



EMOTION REGULATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD WITHIN THE LEARNING CONTEXT AT DAARUL IRSYAD KINDERGARTEN, CIANJUR

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Author Information

Nova Tania Septiani

innovataniaseptiani@gmail.com

Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Tarbiyah Al-Azami Cianjur

Eva Manfaatin Kartadinata

bundava28@gmail.com

Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Tarbiyah Al-Azami Cianjur

Ika Rustika Zainah

ik4rustika@gmail.com

Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Tarbiyah Al-Azami Cianjur

Abstract

Emotional regulation is an important aspect of early childhood education because it influences children's self-control, social interaction, learning readiness, and self-confidence. Although previous studies have examined emotional regulation in young children, limited research has explored its relationship with self-confidence and the Identity Development (Jati Diri) element of the Merdeka Curriculum, particularly within the context of Islamic early childhood education. This study aimed to describe the process of emotional regulation among children aged five to six years in the learning context of Daarul Irsyad Kindergarten, Cianjur, identify the supporting and inhibiting factors, and analyze the teacher's role in strengthening children's self-confidence through emotional guidance. This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach using a case study method. Data were collected through observations, semi-structured interviews with the principal, teachers, and parents, as well as documentation of learning activities. The findings revealed that children's emotional regulation developed through daily habituation, teacher guidance, positive reinforcement, peer interactions, religious practices, and family support. Children gradually learned to recognize and express their emotions appropriately, follow classroom rules, wait for their turns, resolve simple conflicts, and participate more confidently in learning activities. Teachers played a central role as guides, facilitators, motivators, and role models by creating a safe, warm, supportive, and values-based learning environment. The study concludes that emotional regulation contributes to the development of children's self-confidence and supports the achievement of the Identity Development (Jati Diri) learning outcomes. The findings also highlight the importance of collaboration between schools and families in fostering children's emotional competence, confidence, and character development within Islamic early childhood education settings.

Keywords: *Self-Control; Learning Environment; Teacher Support; Confidence Building; Islamic Values*

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education serves as a crucial foundation for developing children's potential, character, and social readiness. During this stage, children experience rapid growth across multiple developmental domains, including social and emotional development. Social development refers to children's ability to interact appropriately according to environmental expectations, whereas emotional development involves the ability to recognize, express, and regulate emotions effectively (Amini & Aisyah, 2014; Fakhruddin, 2010; Hurlock, 1978; Rahman, 2002; Suyadi, 2010). Young children tend to

express emotions spontaneously; therefore, both family and school environments need to provide consistent stimulation to help children adapt, engage in positive social interactions, and develop self-confidence. The development of social-emotional competence during early childhood is particularly important because it influences children's ability to participate in learning activities, build relationships with peers, and develop a positive sense of self.

Emotion regulation has become a critical issue in early childhood education because it is closely associated with self-control, empathy, learning readiness, and children's social competence. Emotion regulation is defined as the process through which individuals monitor, evaluate, and modify their emotional responses to align with situational demands (Wandansari, 2019). During early childhood, children begin to learn how to delay gratification, control impulses, understand others' feelings, and calm themselves when experiencing conflict (Hidayah et al., 2025; Sari & Lestari, 2025). According to Papalia and Martorell (2012), children with well-developed emotion regulation skills are more likely to adapt successfully, establish positive social relationships, and demonstrate greater readiness for learning. In the context of the Early Childhood Education Learning Outcomes (Capaian Pembelajaran PAUD), emotion regulation is closely related to the Identity Development (Jati Diri) element, particularly children's ability to recognize themselves, manage emotions, build self-confidence, and interact positively with others.

