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The Role of Arts Education in Developing Socio-Emotional Skills in Early Childhood at Al Irsyad Pahambatan Kindergarten

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ABSTRACT

Arts education plays an important role in early childhood education by providing opportunities for children to express emotions, develop self-regulation, and establish positive social relationships. This study aims to examine the role of arts education in developing socio-emotional skills in early childhood at Al Irsyad Pahambatan Kindergarten, Agam Regency, West Sumatra, Indonesia. The study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to explore arts-based learning activities, children's participation, and teachers' strategies for supporting socio-emotional development. Data collection is designed to involve classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with teachers, and documentation of relevant learning activities. The analysis focuses on three dimensions: arts education as a medium for emotional expression and self-regulation, collaborative arts activities in developing social interaction and cooperation, and teachers' strategies for integrating arts education into socio-emotional learning. The study is expected to contribute to a contextual understanding of how drawing, painting, music, movement, and creative drama can provide meaningful opportunities for children to recognize emotions, communicate with peers, manage behavioral responses, and participate in collaborative learning. The study also emphasizes the importance of intentional pedagogical planning and supportive teacher–child interactions in maximizing the developmental value of artistic experiences. The findings may inform early childhood educators seeking to integrate creative activities with socio-emotional learning in kindergarten settings.

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Introduction

Early childhood is a formative period in which children develop the social and emotional capacities needed to participate in learning and everyday interactions. During this stage, children begin to recognize their feelings, respond to the emotions of others, establish relationships with peers, and learn to regulate their behavior in different

situations. These capacities are important because they influence how children communicate, manage frustration, cooperate with others, and adapt to classroom expectations. Social-emotional development should therefore be considered an integral component of early childhood education rather than a secondary outcome of academic instruction. Blewitt et al. (2018) demonstrated through a systematic review and meta-analysis that early childhood social-emotional learning interventions were associated with improvements in social competence, emotional competence, and behavioral self-regulation.

The development of socio-emotional skills involves several interrelated abilities, including emotional awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, interpersonal communication, and cooperation. Children who gradually acquire these skills are better equipped to express their needs, respond to disagreements, and participate in shared activities with their peers. However, these abilities do not develop automatically through age or exposure to the classroom environment; they require opportunities for practice, appropriate adult guidance, and supportive social interactions. Early childhood teachers consequently have an important responsibility to create learning experiences in which children can recognize emotions, express themselves appropriately, and learn to understand other people's perspectives. Research by Blewitt et al. (2018) supports the value of structured, developmentally appropriate approaches to social-emotional learning in early childhood education and care settings.

Within this developmental context, arts education offers opportunities for children to communicate ideas and feelings through forms of expression that extend beyond spoken language. Drawing, painting, singing, music-making, movement, and dramatic play allow children to explore experiences and represent their understanding of the world in ways that are appropriate to their developmental capacities. Artistic activities may also encourage children to make choices, experiment with materials, respond to others' ideas, and share the outcomes of their work. These processes can create meaningful situations in which emotional expression and social interaction occur alongside artistic learning. Rumble et al. (2026), in a scoping review of visual arts participation and young children's social-emotional well-being, examined how participation in visual arts has been addressed in research involving children from birth to nine years of age.

The potential contribution of arts education is particularly evident when children participate in activities that require cooperation, shared attention, and mutual consideration. For example, creating a collective artwork may require children to share materials, negotiate the use of space, wait for their turns, and respond constructively to differences in ideas. Group singing and music activities can similarly provide opportunities to coordinate actions, follow common rhythms, and participate in a shared experience. These interactions may help children practise social behaviors that are relevant to classroom relationships and collaborative learning. Lobo and Winsler (2006) found that preschool children participating in an eight-week creative dance and movement program demonstrated greater gains in social competence than children in a comparison group, providing empirical support for further investigation of arts-based learning in early childhood.

