



## Improving Socio-Emotional Skills Through Project Method in Islamic Elementary School Student

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to improve the social emotional of group B children at RA Alkhoeriyah Rajadesa, Ciamis Regency through watermelon seed planting activities using the project method. The project method is one way that can be used in teaching to train children's ability to solve problems in everyday life and can move children to work together with other children where each part of the work is individual or in small groups to achieve shared goals. The research method in this article uses the classroom action research method with the research subjects being teachers and students of group B RA Alkhoeriyah consisting of 12 children, 4 boys and 5 girls. From the data on melon seed planting activities in cycle I, it was found that 6 students or 50.00% of the total children in group B received the MB category, 4 students or 33.34% of the total children in group B received the BSH category, while there were still 2 children receiving the BB category. Meanwhile, from the data of cycle II actions, it was found that 4 children or 33.34% of the total children in the class received the BSB category, 6 children or 50.00% of the total children in the class received the BSH category, while 2 students received the MB category, with a percentage value of 16.67%.

**Keywords:** Planting melon seeds; Project Method; Social Emotional

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## INTRODUCTION

Early childhood social-emotional development, especially at the age of 5–6 years, is one of the important aspects in the formation of a balanced personality (Pujianti et al., 2021). At this age, children begin to show the ability to interact with the surrounding environment, understand their own emotions and others, and form social skills that will be the foundation for social life in the future. Good social and emotional skills will help children manage emotions appropriately, interact positively with peers, and have a strong sense of self-confidence (Rosdiana et al., 2022).

However, in reality, many children experience difficulties in their social-emotional development. This can be due to a lack of opportunities for children to engage in activities that support the development of social-emotional skills (Aurelia et al., 2024). One method that can be used to help children's social emotional development is the project method. The project method provides space for children to engage in activities that are based on real experiences, require cooperation, communication, and problem solving together. (Insania & Pasaribu, 2024). Through this method, children not only learn to develop cognitive skills, but also hone their social and emotional skills (Ananda et al., 2021).

RA Alkhoeriyah Rajadesa Village, Rajadesa District, Ciamis Regency, is one of the early childhood education institutions that is committed to supporting children's social emotional development. Based on observations conducted by researchers on October 28, 2023 at RA Alkhoeriyah Rajadesa Village, Rajadesa District, Ciamis Regency. In group B, which consisted of 12 children aged 5–6 years, researchers found that several children still lacked social emotional skills with other children. Of the 12 children, 82% (8 children) had not shown social emotional skills in the very good criteria, while 18% (4 children) had shown social emotional skills in themselves. This can be indicated by children not being able to work together with their friends, not wanting to share with their friends, not being able to control anger better, not being able to help friends, not being able to control themselves and others, apologizing and accepting forgiveness. In addition, children do not want to wait their turn, always want to be noticed, choose friends, are sensitive to other people's feelings, feel lonely, anxious and always want to be noticed. The low social emotional ability of children is caused by the learning process in the classroom which is still monotonous, the lack of children's ability to use the project method by planting melon seeds, and the use of projects is also very rarely done by teachers so that children are less active in the direct learning process. Based on initial observations, it was found that some children still have difficulty interacting with peers, expressing emotions well, and showing cooperative behavior in group activities. This indicates a need to find effective learning strategies to improve children's social emotional development in the institution.

Early childhood education plays a very important role because early childhood education is the basic foundation of learning that will develop and optimize the potentials that children have (Asmara et al., 2023). Early childhood education is "one of the coaching efforts aimed at children from birth to the age of six years which is carried out through the provision of educational stimuli to help

physical and spiritual growth and development so that children have readiness to enter further education. According to Hurlock, "Early childhood is the age of early childhood that applies to the preschool age to distinguish it from the time when children have to face tasks at the beginning of formal education/"In addition to the preschool age, early childhood is also called the age of play because early childhood spends most of it playing with toys(Suciati & Srianturi, 2021).

According to Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the national education system, Article 1 Paragraph 14 states that Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is a coaching effort aimed at children from birth to the age of six years which is carried out through the provision of educational stimuli to petrify physical and spiritual growth and development so that children have readiness to enter further education. A person's meaningful ability to interact with others(Nurhayati, 2020).

Social skills are activities related to other people, activities related to other parties that require socialization in terms of behavior that is acceptable to others, learning to play social roles that are acceptable to others, and developing social attitudes that are acceptable to others(Ritonga et al., 2022). Early childhood social skills are directed to good social development, such as cooperation, help, sharing, sympathy, empathy and mutual need. For this reason, the goal of developing social behavior in early childhood is to have communication skills, skills to have a sense of pleasure and jovial, to forge, friendship, to have good karmic ethics. Thus, the social development materials applied in kindergarten include: discipline, cooperation, help, empathy, and responsibility.

Emotional abilities are organized reactions to things related to individual needs, goals, interests, and interests. Emotional behavior appears to be a result of a person's emotions (Muawanah et al., 2022). "Emotions by Juntika are defined as a complex atmosphere and vibration of the soul that accompanies or arises before/after the occurrence of behavior". Syamsuddin stated that "emotions are a complex atmosphere and vibration of the soul that accompanies or arises before or after the occurrence of a behavior".

Thus, in an effort to improve these social-emotional skills, it can be done through the learning process by planting melon seeds that make children feel like they have close friends, help each other, be happy, comfortable, and safe. Early childhood social-emotional skills through the project method is one of the methods that help children solve problems creatively and appreciate diversity of thinking that presents a problem that has more than one method or solution and by planting melon seedlings(Utami, 2022). This method provides an opportunity for children to gain knowledge, experience, discover, and recognize how children feel about planting melon seeds. Through the project method, especially with the activity of planting melon seeds, it is hoped that children can develop their social and emotional abilities to behave according to the demands of society, be able to adjust to the people around them, recognize emotions, feel emotions, manage anger better, and become better social-emotional, both in the family, teachers and peers(Musafir et al., 2023).

This research is based on several previous studies that are relevant to the research titled "Meningkatkan Perkembangan Sosial Anak Usia Dini melalui Metode Proyek" The results showed that there was an increase in social

development by using the project method during two cycles that were categorized as very well developed (BSB). The conclusion of this study is that the use of project methods can improve children's social development (Izza, 2020). Then the research with the title "Penggunaan Metode Proyek untuk Meningkatkan Kedisiplinan pada Anak Usia Dini" The results of this study showed that the discipline of children who were given the project method treatment was significantly higher than the group that was not treated. It was concluded that the project method can be recommended to be applied in kindergartens to improve discipline (Mujahidin et al., 2019). Investigación con el título "Efektivitas Penerapan Metode Proyek Untuk Menstimulasi Perkembangan Sosial Emosional Anak Kelompok B1 Tk Tahfizh Anak Bangsa Banda Aceh." The results of this study show that the project method can improve children's social-emotional development with the results of the test of the  $t$  calculation hypothesis  $\geq t$  table, which is  $11 \geq 1.75$ . So  $H_a$  was accepted and  $H_o$  was rejected at a significant level of 0.05% with  $db$  15. The conclusion of this study is that the project method activities are effective in improving the social-emotional development of B1 children in Tahfizh Anak Bangsa Kindergarten Banda Aceh (Nurtiani & Rahma, 2020). Then research "Penerapan Metode Proyek dalam Mengembangkan Sosial Anak Usia 5-6 Tahun." The results of the study show that the project method is one of the ways to solve problems related to children's social development, the advantage of this project method is that children are involved in a joint activity that spurs children to interact with their theme so that it affects their social development, the use of this project method can get children used to interacting with others. Therefore, the use of project methods is expected to improve children's social development (Alhadad et al., 2020). Last research "Peningkatan Kemampuan Naturalis melalui Metode Proyek pada Anak Usia 5-6 Tahun di Paud Annisa Qurota A'yun Kec. Sindang Jaya." The results of this study show that there is an improvement in children's naturalist ability through the project method, it can be proven that the average naturalist ability score in one class in the first cycle of 43.75 has increased in the second cycle of 61.25 and in the third cycle of 87.5 (Rachmi & Ipah, 2023).

This study has a novelty from the variables that will be improved, namely social emotional development. Although cognitive and motor development are often the main focus in early childhood education, research that specifically highlights efforts to improve social emotional through the project method is still relatively small. In fact, social emotional skills have an equally important role in forming a child's balanced and harmonious personality. Another novelty in this study is the project method approach that is applied specifically to improve the social emotional aspect. The project method is often used to improve academic skills or creativity, but there has not been much research that explicitly uses it to develop the social emotional aspect. Through this method, children will be involved in group projects that require collaboration, communication, and the ability to understand and manage their emotions.

In the context of early childhood education at RA Alkhoeriyah, the project method is expected to be an innovative solution to answer the challenges of social emotional development of children aged 5-6 years. Children at this age are at a crucial stage in forming social relations and the ability to understand emotions, so

that intervention through the right method will have a positive long-term impact. In addition, this study also contributes to filling the research gap that has so far focused more on other aspects, such as academics and motor skills, by paying more attention to the importance of children's social emotional development. Therefore, this study not only has a theoretical contribution in adding to the literature on social emotional development through the project method, but also provides a practical contribution for teachers and practitioners of early childhood education in designing more holistic and integrative learning strategies.

As is known, social-emotional development is very important for early childhood, because if the child's social-emotional is good, then the child will be able to behave in accordance with norms, emotions, values or social-emotional expectations. Based on the above phenomenon, this study aims to explore efforts to improve social-emotional development through the application of the project method in children aged 5-6 years at RA Alkhoeriyah. By using this method, it is hoped that children can be more active in participating, interacting, and being able to manage emotions and conflicts more effectively.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The research method used by the author in this study is classroom action research. Classroom action research comes from the English Classroom Action Research, which means research conducted in a classroom to find out the consequences of actions applied to a research subject in that class (Azizah, 2021). More broadly, action research is defined as research that is oriented towards the application of actions with the aim of improving the quality or solving problems in a group of subjects who are studied and observing the level of success or consequences of their actions, then given follow-up actions that are in the form of improving actions or adjustments to conditions and situations so that better results are obtained (Pahleviannur et al., 2022). The actions that are deliberately given are given by the teacher or based on the direction of the teacher which is then carried out by the student (Komariah & Nihayah, 2023). Classroom action research is carried out through a cyclical assessment process consisting of 4 stages, namely planning, action, observation, and reflection, which is carried out in the form of a repetitive cycle and each cycle must have these four stages (Rahayu et al., 2022).

Classroom action research was carried out at RA Alkhoeriyah Rajadesa which is located in Jagamulya Hamlet RT 02 RW 04, Rajadesa Village, Rajadesa District, Ciamis Regency, West Java. The location of RA Alkhoeriyah is very strategically close to residential areas, close to SDN 1 Rajadesa, also close to village roads so that it is easy to reach by the community. Physically the building of RA Alkhoeriyah is quite good, and stands under the auspices of the Miftahul Khoer Foundation. The data source in the study is the data subject obtained and classified into people or persons, places or places, and symbols or papers (Arikunto, 2014). The subjects in this study are 5-6 years old early childhood in RA Alkhoeriyah Rajadesa Village, Rajadesa District, Ciamis Regency with a total of 12 students. In this PTK research, the researcher is the main instrument, because the researcher conducts research directly in the field to conduct interviews with group B teachers

of RA Alkhoeriyah Rajadesa, and also conducts observations (Observations) to the students who are researched, as well as digging data through school documents.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

#### **A. Description of Cycle I**

Based on the results of research that has been carried out at RA Alkhoeriyah Rajadesa which was carried out on Saturday, October 28, 2023 with the improvement of early childhood social-emotional development through the project method, the results of the research consisting of data from the research results which include: Description of learning in cycle I and scores of observation sheets of the learning process in cycle I. The data is then analyzed, recapped, presented and further elaborated to answer the formulation of the research problem, the following is an explanation of the main data obtained in the research. Data Analysis of Observation Results Developing Social-Emotional Skills through the Project Method Based on the results of the analysis in cycle I, the implementation of the research was carried out in a cycle cycle and each cycle consisted of four stages: planning, implementation, observation, and reflection.

##### **1. Planning**

Preparation for action begins with the planning stage. Based on the results of initial observations, the researcher who also acts as a teacher in class B has prepared and compiled various necessary needs. The first step is to compile a Teaching Module that will be the main guide in learning activities. In addition, the researcher also prepared media in the form of picture cards that support the use of Teaching Modules and Daily Learning Implementation Plans (RPPH), taking into account children's absorption in the learning process.

Furthermore, the researcher made an observation sheet specifically designed to monitor student activities, teacher activities, and the development process carried out during learning activities. To complement this process, the evaluation tool is also carefully designed, adjusting to the development goals that have been set, so that the evaluation results can later provide an accurate picture of the achievement of child development.

##### **2. Implementation of Activities**

This research was carried out on Saturday, October 28, 2023. Starting at 07.00–09.00 WIB, with a total of 12 students. The implementation of the first cycle of action is to take place 1 meeting. This is in accordance with the research design. This meeting began with the opening, core activities, and closing.

##### **3. Observation**

At this stage, the researcher conducted observations on the implementation of the action using the child's social emotional development observation sheet. In addition to observing the child's social emotional development, the researcher also used the child's involvement

observation sheet. In the learning activities used for students to find out the obstacles experienced by students. During the learning process and to find out the child's ability to develop their social emotional abilities by telling according to what is in the picture or video.

From the results of observations in cycle I, the researcher concluded that in this cycle the students were quite actively involved and their social emotional skills began to develop well, but not as a whole, this was seen when the teacher invited the children to make sprouts from melon seeds using the project method, some of them still looked confused and were quite interested in the use of the project method from 12 children aged 5-6 years (Group B) who were present in cycle I which gave the results of Not Developing (BB) there were 2 children, Starting to Develop (MB) there were 6 children, Developing According to Expectations there were 4 children and Developing Very Well there were 0 children.

#### **4. Reflection**

The results of the reflection on cycle I meeting 1 can be detailed as follows: 1) The social emotional development of children in understanding the project method has begun to be seen but is not yet optimal. 2) Children's interest and motivation to participate in learning activities have begun to be seen but are still not optimal, this can be seen from the fact that there are still students playing and not focusing on the material given. 3) The use is not accompanied by examples of melon seed growth every day, so children cannot see what sprouts that can be harvested look like. Based on the results of the reflection from cycle I meeting 1, it can be concluded that there are several problems that arise in the implementation of cycle I. For this reason, in the implementation of cycle II, improvements are needed to the learning design.

#### **B. Description of Cycle II**

Based on the results of research that has been carried out at RA Alkhoeriyah Rajadesa which was carried out on Saturday, November 4, 2023 with an increase in early childhood social-emotional development through the project method, the results of the research consist of data on the results of the research which include: Description of learning in cycle II and score of observation sheets of the learning process in cycle II. The data is then analyzed, recapped, presented and further elaborated to answer the formulation of the research problem, following an explanation of the main data obtained in the study.

Based on the results of the reflection from the second cycle of the 2nd meeting, it can be concluded that the development of children's social-emotional skills has increased through the activity of planting melon seeds using project media, which is quite significant with the acquisition of an average score of 90 and the percentage of classical completeness reaching 88.88% or as many as 10 children with the complete category. While the remaining 2 children or 16.67% in the incomplete category. After the child is

given stimulation through the activity of planting melon seeds, there are significant changes in the child's social-emotional ability. Providing stimulation with the right activities or media certainly affects both developmental aspects or skills that are to be developed in children. Stimulation or stimulation is provided with the aim of providing educational value and as a provision for knowledge for children.

The use of melon seed planting activities can make children more skilled, enthusiastic, active, and make the learning process more interesting and fun for children, so that children are more free to interact with their group friends, the ability to respond or respond to someone's behavior in accordance with norms. Meanwhile, from the emotional aspect, the child's learning process becomes more orderly, his ability to place himself when experiencing emotions of sadness, disappointment, anger, joy, and fear.

When the researcher applied the activity of planting melon seeds in the actions of cycles I and II in improving the social-emotional skills of group B children in RA Alkhoeriyah Rajadesa District, all children looked enthusiastic and enthusiastic to carry out the activity of planting melon seeds because the activity was so interesting to them. Implementing planting activities makes it easier for children to develop their own social-emotional skills, because children can interact or respond directly to the actions and words of their friends through the activity of planting melon seeds. Also, children are more self-expressive, managing their emotions well, when reprimanding or communicating with their group friends.

The activity of planting melons is very suitable for use, because planting activities is one of the methods that helps children solve problems creatively and appreciate diversity of thinking that presents a problem that has more than one solution. This method also provides opportunities for children to gain knowledge, experience, discover, and recognize how children feel about the plants planted.

The results of the study showed that the social-emotional ability of group B children of RA Alkhoeriyah Rajadesa District could be improved through melon seed planting activities. From the data on melon seed planting activities in the first cycle of actions, it was found that 6 students or 50.00% of the total children in group B got the MB category, 4 students or 33.33% of the total children in group B got the BSH category, while there were still 2 children who got the BB category. Meanwhile, from the data of the second cycle of actions, it was found that 4 children or 33.33% of the total children in the class received the BSB category, 6 children or 50.00% of the total children in the class received the BSH category, while 2 students received the MB category, with a percentage value of 16.67.

## **Discussion**

The project method offers a dynamic approach to developing socio-emotional skills in Islamic elementary school students, as it combines collaborative, hands-on learning with real-world problem-solving tasks (Cristóvão et al., 2020). Through project-based learning, students actively engage



in activities that require them to work together, make decisions, and solve problems—key competencies in social-emotional development. For Islamic elementary students, such projects can be framed around themes that align with values from Islamic teachings, such as teamwork, patience, empathy, and responsibility. For instance, projects focused on community service or environmental stewardship not only strengthen socio-emotional skills but also deepen students' understanding of ethical principles (Cojocar, 2023).

In practical terms, the project method promotes interpersonal communication, as students must negotiate roles, share resources, and listen to others' viewpoints. These experiences help students develop self-regulation, respect for diversity, and empathy—qualities essential for positive social interactions. Moreover, the iterative nature of projects, where students reflect on outcomes and identify areas for improvement, cultivates resilience and adaptability, equipping them to handle challenges more effectively. This method, therefore, not only aids in academic learning but also nurtures a balanced, character-focused education, preparing students to contribute thoughtfully to their communities. Integrating project-based learning into Islamic education provides a holistic approach, merging religious values with essential life skills (Pratama & Abidin, 2024).

Integrating project-based learning (PBL) into Islamic education thus serves as a comprehensive model for cultivating both cognitive and socio-emotional growth in students (Marmi et al., 2024). By connecting academic content with real-life applications, PBL enables students to internalize Islamic values, such as cooperation (*ta'awun*), trustworthiness (*amanah*), and perseverance (*sabr*), in ways that are meaningful and memorable. This approach not only enhances students' understanding of religious teachings but also enables them to apply these principles to everyday challenges, fostering a character-centered education that aligns with the broader goals of Islamic schooling (Jaedun et al., 2024).

For teachers, PBL offers flexibility in curriculum delivery and allows them to address diverse learning styles, enabling each student to engage with the material in a manner that best suits their abilities and interests (Vaithianathan et al., 2024). Teachers can guide students through reflective activities, helping them recognize the social impact of their projects, which, in turn, deepens their empathy and social awareness. By facilitating student-led projects, educators also play a crucial role in modeling and reinforcing Islamic ethical behaviors, creating a supportive environment that encourages students to learn actively and mindfully (Qadri et al., 2024).

Additionally, integrating PBL into Islamic education addresses the critical need for students to develop skills that are increasingly essential in modern contexts, such as critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving. As students work through complex projects, they are empowered to think creatively and find innovative solutions, preparing them for both academic and life challenges. In this way, PBL not only supports academic objectives but also nurtures a sense of responsibility and purpose in students, aligning their personal development with the moral and ethical standards valued in Islamic teachings.

Consequently, the use of project-based learning in Islamic schools can foster a generation of students who are well-equipped to contribute positively to society, embodying the principles of compassion, integrity, and service.

Each child has children's social-emotional abilities with different degrees and fields. Teachers must provide opportunities and get to know children social-emotionally well so that they can develop children's social-emotional optimally, must be done continuously and continuously, cannot be taught instantly (Sukatin, 2021). One way that can be done for early childhood social-emotional skills is through the project method. The project method for children is a fun activity if the project they are working on is interesting (Amanda & Fernandes, 2024).

The project method is one way to provide a learning experience by facing daily problems that must be solved in groups. The project method is a method that provides opportunities for students to carry out learning activities in stages, from the initial stage to the final stage which is a unified series of activities (Siregar et al., 2022). The method is a simple environment and daily activities for students to do, for example planting plants that are easy to grow with seeds (melon seeds). The advantage of the project method lies in the seriousness of the child to devote his energy and ability in activities to achieve common goals. The project method provides opportunities for children to improve skills that have been mastered individually or in small groups, and arouses children's interest in what is done in the project as well as opportunities for children to show their creativity, work thoroughly and take responsibility for the success of group goals (Kasiyati, 2020).

Social-emotional development is the basis for future personality development (Dhiu & Fono, 2022). Everyone will have emotions of pleasure, anger, irritation, in dealing with the daily environment. At the beginning of their development, they had guaranteed a reciprocal relationship with the person who took care of them. The personality of the person closest to you will affect both social and emotional development (Andhika, 2021). Cooperation and friendship with friends develop according to the child's perspective on friendship.

## **CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION**

### **Conclusion**

Based on the results of the study on Improving Social Emotional Skills Through Melon Seed Planting Activities in Group B at RA Alkhoeriyah Rajadesa District for the 2023/2024 Academic Year, it can be concluded that melon planting activities can improve the social-emotional activities of group B children at RA Alkhoeriyah Rajadesa District. This increase can be seen from the learning activities of students in the first cycle of actions have increased from 50.00% in the less active category, to 83.33% in the active category in the second cycle of actions. Meanwhile, the assessment classically increased from 50.00% in the first cycle with the MB child category, in the second cycle action 50.00% with the BSH child category.

### **Implication**

The results of this study imply that incorporating hands-on activities like melon seed planting in early childhood education can effectively support the

development of social-emotional skills. The significant increase from 50.00% to 83.33% in active engagement indicates that such activities encourage children to become more involved, which fosters essential social skills such as collaboration, patience, and responsibility. Additionally, the observed improvement in assessment categories—from MB to BSH—highlights that nature-based tasks can serve as practical tools to help children better express emotions, interact positively, and build self-confidence. This suggests that schools may benefit from integrating similar gardening or nature-based projects into their curricula to enhance young learners' social-emotional growth.

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