Within the context of Islamic education, emotion regulation is understood not only as a psychological competence but also as an essential component of *akhlakul karimah* (noble character development). Values such as patience, empathy, and self-control are fundamental in shaping children's behavior. A hadith narrated by Bukhari and Muslim states that true strength lies in the ability to control oneself when angry. Similarly, the Qur'an emphasizes the importance of patience in Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 153. These values are highly relevant to early childhood learning and can be fostered through habituation practices, teacher guidance, prayers, *dhikr* (remembrance of God), and the reinforcement of patient behavior during classroom activities. Therefore, efforts to develop emotion regulation in early childhood education are not only intended to support children's social-emotional development but also to strengthen character formation based on Islamic values.

However, preliminary observations conducted at TK Daarul Irsyad Cianjur indicate that emotion regulation among Group B children has not yet developed optimally. Initial data revealed that eight children still exhibited tantrums when their desires were not fulfilled, seven children cried or withdrew during conflicts, six children were able to calm themselves with teacher assistance, and only four children could express their feelings and independently resolve simple problems. These conditions affected children's participation in classroom activities, peer interactions, and confidence when facing challenges or expressing opinions during learning activities. These findings highlight a gap between theoretical expectations and classroom practices. Previous studies have demonstrated that positive discipline, social environments, consistent interactions, and the ability to understand others'

perspectives significantly influence children's emotion regulation (Drupadi & Syafrudin, 2019; Idamayanti et al., 2026). Nevertheless, most previous studies have focused on factors influencing emotion regulation or strategies for improving social-emotional development in general. Limited research has specifically examined how emotion regulation develops in everyday classroom interactions and how teachers facilitate this process to strengthen children's self-confidence within the Identity Development (Jati Diri) element of the PAUD Learning Outcomes framework.

Based on these conditions, this study aims to describe the process of emotion regulation among Group B children during learning activities at Daarul Irsyad Kindergarten, Cianjur; identify the factors influencing emotion regulation; determine the supporting and inhibiting factors; and analyze the role of teachers in fostering emotion regulation to enhance children's self-confidence in accordance with the Identity Development element (Jati Diri). This study is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically by providing a deeper understanding of emotion regulation in early childhood education settings and by offering insights into how teachers can integrate social-emotional development, self-confidence, and Islamic character values within everyday learning experiences.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach using a descriptive case study method (Luthfiah, 2018; Wada et al., 2024). A qualitative approach was selected because the study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of emotion regulation processes among young children within the natural context of classroom learning. Emotion regulation was examined not merely as a behavioral phenomenon but also as a socio-psychological experience that emerges through interactions with teachers, peers, and the learning environment. Qualitative research generates descriptive data in the form of words, actions, behaviors, and participants' responses observed directly in the field (Moleong, 2017). The descriptive method was used to portray real-life conditions, while the case study design was chosen because the research focused on a specific setting, namely Daarul Irsyad Kindergarten in Cianjur. The case study approach enabled the researcher to explore emotion regulation processes comprehensively within their real-life educational context and to examine how classroom interactions, teacher support, and school culture contributed to children's emotional development and self-confidence.

The study was conducted at Daarul Irsyad Kindergarten, located at Jl. KH. Achmad Munawar KM 0.13, Geger Bitung Hamlet, RT/RW 01/05, Sukasari Village, Cilaku District, Cianjur Regency, West Java, Indonesia. This site was selected because learning activities in Group B classrooms involve intensive social interactions among children through group work, role-playing, motor activities, and creative tasks. These situations enabled the researcher to observe children's emotional responses in a natural setting. The study was conducted from March to April 2026, with preliminary observations carried out on March 23, 2026.

Research participants were selected purposively based on data requirements. The primary participants were Group B children aged 5–6 years at Daarul Irsyad Kindergarten, Cianjur. The study involved 25 children in Group B as observation participants. The study informants included the principal, Group B teachers, and the children's parents or guardians. The principal provided information regarding school policies and programs that support children's emotion regulation. Group B teachers served as key informants because they interacted directly with children throughout the learning process. Parents or guardians provided additional information regarding children's emotional behaviors and self-confidence at home. Purposive sampling was employed to ensure that participants possessed relevant experiences and information related to children's emotion regulation and self-confidence development.