Arts education may also contribute to children's emotional development by providing opportunities to recognize, express, and regulate feelings. Young children do not always possess the vocabulary needed to explain sadness, disappointment, excitement, or anxiety, making nonverbal forms of expression particularly relevant in educational settings. Through drawing, painting, music, and movement, children may communicate aspects of their emotional experiences while receiving guidance from teachers. Such activities should not be treated as substitutes for professional psychological support when needed, but they can form part of a supportive learning environment that acknowledges children's feelings.

Brown and Sax (2013) reported that children attending an arts-enriched preschool program displayed more positive emotions during arts classes and showed greater growth in teacher-rated emotion regulation over the school year than comparison groups.

The relationship between arts education and socio-emotional development also depends on how learning activities are designed and facilitated. An activity that focuses exclusively on producing an attractive final product may provide fewer opportunities for social interaction than one that emphasizes exploration, collaboration, and reflection. Teachers can encourage socio-emotional learning by asking children to describe their work, explain their choices, listen to classmates, and respond respectfully to different interpretations. They can also acknowledge children's efforts and emotional responses without comparing artistic abilities or expecting identical outcomes. Brown and Sax (2013) provide a useful empirical basis for examining arts-enriched learning environments, while Blewitt et al. (2018) highlight the broader value of intentional approaches to social-emotional development in early childhood education.

The classroom environment is another important consideration in understanding how arts education may support children's development. Access to appropriate materials, sufficient space, predictable routines, and emotionally supportive interactions can influence how children participate in learning activities. A classroom that allows children to explore materials safely and communicate their ideas without fear of ridicule may create more favorable conditions for self-expression and peer cooperation. Conversely, poorly organized activities or limited opportunities to participate may make it difficult for some children to engage meaningfully with others. Tamblyn et al. (2023), through a systematic scoping review of physical and sensory environments in early childhood education and care, identified associations between environmental conditions and children's social-emotional competence, emphasizing the importance of considering the broader learning context.

Teachers play a central role in connecting artistic experiences with children's socio-emotional development. Their responsibilities include selecting developmentally appropriate activities, observing children's responses, facilitating cooperation, and helping children manage disagreements that arise during shared tasks. When children struggle to share materials or become frustrated with their work, teachers can use these situations as opportunities to guide emotional expression, problem-solving, and respectful communication. Such guidance requires sensitivity to individual differences because children vary in their confidence, communication skills, emotional responses, and readiness to participate in groups. The findings synthesized by Blewitt et al. (2018) reinforce the importance of intentional educational practices rather than assuming that developmental benefits will emerge automatically from participation in classroom activities.

Although arts education is frequently associated with creativity and artistic expression, its possible contribution to social-emotional development deserves closer attention in early childhood settings. Previous studies have examined arts-enriched preschool programs, creative dance interventions, and visual arts participation, providing evidence that artistic experiences can be relevant to children's emotional expression and social competence (Brown & Sax, 2013; Lobo & Winsler, 2006). Nevertheless, these findings arise from particular programs, populations, and research designs, so they should not be generalized automatically to every educational context. The effects of arts activities may depend on their frequency, instructional approach, classroom conditions, and the quality of teacher-child interactions. Further context-specific research is therefore needed to understand how arts education is implemented in individual kindergartens and how children respond to those experiences.

In Indonesia, kindergarten education operates within diverse social and cultural

environments that shape children's everyday experiences and opportunities for learning. Local traditions, family practices, community relationships, and the availability of educational resources may influence the forms of artistic activities that teachers can introduce. In West Sumatra, the cultural environment also provides opportunities to explore locally meaningful forms of music, visual expression, movement, and collective artistic activity, provided that these practices are appropriate for young children. Such activities may create connections between children's classroom experiences and the cultural practices familiar to their families and communities. However, the educational value of locally relevant arts activities should be examined through actual classroom practices rather than assumed solely from the cultural identity of the setting.

