

Analysis of the Impact of Low Self-Confidence on Early Childhood Social Development

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the effect of low self-confidence on the social development of early childhood at TK Tri Kusumo. A quantitative approach with a correlational design was employed to analyze the relationship between low self-confidence (X) and children's social development (Y). The sample consisted of 25 children aged 4–6 years selected through total sampling. Data were collected using observation and structured questionnaires based on predefined indicators of both variables. The data were analyzed using the Pearson product-moment correlation test. The findings revealed that the level of low self-confidence among children was relatively high, as indicated by behaviors such as shyness, hesitation in speaking, and reluctance to perform in front of others. Meanwhile, children's social development was found to be suboptimal, particularly in communication, interaction, and cooperation skills. The correlation analysis showed a coefficient value of $r = -0.67$, indicating a strong negative relationship between low self-confidence and social development. This suggests that higher levels of low self-confidence are associated with lower levels of social development. Therefore, enhancing children's self-confidence through supportive learning environments and appropriate stimulation from teachers and parents is essential to optimize their social development.

Keywords: Low Self-Confidence, Social Development, Early Childhood.

I. Introduction

Early childhood is a golden period of development, including the social-emotional aspect at the age of 5–6 years (Suyadi & Ulfah, 2017). It is a crucial stage of growth and development that greatly determines the quality of life in the future. At this stage, social development becomes essential because it is related to children's ability to interact, communicate, and adapt to their surrounding environment. Good social skills help children develop confidence in building positive relationships with others. Self-confidence is an attitude of believing in oneself and in one's own abilities to perform specific tasks, particularly the belief in achieving certain goals (Lalit et al., 2020; Ma'arif & Zulia, 2021; Wardani et al., 2021). Furthermore, self-confidence can also be defined as a child's ability to understand their own capabilities in achieving goals, which can be observed through task completion, communication, and interaction (Fransisca et al., 2020; Kastanja & Watini, 2022). Self-confidence is important to be developed in children, as healthy self-confidence can help them navigate various aspects of life (Chan et al., 2020). Children with high levels of self-confidence tend to demonstrate strong self-belief. Similar to emotional development, self-confidence continues to improve over time (Williams et al., 2022).



However, conditions in the field do not always reflect this ideal situation. There are still children who have low self-confidence. Confident children tend to be brave in trying new things and are willing to perform in front of others, while those with low self-confidence tend to hesitate and fear making mistakes (Santrock, 2021). In addition, Azzahra & Windarta (2025) state that low self-confidence can hinder social-emotional development and therefore requires stimulation through supportive learning environments, in line with findings that self-confidence is positively correlated with social-emotional skills in children aged 5–6 years (Sitorus, 2023). The phenomenon of low self-confidence observed in the school where I teach includes children doubting their own abilities, being afraid of making mistakes, feeling shy to appear in front of others, preferring to be alone, and needing more encouragement to try new things. Therefore, stimulation of self-confidence needs to be provided in a planned and continuous manner through activities that consider each child's characteristics.

Self-confidence requires a safe and comfortable space, free from anxiety about what might happen. The need for a sense of security is essential from infancy, especially during the first five years of life (the golden age), when children begin to understand differences and expand their interactions (Fransisca et al., 2020; Larasani et al., 2020; Vega et al., 2019). Low self-confidence is closely related to social interaction, as it influences how children perceive themselves and respond to others. Children who lack confidence tend to fear negative evaluation and limit their social engagement. For example, they may become passive in group settings, have trouble communicating with peers, withdraw socially, and feel easily anxious. Low self-confidence in children is influenced by internal factors such as self-esteem and anxiety, as well as external factors such as parenting styles, peer relationships, and educational environments (Parveen et al., 2025; Ginting, 2023).

The role of parents, teachers, and the surrounding environment is crucial in helping children develop a sense of self-confidence, enabling them to adapt more easily to new environments, possess strong life principles, and develop their potential. Without self-confidence, children may struggle to make decisions and become hesitant in their actions. Providing opportunities, motivation, rewards, and positive role models for children serves as a fundamental foundation in building self-confidence, self-esteem, and independence (Achmad, n.d.; Syafitri Agustin, 2017). Several previous studies, such as those conducted by Asni and Asqia (2024), found that children with low self-confidence tend to be passive and experience difficulties in interacting with peers. Similarly, Ferdiansyah et al. (2024) revealed a significant relationship between self-confidence and children's social interaction abilities. Further research indicates that the higher a child's emotional intelligence, the higher their level of self-confidence (Nurmalasari & Chairilisyah, 2021). Based on these explanations, it is necessary to conduct research to analyze the impact of low self-confidence on early childhood social development to obtain a comprehensive understanding as a basis for determining appropriate learning strategies.

II. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Early childhood development is widely recognized as a critical foundation for later cognitive, social, and emotional functioning. At the age of 5–6 years, children experience rapid development in social-emotional skills, including self-confidence, which plays a central role in shaping their interactions and adaptation within social environments (Suyadi & Ulfah, 2017). Self-confidence is considered an essential psychological construct that influences how children perceive themselves and engage with others in daily activities. Self-confidence in early childhood refers to a child's belief in their own abilities to perform tasks, express ideas, and interact socially without excessive fear or hesitation. According to Santrock (2021), self-confidence is closely related to self-efficacy, which determines a child's willingness to attempt new challenges and persist in difficult situations. Similarly, Bandura's social cognitive theory emphasizes that self-efficacy develops through mastery experiences, social modeling, and verbal encouragement, which are highly relevant in early childhood educational settings (Bandura, 2018).

Research indicates that self-confidence is strongly associated with social development in children. Children with higher self-confidence tend to demonstrate better communication skills, greater participation in group activities, and more positive peer relationships (Chan et al., 2020). Conversely, children with low self-confidence often exhibit social withdrawal, hesitation in expressing themselves, and difficulty in forming peer interactions (Ferdiansyah et al., 2024). These conditions may hinder their overall social-emotional development if not properly addressed through supportive environments. The development of self-confidence is influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include self-esteem, temperament, and emotional regulation, while external factors include parenting styles, teacher support, peer relationships, and the learning environment (Ginting, 2023; Parveen et al., 2025). Authoritative parenting and positive reinforcement have been shown to significantly enhance children's self-confidence, while overly restrictive or neglectful parenting may contribute to low self-esteem and social anxiety (Baumrind, 2017).

In the school context, teachers play a crucial role in fostering self-confidence by providing opportunities for children to express themselves, engage in collaborative activities, and experience success in learning tasks. According to Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory, learning occurs through social interaction, where more capable peers or adults provide scaffolding that helps children develop higher psychological functions, including confidence in social situations (Vygotsky, 2019). Therefore, classroom environments that encourage participation and reduce fear of failure are essential in supporting children's confidence development. Empirical studies further support the relationship between self-confidence and social competence in early childhood. Nuralmasari and Chairilsyah (2021) found that emotional intelligence significantly correlates with self-confidence, which in turn influences children's ability to interact socially. Similarly, Sitorus (2023) reported a positive correlation between self-confidence and social-emotional skills in children aged 5–6 years. These findings suggest that improving self-confidence can contribute to better social development outcomes. Based on the reviewed literature, it can be concluded that self-confidence is a fundamental factor in early childhood social development. Low self-confidence may negatively affect children's ability to interact, communicate, and adapt socially, while high self-confidence supports positive social engagement and emotional growth. Therefore, it is important to develop strategies in educational settings that enhance self-confidence through supportive parenting, effective teaching practices, and a conducive learning environment.

III. Research Method

This study employed a quantitative approach with a correlational design, aiming to determine the relationship or effect between the level of low self-confidence (X) and early childhood social development (Y). This approach was chosen because the study involves two variables that are statistically analyzed to examine the strength of their relationship. The population in this study consisted of all early childhood students at Tri Kusumo Kindergarten. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling with a total sampling approach, meaning that the entire population was included as the research sample. The sample in this study consisted of 25 children from Group A and Group B, aged 4–6 years. Data collection techniques included observation and questionnaires. Observations were conducted to directly assess children's behavior during learning activities and daily social interactions. The questionnaires were developed by the classroom teacher to evaluate the level of self-confidence and social development of children based on predetermined indicators. The research instruments consisted of observation sheets and a rating scale (Likert scale). The blueprint of the research instruments for low self-confidence and early childhood social development is presented in the table below:

Table 1. Research Instrument Blueprint

No	Variable	Indicators
1	Low Self-Confidence	Not confident to perform in front of the class; Hesitant in speaking or answering questions; Avoids interaction with peers; Shows excessive shyness or fear; Lacks initiative in activities

No	Variable	Indicators
2	Social Development	Able to interact with peers; Willing to cooperate in groups; Able to share and take turns; Able to communicate effectively; Able to adapt to the social environment

Data analysis was conducted using the Product Moment correlation test proposed by Karl Pearson. This technique was used to determine whether there is a relationship between low self-confidence and early childhood social development, as well as to identify the strength and direction (positive or negative) of the relationship between the two variables.