Data sources consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through direct observation of children's behavior, interviews with the principal, teachers, and parents, as well as field notes documenting classroom learning situations. Secondary data were collected from school documents, student records, activity journals, lesson plans, documentation of learning activities, and relevant scholarly literature (Arikunto, 2018).

Data collection techniques included observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted systematically using observation checklists to record children's emotional expressions, responses to conflicts, self-soothing abilities, willingness to participate, and teachers' responses in assisting children to regulate their emotions. Specific observation indicators included children's ability to recognize and express emotions appropriately, control emotional reactions when facing disappointment, calm themselves after emotional incidents, interact positively with peers, seek assistance when experiencing difficulties, and demonstrate confidence during learning activities. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the principal, Group B teachers, and parents or guardians. Interview questions focused on the importance of emotion regulation, teachers' strategies, the relationship between emotion regulation and self-confidence, school support, and changes in children's behavior at home and at school. Documentation was used to complement observational and interview data through school records, activity logs, photographs, and instructional archives. Data collection was conducted repeatedly throughout the study period to capture consistent patterns of children's emotional behavior across different learning situations.

Data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. During the data reduction stage, the researcher selected information relevant to the research focus, such as children's emotional expressions, teachers' responses, peer interactions, and learning situations influencing emotion regulation. In the data display stage, findings were organized into descriptive narratives to clearly identify patterns of children's emotion regulation. During the conclusion drawing stage, the

researcher interpreted the meaning of the data iteratively and verified the findings by comparing results from observations, interviews, and documentation. Particular attention was given to identifying themes related to emotional self-control, emotional expression, coping strategies, teacher support, peer interactions, and children's self-confidence during classroom participation. These themes were coded, categorized, and interpreted to develop a comprehensive understanding of emotion regulation processes in the classroom context. Data trustworthiness was enhanced through source and technique triangulation by comparing information obtained from the principal, teachers, parents, observational findings, and supporting documents. To further strengthen credibility, member checking was conducted by confirming interview interpretations with participants, while prolonged engagement in the field enabled the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of children's emotional behaviors and the educational context in which they occurred.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study was conducted in Group B classes for children aged 5–6 years at Daarul Irsyad Kindergarten, Cianjur. The findings indicate that children's emotion regulation develops through daily learning activities involving teacher guidance, positive habituation, peer interactions, and family support. Emotion regulation was evident when children learned to recognize their feelings, express emotions appropriately, wait their turn, follow classroom rules, resolve simple conflicts, and confidently participate in learning activities. Data were collected through observations, interviews with the principal, teachers, and parents, as well as documentation of classroom activities. Overall, the findings suggest that emotion regulation serves as an important foundation for children's social participation, self-confidence, and learning readiness, which are closely related to the Identity Development (Jati Diri) element of the PAUD Learning Outcomes.

The learning environment at Daarul Irsyad Kindergarten supports the development of emotion regulation because the school's vision is to nurture an Islamic generation from an early age that is healthy, intelligent, creative, cheerful, independent, and well-mannered. This vision is implemented through learning activities emphasizing religious values, independence, cooperation, courage, and self-control. Activities such as greeting others, reciting prayers, reading short chapters from the Qur'an, practicing polite behavior, collaborating with peers, waiting in line, playing together, and performing in front of the class provide opportunities for children to develop emotion regulation skills directly. These activities not only foster emotional control but also strengthen children's sense of identity, responsibility, and confidence, which are central components of the Jati Diri element in the Early Childhood Learning Outcomes framework.

Table 1. Student Enrollment at Daarul Irsyad Kindergarten, Academic Year 2025/2026

No.	Age Group	Boys	Girls	Total
1	4–5 years	2	2	4

2	5–6 years	10	12	22
Total		12	14	26

Interviews with the principal revealed that emotion regulation is considered a fundamental competence in early childhood learning. Children who can regulate their emotions are more likely to follow rules, interact positively with peers, and actively participate in classroom activities. The principal also explained that the school provides activities that encourage children to express opinions, perform in front of the class, collaborate with peers, solve simple problems, communicate their feelings, and respect others. These activities help children regulate their emotions while simultaneously enhancing their self-confidence. This finding suggests that emotion regulation functions as a foundation for children's participation and engagement in learning experiences.