Al Irsyad Pahambatan Kindergarten, located in Agam Regency, West Sumatra, provides a specific educational context in which the relationship between arts education and socio-emotional development can be investigated. Examining this setting makes it possible to consider how teachers organize artistic activities, how children participate in individual and group tasks, and how social and emotional behaviors emerge during learning. Relevant observations may include children's willingness to share materials, express feelings, respond to classmates, manage frustration, and participate in collaborative activities. These aspects should be investigated through systematic observation and appropriate data collection rather than inferred from the presence of arts activities alone. A context-sensitive examination can help clarify the pedagogical practices through which arts education may support children's social-emotional experiences in this kindergarten.

Despite growing research interest in arts-based learning and early childhood socio-emotional development, further investigation is needed to understand how these relationships are manifested in particular kindergarten settings. Existing studies provide useful evidence concerning arts-enriched preschool programs, creative movement, and visual arts participation, but their findings do not automatically explain the practices and experiences of children in Al Irsyad Pahambatan Kindergarten (Brown & Sax, 2013; Rumble et al., 2026). The present study therefore aims to examine the role of arts education in developing socio-emotional skills among children at Al Irsyad Pahambatan Kindergarten, Agam Regency, West Sumatra, Indonesia. Specifically, it focuses on how artistic learning activities provide opportunities for emotional expression, cooperation, interpersonal communication, and behavioral self-regulation. By examining these processes within a specific educational setting, the study is expected to contribute contextually grounded insights into the integration of arts education and socio-emotional development in early childhood education.

Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to examine the role of arts education in developing socio-emotional skills in early childhood at Al Irsyad Pahambatan Kindergarten, Agam Regency, West Sumatra, Indonesia. A qualitative approach was selected because it enables an in-depth understanding of children's experiences, classroom interactions, and teachers' practices in the natural educational setting. The research focused on how arts-based learning activities, including drawing, painting, music, movement, and collaborative artistic tasks, provided opportunities for children to express emotions, develop empathy, communicate with peers, and practise cooperation and self-regulation. Participants were selected purposively and included kindergarten teachers and children involved in arts learning activities. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with teachers, and documentation of relevant learning activities. Observations focused on children's participation, emotional expression, interactions with peers, responses to challenges, and involvement in individual and group

activities.

Data were analyzed using the interactive qualitative analysis framework proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which involves data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Observation records, interview transcripts, and relevant documentation were organized according to emerging themes related to arts education and socio-emotional development. The analysis examined recurring patterns in children's emotional expression, interpersonal communication, cooperation, and behavioral self-regulation, while also considering the role of teachers in facilitating these processes. Data triangulation was conducted by comparing findings from observations, interviews, and documentation to strengthen the credibility of the interpretations. Ethical considerations included obtaining appropriate institutional permission, securing informed consent from parents or legal guardians, protecting children's identities, and ensuring that participation did not interfere with their well-being or regular learning activities. The study interpreted the findings within the specific context of the kindergarten rather than assuming that the observed experiences would apply universally to all early childhood education settings.

Results and Discussion

1. Arts Education as a Medium for Emotional Expression and Self-Regulation in Early Childhood

Arts education provides opportunities for young children to recognize, express, and communicate their emotions through creative activities. Drawing, painting, singing, and movement allow children to communicate feelings that may be difficult to explain verbally because their emotional vocabulary and communication skills are still developing. In early childhood education, artistic activities can create a supportive learning environment in which children explore their feelings through colors, sounds, movements, and visual representations. Brown and Sax (2013) found that children participating in an arts-enrichment preschool program demonstrated more positive emotional expressions, including interest, happiness, and pride, during music, dance, and visual arts activities than during traditional early learning activities. This evidence highlights the potential of arts education to support emotional expression as part of children's broader developmental experiences.

Drawing and painting can serve as accessible media for children to represent their experiences and emotional responses. Through the selection of colors, the creation of images, and the explanation of their artwork, children may communicate feelings associated with happiness, sadness, excitement, fear, or other personal experiences. Teachers can encourage this process by asking open-ended questions about children's drawings without imposing predetermined interpretations on their work. Such interactions provide opportunities for children to identify their feelings and gradually develop the language needed to communicate them. Brown and Sax (2013) support the relevance of arts-enrichment experiences to preschool children's emotional functioning, although individual drawings should not be treated as definitive evidence of a child's psychological state.