IV. Results and Discussion

The results of the studyThe following table presents the results of the study regarding indicators of low self-confidence and their relation to early childhood social development. It summarizes the percentage and descriptive findings obtained from observations and assessments of the children at TK Tri Kusumo.

Table 2. the results of the study

No	Aspect Studied	Findings	Percentage/Description
1	Not brave enough to perform in front of the class	Most children show shyness and reluctance when asked to come forward	68% of children are in the high category
2	Hesitant in speaking or answering questions	Children often stay silent, look down, and need teacher encouragement when asked	72% of children are in the low confidence category
3	Avoiding peer interaction	Some children prefer to play alone and are less active in groups	64% of children show a tendency to withdraw
4	Excessive shyness or fear	Children appear afraid of making mistakes, anxious when communicating, and easily cry when receiving attention	76% of children show these symptoms
5	Lack of initiative in activities	Children wait for teacher instructions and are not brave enough to start activities independently	60% of children fall into the passive category
6	Social interaction ability	Children with low self-confidence show more limited social interaction compared to other children	Negative relationship is significant
7	Group cooperation	Low self-confidence children tend to be passive in group work and find it difficult to participate actively	Moderately correlated
8	Social communication skills	Low self-confidence children experience difficulties in expressing opinions and communicating with peers	Strong correlation
9	Social adjustment ability	Children take longer time to adapt to new environments	Moderately correlated

Based on the research conducted on 25 children at TK Tri Kusumo, it was found that the level of low self-confidence among early childhood children is relatively high. This is indicated by several main aspects such as reluctance to perform in front of the class (68%), hesitation in speaking (72%), and excessive fear and anxiety (76%). The findings show that most children still experience barriers in developing self-confidence, with excessive shyness or fear (76%) being the most dominant indicator, reflecting social anxiety tendencies that hinder children's willingness to interact. Furthermore, hesitant speaking behavior (72%) and avoidance of social interaction (64%) demonstrate that low self-confidence is not only an internal condition but also appears in observable social behavior. Children tend to be passive, less responsive, and less involved in group

activities. From a social development perspective, children with low self-confidence show more limited interaction skills, where social communication ability shows a strong correlation, group cooperation shows a moderate correlation, and social adjustment also shows a moderate correlation, particularly in longer adaptation time in new environments. The Product Moment correlation test also reveals a strong negative relationship ($r = -0.67$), indicating that the higher the level of low self-confidence, the lower the child's social development.

Theoretically, these findings are consistent with Santrock (2021), who explains that children with low self-confidence tend to face barriers in social interaction due to fear of making mistakes and concern about others' judgments. This condition leads to avoidance of communication and withdrawal from social groups. The study also supports previous findings by Azzahra & Windarta (2025) and Sitorus (2023), which emphasize the positive relationship between self-confidence and social-emotional development. Low self-confidence may be influenced by internal factors such as low self-esteem and high anxiety, as well as external factors such as parenting style and lack of environmental support. Therefore, efforts such as providing gradual opportunities, positive reinforcement, supportive environments, and active learning methods are needed. Overall, this study confirms that self-confidence plays an essential role in early childhood social development and must be systematically enhanced for optimal growth.

The findings of this study have several important implications, including theoretical, practical, and policy implications. Theoretically, this study strengthens the theory that self-confidence is closely related to the social development of early childhood. In practical terms, teachers and parents need to provide opportunities for children to speak or perform in front of others, give positive reinforcement, and create a safe and comfortable environment. In terms of policy, early childhood education institutions (PAUD) should integrate the development of self-confidence into the social-emotional learning curriculum for children.

V. Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion regarding the impact of low self-confidence on the social development of early childhood at TK Tri Kusumo, several conclusions can be drawn. The level of low self-confidence among early childhood children is relatively high, as indicated by dominant characteristics such as excessive shyness or fear, hesitation in speaking, and a lack of courage to perform in front of the class, which shows that many children still experience obstacles in emotional aspects and in believing in their own abilities. In terms of social development, the children in this study have not yet developed optimally, as shown by limitations in interacting, communicating, cooperating, and adapting to the social environment, where children tend to be passive, less active in group activities, and require more time to adjust. Furthermore, there is a strong negative relationship between low self-confidence and social development, meaning that the higher the level of low self-confidence, the lower the child's social abilities, which is reflected in behaviors such as avoiding interaction, reluctance to communicate, and low participation in group activities. In general, this study shows that self-confidence is an important factor in supporting early childhood social development, as children with good self-confidence tend to be more capable of interacting, communicating, and adapting to their social environment, therefore systematic and continuous efforts from teachers, parents, and the educational environment are needed to enhance children's self-confidence so that their social development can grow optimally.

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