The findings further demonstrate a close relationship between emotion regulation and children's self-confidence. Children who remained calm during learning activities tended to ask questions more confidently, answer teachers' questions, try new activities, and interact more effectively with teachers and peers. In contrast, children who struggled to regulate their emotions often appeared shy, fearful, hesitant, easily upset, or less engaged in classroom activities. Thus, emotion regulation serves as an essential foundation for the development of self-confidence in learning contexts. This relationship supports the view that emotional competence enables children to take risks in learning situations and participate more actively in social interactions.

Teachers played a significant role in stimulating children's emotion regulation. They encouraged children to talk about their feelings when they felt sad, angry, disappointed, or afraid. Teachers used gentle language, helped children understand the causes of their emotions, and guided them in finding solutions to problems they encountered. This approach enabled children to learn that emotions can be expressed appropriately through words rather than through crying, anger, or aggressive behavior. Teacher scaffolding was therefore essential in helping children transform emotional reactions into constructive social behaviors.

Teachers also provided motivation and positive reinforcement to children who were shy or lacked self-confidence. Rather than forcing children to participate immediately, teachers encouraged them to engage gradually. When children answered questions, performed in front of the class, tried new activities, or completed tasks successfully, teachers offered praise and appreciation. This approach helped children feel valued and become more confident in their abilities. Consistent encouragement created a supportive emotional climate that promoted both self-regulation and self-confidence.

Interviews with parents reinforced these findings. Several parents reported that their children had become more willing to communicate, easier to engage in conversations when feeling angry or disappointed, and more confident when interacting with peers and family members. Children also

began sharing their school experiences and expressing feelings of happiness, sadness, anger, or disappointment, although some children still initially expressed these emotions through crying. These findings suggest positive changes in children's emotional behaviors after participating in learning activities at Daarul Irsyad Kindergarten. The consistency between school observations and parental reports strengthens the credibility of the findings regarding children's emotional development.

Table 2. Summary of Findings on Children's Emotion Regulation at Daarul Irsyad Kindergarten

Focus Area	Field Findings
Forms of emotion regulation	Children began learning to calm themselves, express their feelings, follow rules, wait their turn, and resolve simple conflicts.
Relationship with self-confidence	Children who managed their emotions effectively appeared more willing to ask and answer questions, perform, try new activities, and interact with others.
Teacher's role	Teachers guided children through gentle communication, emotional storytelling, motivation, praise, habituation, and positive role modeling.
School support	The school fostered a safe, comfortable, religious, and enjoyable environment through Islamic values and social activities.
Parents' role	Parents who listened to their children, provided support, and offered praise contributed to greater emotional stability.

Table 2 shows that emotion regulation emerged through the interaction of multiple factors, including teacher guidance, parental support, and the learning environment. The findings indicate that emotion regulation is not limited to children's internal abilities but is shaped by the social and educational contexts in which they develop. These findings also demonstrate that children's emotional development is closely linked to opportunities for social participation and positive interpersonal experiences.

Supporting factors for children's emotion regulation included teachers' roles, motivation, family environment, school environment, and peer interactions. Teachers emerged as the primary factor because they spent the most time accompanying children during learning activities. Encouragement from teachers and parents helped children feel secure and willing to try new experiences. The family environment served as the initial context in which children learned to recognize and express emotions. A supportive school environment helped children feel accepted, while peer interactions provided opportunities to learn sharing, cooperation, and empathy. Together, these factors created an ecosystem that encouraged the development of emotional competence and social confidence.