Music and movement activities also offer opportunities for children to experience and manage emotional responses. Singing together, responding to different rhythms, and moving according to musical instructions can encourage children to notice changes in their energy, attention, and emotional expression. Structured activities, such as moving slowly to gentle music or changing movements when the rhythm changes, may help children practise adjusting their behavior to external cues. Research by Lobo and Winsler (2006)

demonstrated that an eight-week creative dance and movement program was associated with improvements in social competence among preschool children, alongside positive changes in internalizing and externalizing behavior problems. These findings suggest that movement-based arts activities may contribute to children's social and behavioral development, although their specific effects depend on the activities, implementation, and learning context.

Emotional self-regulation involves children's developing ability to manage emotional reactions and adjust their behavior according to a situation. Arts activities can provide practical situations in which children practise waiting for instructions, completing a task, responding to mistakes, and continuing an activity when the outcome differs from their expectations. A child who experiences difficulty completing a drawing, for example, may learn to try another approach after receiving encouragement from the teacher. These experiences can create opportunities to practise patience, persistence, and the management of frustration. Blewitt et al. (2018), in a systematic review and meta-analysis of early childhood social and emotional learning interventions, reported improvements in behavioral self-regulation and emotional competence among children participating in the evaluated programs. Their findings provide broader evidence for intentional educational activities that support the development of these competencies, rather than establishing that arts education alone produces the same outcomes.

The teacher's role is important in helping children connect artistic experiences with emotional awareness. Teachers can acknowledge children's feelings, provide simple vocabulary for describing emotions, and model constructive responses when children experience disappointment or excitement during an activity. For instance, a teacher may invite a child who is upset about a painting to describe the difficulty and consider whether to continue, modify the work, or ask for assistance. This response recognizes the child's emotion while encouraging an appropriate behavioral choice. Blewitt et al. (2018) emphasize the value of early childhood interventions that intentionally develop social and emotional competencies. Arts education may therefore be most supportive when creative activities are accompanied by sensitive teacher guidance and opportunities for children to reflect on their experiences.

A supportive classroom atmosphere can further strengthen the potential of arts education for emotional expression. Children need opportunities to participate without fear of ridicule or excessive comparison with their peers. Recognizing differences in children's artistic abilities and allowing multiple ways of completing a task can help create a more inclusive learning experience. Teachers can focus feedback on children's effort, participation, and creative decisions rather than judging every artwork according to a single standard. Brown and Sax (2013) provide evidence that arts-enrichment settings can be associated with more positive emotional expressions among preschool children. This relationship suggests the importance of considering not only the artistic materials used but also the emotional climate in which learning takes place.

The relationship between emotional expression and self-regulation can also be understood through the repeated practice that occurs during artistic activities. Children may initially respond to challenges with frustration, hesitation, or a need for adult assistance, while guided participation provides opportunities to practise alternative responses. Repetition alone does not guarantee emotional development; meaningful progress depends on the child's engagement, the nature of the task, and the support provided by adults. The evidence reviewed by Blewitt et al. (2018) indicates that social and emotional competencies can be strengthened through structured early childhood interventions. Similarly, the findings reported by Lobo and Winsler (2006) illustrate the developmental potential of creative movement programs. Together, these studies provide

a basis for examining how regular and appropriately guided arts activities may support emotional learning in kindergarten settings.

The role of arts education in developing emotional expression and self-regulation should consequently be understood as a learning process rather than an immediate or uniform outcome. Drawing, painting, music, and movement can create meaningful opportunities for children to identify feelings, communicate experiences, manage frustration, and respond to classroom expectations. The extent to which these opportunities contribute to development needs to be examined through concrete evidence, including children's observed behavior, teacher explanations, and documentation of learning activities. For the study at Al Irsyad Pahambatan Kindergarten, the analysis should identify specific examples of how children expressed emotions during artistic activities and how teachers responded when emotional difficulties occurred. Such evidence would connect the broader literature on arts education and socio-emotional development with the particular educational context of the kindergarten, while avoiding conclusions that extend beyond the data collected.

2. The Role of Collaborative Arts Activities in Developing Social Interaction and Cooperation among Children

Collaborative arts activities provide young children with opportunities to develop social interaction through shared creative experiences. Activities such as creating a group painting, singing in an ensemble, performing a simple drama, or producing a collective collage require children to communicate ideas and coordinate their actions with others. These experiences encourage children to recognize that completing a shared task involves listening, responding, and making decisions together. Rahma et al. (2023) investigated collaborative art activities among children in an Indonesian kindergarten and found that the activities were effective in improving children's social interaction skills. Their findings support the relevance of collaborative arts as a learning approach that connects artistic expression with interpersonal development during early childhood.

Group art projects can encourage children to practise sharing resources, taking turns, and negotiating decisions. A collaborative painting, for example, may require children to share brushes, select colors together, and decide where different elements should be placed. Situations in which children have different preferences can become opportunities to learn how to express opinions while respecting the ideas of their peers. Cutcher and Boyd (2018), in their study of collaborative painting with preschool children in rural Australian early childhood centres, examined artistic practice as a collective process involving children, teachers, and researchers. Their work highlights the importance of understanding art-making not only as an individual creative product but also as a social process through which children participate in shared learning and meaning-making.

Social interaction during artistic activities also depends on how children communicate and respond to one another. Verbal communication may occur when children explain their ideas, request materials, suggest changes, or offer assistance to their peers. Nonverbal communication, including gestures, facial expressions, and demonstrations, can also help children coordinate their participation, particularly when their verbal skills are still developing. Rissanen et al. (2026) discuss young children's artistic activities as spaces for interaction, social exchange, and the negotiation of agency. Their research on preschool children's discussions of art and self-produced photographs illustrates how artistic experiences can create opportunities for children to contribute their perspectives and construct meaning through interaction with others.

Cooperation becomes particularly visible when children participate in activities that require a common goal. Producing a group collage, staging a short performance, or

combining individual drawings into a collective display requires children to understand how their contributions relate to the work of the group. Each child may have a different role, yet the final product depends on the coordination of these roles. Research on cooperative art activities by Lee (2017) examined the relationship between young children's experiences of cooperative art and their self-regulation, peer interaction, and social competence. The study reported more favorable outcomes for children participating in cooperative art activities than for those in the comparison group. This evidence suggests that collaborative artistic experiences may provide a meaningful context for practising both interpersonal cooperation and behavioral regulation.

Creative drama offers another pathway for strengthening children's social relationships. Role-playing allows children to take on different characters, respond to imagined situations, and coordinate actions within a shared storyline. Preparing a simple performance may involve deciding who will play each character, agreeing on the sequence of events, and responding when a peer changes an idea or makes an unexpected contribution. Bal (2026) found that preschool children participating in a structured creative drama program showed greater improvement in social interaction, a dimension of peer relationships, than children in the comparison group. These findings provide empirical support for the potential of drama-based activities to facilitate interaction among preschool peers, although the outcomes of any particular program should be evaluated in its own educational context.

The teacher's facilitation influences whether collaborative arts activities provide meaningful opportunities for inclusion and cooperation. Clear instructions, flexible role assignments, and access to shared materials can help children understand how to participate in a group task. Teachers may also need to support children who are reluctant to contribute, dominate group decisions, or experience difficulty sharing resources. Guidance should encourage children to negotiate and solve minor disagreements rather than immediately making every decision on their behalf. Rissanen et al. (2026) emphasize the relational nature of children's agency in artistic activities, reinforcing the importance of allowing children to contribute ideas while recognizing that participation develops through interaction with others.

The social benefits of collaborative arts activities should not be assessed solely through the quality of the final artwork or performance. Observable indicators of social development may include initiating conversations, responding positively to peers' suggestions, offering assistance, sharing materials, waiting for turns, and participating in collective decisions. Teachers can document these behaviors through systematic observation across several activities rather than relying on a single classroom episode. Rahma et al. (2023) provide relevant evidence concerning the relationship between collaborative art and social interaction in an Indonesian kindergarten context. Such research supports the use of process-oriented observations to examine how children participate and interact during arts-based learning, while actual conclusions about children at Al Irsyad Pahambatan Kindergarten must be grounded in the study's own observational and interview data.

Collaborative arts activities can therefore be understood as an educational context in which children practise the social skills needed for participation in a learning community. Shared artistic tasks create opportunities to communicate, negotiate differences, coordinate actions, and recognize the contributions of others. The literature on collaborative painting, cooperative art activities, and creative drama provides a foundation for examining these processes in early childhood education (Cutcher & Boyd, 2018; Lee, 2017; Rahma et al., 2023). In the context of Al Irsyad Pahambatan Kindergarten, the analysis should identify which artistic activities involve peer collaboration, how children respond to group

responsibilities, and what forms of teacher support help them cooperate. Specific examples from classroom observations and teacher interviews will be essential for establishing whether and how these opportunities are reflected in children's social interactions at the research site.

3. Teachers' Strategies in Integrating Arts Education to Support Children's Socio-Emotional Development

Teachers play an important role in integrating arts education with children's socio-emotional development because the educational value of artistic activities depends partly on how learning experiences are designed and facilitated. Drawing, painting, music, dance, and drama can become meaningful opportunities for children to develop emotional awareness, confidence, cooperation, and empathy when teachers connect these activities with clear developmental objectives. Muthmainah and Yahya (2025), in their comparative qualitative study of kindergartens in Indonesia and Malaysia, identified the integration of social-emotional learning into arts education through dance, music, drama, and visual arts. Their findings highlighted values such as self-confidence, responsibility, patience, emotional expression, emotional regulation, cooperation, and empathy. This research provides a relevant framework for examining how teachers at Al Irsyad Pahambatan Kindergarten may integrate socio-emotional objectives into everyday artistic experiences.

Intentional planning is one strategy teachers can use to ensure that arts activities support more than the completion of an artistic product. Before conducting an activity, teachers can identify the socio-emotional skills they intend to encourage, such as expressing feelings, waiting for turns, respecting different opinions, or managing frustration. A drawing activity, for example, may include an opportunity for children to describe the emotions represented in their pictures, while a group performance may encourage them to practise listening and sharing responsibilities. Denee and Cherrington (2023) examined intentional teaching for visual arts in early childhood education and highlighted the importance of considering teachers' practices and perceptions when implementing visual arts pedagogy. Their study supports the need to examine how teachers make deliberate instructional decisions rather than assuming that children's participation in art automatically leads to developmental benefits.

Teachers' knowledge and confidence in teaching art also influence the quality of learning experiences. Educators who feel uncertain about artistic techniques or curriculum expectations may rely on highly structured activities that emphasize copying examples and producing similar outcomes. Such practices can limit children's opportunities to make independent decisions, communicate personal experiences, and explore alternative solutions. Leung et al. (2025) investigated teachers' content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and challenges in early childhood visual arts education. Their research identified important issues concerning teachers' preparation and the implementation of visual arts education. These findings suggest that professional competence in arts education involves not only knowledge of artistic materials but also the ability to select developmentally appropriate strategies that recognize children's individual needs and emotional experiences.

Creating an emotionally supportive classroom is another important teaching strategy. Teachers can establish a learning atmosphere in which children feel safe to experiment, make mistakes, express preferences, and share their work without fear of ridicule. Constructive feedback can emphasize effort, persistence, curiosity, and personal expression rather than comparing children's artistic abilities. This approach is particularly relevant when children experience frustration because their artwork does not match their expectations or when they feel hesitant to present their creations. Denee et al. (2024)

examined visual arts self-efficacy among early childhood teachers and discussed the factors and supports that influence teachers' confidence in delivering visual arts education. Their findings reinforce the importance of supporting teachers so that they can provide meaningful artistic experiences and respond confidently to children's learning needs.

The integration of social-emotional learning into arts education can be strengthened through explicit emotional vocabulary and guided reflection. Teachers may introduce simple words describing emotions before an activity and invite children to discuss how particular characters, musical rhythms, colors, or movements make them feel. After completing the activity, children can be encouraged to explain their experiences, identify challenges, and describe how they responded to their peers. Muthmainah and Yahya (2025) identified emotional expression and regulation, respect, patience, cooperation, and empathy among the socio-emotional values addressed through arts-integrated learning in Indonesian and Malaysian kindergartens. Their study suggests that teachers can make the relationship between art and socio-emotional learning more visible by connecting creative experiences with opportunities to recognize and discuss emotions.

Collaboration between classroom teachers and arts specialists may also enrich the learning process. Teachers can share knowledge about children's developmental needs, while artists can contribute expertise in artistic techniques, materials, and creative exploration. A collaborative approach may help educators move beyond activities focused primarily on finished products toward experiences that emphasize experimentation, communication, and reflection. Hayes et al. (2021) presented a professional development model for early childhood arts education based on creative exchange between early years teachers and artists. Their research involved a co-mentoring program and emphasized professional collaboration as a way to develop arts teaching practices. This approach offers a useful perspective for considering how professional learning and cooperation among educators could strengthen the integration of arts education and socio-emotional development in kindergarten settings.

Assessment is another essential component of the teacher's role. Socio-emotional development cannot be evaluated adequately through the appearance of children's artwork alone; teachers need to consider the behaviors and interactions that occur during the learning process. Relevant indicators may include children's willingness to participate, ability to communicate feelings, responses to constructive feedback, persistence when facing difficulties, and interactions with peers. Teachers can record these behaviors through observation notes, reflective journals, children's verbal explanations, and documentation of learning activities. Leung et al. (2025) highlight the importance of teachers' pedagogical knowledge and classroom practices in visual arts education, providing a basis for considering how assessment and instructional decisions can be connected. For a qualitative study, these records can help establish how particular teaching strategies relate to observable socio-emotional behaviors without claiming causal effects that the research design cannot demonstrate.

The integration of arts education and socio-emotional learning ultimately requires a combination of thoughtful planning, supportive interaction, appropriate teaching strategies, and ongoing reflection. Teachers can strengthen the educational value of artistic experiences by setting clear learning objectives, providing opportunities for children's independent expression, facilitating cooperation, and observing developmental progress. Research by Muthmainah and Yahya (2025), Leung et al. (2025), and Hayes et al. (2021) illustrates the relevance of curriculum integration, pedagogical competence, and professional collaboration in early childhood arts education. At Al Irsyad Pahambatan Kindergarten, the analysis should focus on the strategies teachers actually employ, the challenges they encounter, and the ways children respond during artistic activities.

Evidence from classroom observations and teacher interviews will be necessary to determine how these practices operate in the local context and what implications they have for strengthening socio-emotional development through arts education.

Conclusion

Arts education plays an important role in supporting socio-emotional development in early childhood by providing opportunities for emotional expression, self-regulation, social interaction, and cooperation. Activities such as drawing, painting, music, dance, and creative drama can help children communicate their feelings, develop confidence, manage frustration, respect differences, and build positive relationships with their peers. Teachers have a central role in maximizing these benefits through intentional activity planning, supportive classroom interactions, appropriate guidance, and continuous observation of children's developmental progress. The integration of socio-emotional learning into arts education can create meaningful learning experiences that address both children's creative abilities and interpersonal competencies. In the context of Al Irsyad Pahambatan Kindergarten, Agam Regency, West Sumatra, the potential of arts education should be understood in relation to the school's learning practices, children's participation, and teachers' approaches. Further empirical investigation using classroom observations and teacher interviews is necessary to establish how these practices contribute to children's socio-emotional development in this specific setting. This study highlights the importance of integrating arts education into early childhood learning as a developmentally appropriate approach that connects creativity, emotional awareness, and positive social relationships.

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