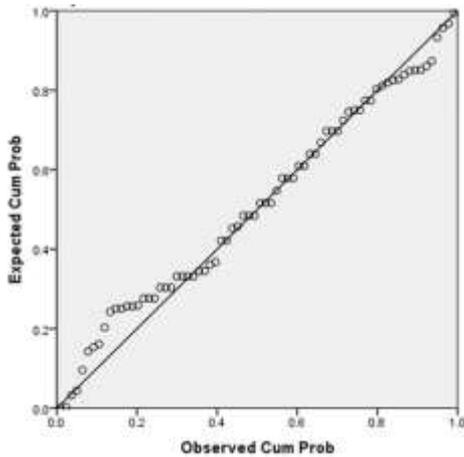
According to the findings derived from the data analysis conducted via SPSS version 25, all items in the questionnaire were confirmed to be valid and reliable. The calculated Cronbach's Alpha reliability

coefficients were 0.910 for the emotional intelligence variable and 0.916 for the social interaction variable. These values indicate an exemplary level of internal consistency, as they significantly exceed the minimum reliability threshold recommended in social and educational research ($\alpha \geq 0,70$). Furthermore, the item statements demonstrated satisfactory item-total correlations, indicating that each item effectively and consistently manifests the underlying constructs being measured.

The findings obtained from the assumption testing indicate that the model residuals meet the criteria for normal distribution, as evidenced by the significance values of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test exceeding the 0.05 threshold.

Further analysis conducted through the Normal P-P Plot indicates that the data points consistently adhere to the diagonal line, thereby demonstrating alignment with a normal distribution.

12



Based on the empirical findings derived from the Pearson Product-Moment correlation analysis, it has been confirmed that there is a statistically significant correlation between the nature of peer social interaction and the level of emotional intelligence exhibited by children in the 5 to 6-year age group. The calculated correlation coefficient was determined to be $r = 0,51$, with a significance level of $p < 0,001$, thereby indicating a positive association of moderate strength.

The findings indicate that an improvement in the quality of peer social interaction is positively correlated with an increase in children's emotional intelligence. Conversely, a deficiency in the quality of social interaction is associated with a diminished capacity in children to

effectively manage and articulate their emotions. To evaluate the significance of the identified relationship, a t-test was performed on the correlation coefficient. The analysis revealed a t-value of $t(70) = 4.964$, with $p < 0,001$, thereby confirming that the observed relationship is statistically significant.

Tabel. Hasil Uji Korelasi Product Moment

Variabel	N	r (Pearson)	Sig. (p)	Keterangan
Interaksi Sosial Teman Sebaya - Kecerdasan Emosional	72	0,51	0,000	Korelasi sedang dan signifikan

A correlation coefficient of 0.51 indicates that the relationship between peer social interaction and emotional intelligence is classified as moderate. From a statistical perspective, this relationship is significant and implies that social interaction influences the emotional development of early childhood, although it is not the sole factor affecting this process.

Model Summary^b

R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.260	.250	6.561

a. Predictors: (Constant), Interaksi Sosial

b. Dependent Variable: Kecerdasan Emosional

According to the Model Summary table, a coefficient of

determination (r) of 0.260 was derived. The findings indicate that 26% of the variance in children's emotional intelligence can be explained by the quality of peer social interaction, while the remaining 74% is attributed to other variables not examined in this study.

2. Discussion

Based on the research findings, it is concluded that interpersonal engagement among peers demonstrates a substantive correlation with the emotional intelligence of children aged 5 to 6 years. A correlation coefficient of signifies a positive association of moderate intensity, indicating that the caliber of social interaction is significantly linked to the advancement of a child's emotional intelligence. These results reinforce the perspective that routine social encounters serve as a vital framework for the development of emotional competencies during the formative years of a child's life.

Theoretically, these empirical observations align with the Ability Model

of Emotional Intelligence articulated by Mayer and Salovey, which posits that the capacity to recognize, understand, and regulate emotions is cultivated through ongoing social interaction processes.¹³

Within the framework of early childhood, engagement with peers provides a genuine emotional learning environment, encompassing activities such as sharing, collaborative efforts, conflict resolution, and the appreciation of diverse perspectives. These mechanisms facilitate the enhancement of children's emotional regulation and social competence.

Engagement with peers during early childhood serves as a significant bridge for a child's emotional learning, as this process provides opportunities to negotiate differences, understand the perspectives of others, and foster empathic attitudes. This conclusion aligns with existing research demonstrating a constructive correlation between social interaction involvement and the development of emotional intelligence and prosocial behavior during early childhood.¹⁴

¹³ Salovey, P. and Mayer, J. D., 'Emotional Intelligence', *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, 9.3 (1990), 185-211.

¹⁴ Denham, S. A., *Emotional Development in Young Children* (New York: Guilford Press, 1998), pp. 45-60.

Within the context of Islamic pedagogy, the results of this study relate to findings in *Bunayya: Journal of Child Education*, which state that educational settings prioritizing Islamic principles alongside constructive social interaction contribute significantly to the development of moral character and the regulation of children's emotional states.¹⁵

Consequently, social engagement is conceptualized not merely as a social phenomenon, but also as a vital mechanism for the internalization of values and the enhancement of character development during childhood.

Despite the significant and practically relevant relationship identified, this study is not without its limitations, particularly concerning the reliance on a single data source (parents) and the cross-sectional design employed. Consequently, it is recommended that future research endeavors incorporate multiple informants—such as educators and direct observation methods—alongside longitudinal methodologies to more

comprehensively elucidate the complexities inherent in children's emotional development.