In addition to supporting factors, the study identified several barriers to emotion regulation. The most prominent challenge was insufficient family support. Children who received limited

attention, had few opportunities to communicate, or were frequently scolded tended to struggle with understanding and expressing their emotions. Harsh parenting styles, negative experiences, limited social interaction, and a lack of appreciation also hindered the development of emotion regulation and self-confidence. These findings suggest that emotional difficulties are often influenced by environmental conditions rather than solely by children's personal characteristics.

Table 3. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of Children's Emotion Regulation

Supporting Factors	Findings
Teacher's role	Teachers provided guidance, motivation, praise, and assistance when children experienced negative emotions.
Parental support	Parents listened to children, offered encouragement, and modeled appropriate communication during moments of anger or sadness.
School environment	The classroom atmosphere was designed to be safe, comfortable, enjoyable, and respectful of children.
Peer interactions	Children learned to share, cooperate, wait their turn, resolve conflicts, and understand their peers' feelings.
Inhibiting Factors	Findings
Lack of family attention	Children had limited opportunities to share experiences and express emotions at home.
Harsh parenting practices	Children tended to feel fearful, shy, and hesitant to express emotions or opinions.
Negative experiences	Children who had been scolded, ridiculed, or undervalued often displayed lower self-confidence.
Lack of appreciation	Children were less motivated to try new activities and demonstrate their abilities.

Table 3 indicates that the development of emotion regulation is influenced by both supportive and inhibiting conditions. The presence of positive relationships and supportive communication contributes to emotional growth, whereas negative interactions may limit children's opportunities to develop emotional competence and confidence.

The findings indicate that emotion regulation among young children at Daarul Irsyad Kindergarten develops through consistent habituation, teacher support, and social interactions. These results align with the concept of emotion regulation, which emphasizes that children need to learn how to monitor, evaluate, and adjust their emotional responses according to situational demands (Gross, 2019; Wandansari, 2019). During early childhood, these abilities are not yet fully developed

independently. Children still require adult support to recognize emotions, understand their causes, and select appropriate responses. The findings therefore reinforce the importance of guided emotional learning during the early years.

The findings regarding the importance of teachers' roles are consistent with Santrock's (2020) view that early childhood is a critical period for developing self-control, understanding others' emotions, and building social competence. At Daarul Irsyad Kindergarten, teachers functioned as guides, facilitators, mentors, and role models. They not only delivered instruction but also demonstrated gentle communication, patience, respect, and constructive conflict resolution. Teachers' calm and responsive attitudes provided children with concrete examples of effective emotion regulation.

These findings are also consistent with Hermahayu et al. (2024), who argued that well-planned positive discipline strategies can enhance emotion regulation among young children. At Daarul Irsyad Kindergarten, positive discipline was reflected in teachers' efforts to encourage children to follow rules, wait their turn, express their feelings, and resolve conflicts without aggression. Rather than punishing children when they became angry or cried, teachers engaged them in dialogue to help them understand their emotions.

The findings concerning the influence of the family environment support the work of Drupadi and Syafrudin (2019) and Rahiem (2023), who emphasized that children's emotion regulation is shaped by social environments and consistent interaction patterns. Children who received support at home were more likely to express their feelings and demonstrate greater self-confidence. In contrast, children who received limited attention or were frequently scolded were more likely to experience anxiety, fear, and difficulties regulating their emotions.

The findings related to peer interactions also support Risnawati et al. (2023), who highlighted the relationship between perspective-taking abilities and children's emotional control. Through activities such as playing together, waiting in line, collaborating, and resolving simple conflicts, children learned that their peers also have feelings and desires. These social experiences foster empathy, patience, and adaptability.

A distinctive contribution of this study is its integration of emotion regulation with Islamic educational values. Unlike previous studies that primarily examined emotion regulation from psychological or social perspectives, this research demonstrates how Islamic practices such as prayer, Qur'anic recitation, greetings, patience, gratitude, and respectful behavior can serve as practical mechanisms for fostering emotional self-regulation. This finding highlights the potential of faith-based early childhood education environments to support both emotional development and character formation simultaneously.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that emotion regulation plays a crucial role in enhancing children's self-confidence in alignment with the Identity Development learning outcomes (Jati Diri element). Children who are able to regulate their emotions become more confident, independent, active, socially engaged, and prepared to participate in learning activities. The practical implication of this study is that teachers should intentionally integrate emotional learning into daily classroom routines, while parents should provide consistent emotional support at home. Early childhood institutions can further strengthen emotion regulation by creating learning environments that combine positive social interaction, emotional guidance, and character education grounded in Islamic values. The strength of this study lies in its direct portrayal of emotion regulation practices in everyday classroom settings. However, the study is limited by its focus on a single institution; therefore, the findings should be interpreted as a contextual representation of emotion regulation practices at Daarul Irsyad Kindergarten, Cianjur.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that emotion regulation among young children at Daarul Irsyad Kindergarten, Cianjur, develops through a continuous process of habituation, teacher guidance, social interaction, and family support. Children gradually learn to recognize and express their emotions appropriately, calm themselves when experiencing anger or disappointment, follow classroom rules, wait their turn, and participate confidently in learning activities. The findings demonstrate that children who are able to regulate their emotions tend to be calmer, more engaged in classroom activities, more willing to ask and answer questions, and more capable of building positive relationships with teachers and peers. These findings indicate that emotion regulation serves as an important foundation for strengthening children's self-confidence and supporting their participation in learning.

The study also reveals that children's emotion regulation is influenced by multiple interconnected factors, including teachers' roles, parental support, family environment, school climate, motivation, and peer interactions. Teachers play a central role as facilitators, mentors, guides, and role models who help children understand and manage emotions through positive communication, emotional guidance, reinforcement, and supportive classroom practices. Similarly, family support contributes significantly to children's emotional development by providing opportunities for communication, appreciation, emotional expression, and positive interaction. Conversely, limited parental attention, harsh parenting practices, negative experiences, and inadequate emotional support may hinder the development of both emotion regulation and self-confidence.

The novelty of this study lies in its exploration of emotion regulation as a pathway for strengthening children's self-confidence within the framework of the Identity Development (Jati Diri) element of the Merdeka Curriculum. Unlike previous studies that primarily examined emotion regulation from psychological or social perspectives, this study highlights the integration of emotion

regulation, self-confidence, and Islamic character education within early childhood learning. The originality of the research is reflected in its focus on an Islamic early childhood education setting where religious habituation, patience, gratitude, politeness, cooperation, empathy, and self-control are embedded in daily classroom activities. This finding positions emotion regulation not only as a developmental competence but also as an essential component of character formation and identity development in early childhood education.

From a scholarly perspective, this study contributes to the advancement of knowledge in early childhood education, particularly in the fields of social-emotional development, character education, and Islamic values-based learning. The findings provide empirical evidence that emotion regulation supports the achievement of the Identity Development (Jati Diri) learning outcomes by fostering children's confidence, independence, responsibility, empathy, and social competence. Furthermore, the study enriches existing literature by demonstrating how religious values and daily learning practices can be integrated to support children's emotional and social development in a holistic manner.

The implications of this study extend to educational institutions, teachers, parents, and the wider community. For early childhood education institutions, the findings highlight the importance of implementing structured social-emotional learning programs that are integrated into daily classroom activities. For teachers, the study emphasizes the need to create emotionally supportive learning environments through positive communication, guidance, modeling, and consistent reinforcement. For parents, the findings underscore the importance of providing emotional support, appreciation, active listening, and positive interaction at home. More broadly, the study suggests that the development of confident, emotionally resilient, socially competent, and morally grounded children requires strong collaboration between schools and families. Therefore, emotion regulation should be recognized as a fundamental component of early childhood education that supports children's readiness for future learning, positive social participation, and lifelong character development.

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