D. CONCLUSION

The research findings demonstrate a significant correlation between peer social interaction and the emotional intelligence of children aged 5 to 6 years. A correlation coefficient of $r = 0,51$ signifies a positive association of moderate magnitude, implying that social interaction plays a pivotal role in enhancing the development of a child's emotional intelligence. These results reinforce the perspective that routine social experiences serve as a vital framework for developing emotional competencies during the formative years of a child's life.

Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.260 indicates that peer social interaction accounts for 26% of the variance in early childhood emotional intelligence, while the remaining 74% is attributed to extraneous variables not examined in this study. These results support the assertion that peer social interaction is a

¹⁵ Retno Susilowati, 'Kecerdasan Emosional Anak Usia Dini', *Bunayya: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak*, 6.1 (2018), 45–56.

critical factor in facilitating the development of emotional competencies, particularly in the domains of emotion recognition, emotional regulation, empathy, and the establishment of constructive social relationships.

This study carries significant practical implications for enhancing learning outcomes in early childhood education. Educators in early childhood settings are encouraged to intentionally cultivate a classroom atmosphere that fosters constructive social interaction. This can be achieved through organized cooperative play, small-group engagement, and sociodrama that facilitates emotional expression and mutual understanding among learners. Furthermore, emotion coaching methodologies—including the articulation of emotions, modeling appropriate emotional regulation, and establishing safe and fair conflict resolution protocols—can serve as effective approaches in promoting children's emotional intelligence. For educators and educational institutions, these findings underscore the importance of collaborative efforts in nurturing supportive social

environments, both domestically and pedagogically, to ensure children gain consistent and meaningful social experiences.

Given the constraints identified in this investigation, future research is encouraged to adopt longitudinal methodologies to effectively elucidate the dynamics of children's evolving emotional intelligence over an extended temporal framework. Additionally, further scholarly efforts should consider incorporating proximal variables more closely aligned with the educational environment, such as classroom climate, teacher support, peer acceptance, linguistic abilities, and the nature of parental involvement in child-rearing practices. Moreover, the utilization of multiple informants, including educators and direct observation methods, is highly recommended to ensure a more comprehensive understanding of the social interactions and emotional development occurring during childhood.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Astuti, S., & Handayani, L. (2021). Hubungan interaksi sosial teman sebaya dengan kecerdasan emosional anak usia dini. *Jurnal Obsesi: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 5(2), 1789–1799. <https://doi.org/10.31004/obsesi.v5i2.940>
- Azwar, S. (2018). *Reliabilitas dan validitas* (4th ed.). Pustaka Pelajar.
- Badan Standar, Kurikulum, dan Asesmen Pendidikan. (2025). *Keputusan Kepala BSKAP Nomor 046/H/KR/2025 tentang capaian pembelajaran pada pendidikan anak usia dini fase fondasi*. BSKAP.
- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Denham, S. A. (1998). *Emotional development in young children*. Guilford Press.
- DeVellis, R. F. (2017). *Scale development: Theory and applications* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Desmita. (2015). *Psikologi perkembangan*. Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Elidah. (2016). *Pengaruh interaksi sosial teman sebaya terhadap kecerdasan emosional siswa kelas V MI Islamiyah Podorejo Semarang* (Skripsi). UIN Walisongo Semarang.
- Elfi Yuliani, R. (2011). *Perkembangan anak*. STAIN Ponorogo Press.
- Ghozali, I. (2018). *Aplikasi analisis multivariate dengan program IBM SPSS 25* (9th ed.). Universitas Diponegoro.
- Hurlock, E. B. (2011). *Psikologi perkembangan: Suatu pendekatan sepanjang rentang kehidupan*. Erlangga.
- Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi. (2022). *Capaian pembelajaran PAUD: Fase fondasi*. Kemendikbudristek.
- Kementerian Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah. (2025). *Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah Nomor 13 Tahun 2005 tentang kurikulum pada pendidikan anak usia dini, pendidikan dasar, dan menengah*. Kemendikdasmen.
- Mayer, J. D., & Salovey, P. (1997). What is emotional intelligence? In P. Salovey & D. J. Sluyter (Eds.), *Emotional development and emotional intelligence* (pp. 3–31). Basic Books.
- Mayer, J. D., Salovey, P., & Caruso, D. R. (2004). Emotional intelligence: Theory, findings, and implications. *Psychological Inquiry*, 15(3), 197–215.
- Moh. Fauziddin. (2016). *Peningkatan kemampuan kerja sama melalui kegiatan kerja kelompok pada*

- anak kelompok A TK Kartika Salo Kabupaten Kampar. *Jurnal PAUD Tambusai*, 2(1).
- Muhammad Junni Beddu, et al. (2021). *Metode penelitian*. STAI Ibnu Sina Batam.
- Pujasari, Y. (2009). *Pengaruh kecerdasan emosional terhadap penyesuaian sosial siswa*. *Jurnal Administrasi Pendidikan*, 9(1).
- Republik Indonesia. (2003). *Undang-Undang Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional*. Sekretariat Negara.
- Retno Septiyaningtyas. (2013). *Pengaruh kecerdasan emosi terhadap interaksi sosial siswa kelas V SD Gugus Puren* (Skripsi). UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta.
- Retno Susilowati. (2018). Kecerdasan emosional anak usia dini. *Bunayya: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak*, 6(1), 45-56.
- Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1990). Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, 9(3), 185-211.
- Santrock, J. W. (2011). *Life-span development* (13th ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- Sujarweni, V. W. (2015). *Metodologi penelitian bisnis dan ekonomi*. Pustaka Baru Press.
- Sukmadinata, N. S. (2011). *Landasan psikologi proses pendidikan*. Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Warda Daulay. (2019). *Hubungan interaksi teman sebaya dengan percaya diri anak usia 5-6 tahun di TK Kelurahan Pondok Cabe Ilir* (Skripsi). UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta