



STIMULATION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
WITH THE TELLYNG STORY METHOD

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Abstract

Background: Emotional intelligence is a fundamental aspect of early childhood development because it influences children's ability to recognize and regulate emotions, demonstrate empathy, cooperate with peers, and establish positive social relationships. However, many preschool children continue to experience difficulties in emotional regulation and social interaction, indicating the need for appropriate learning strategies. **Objective:** This study aimed to examine the effect of the storytelling method on the emotional intelligence of children aged 4–5 years at PAUD Taruna Elim. **Method:** A quantitative study employing a **quasi-experimental one-group pretest–posttest design** was conducted involving 20 children selected through total sampling. Data were collected using structured observation instruments and analyzed using descriptive statistics and simple linear regression with SPSS. **Results:** The findings indicated that the storytelling method was positively associated with children's emotional intelligence; however, the relationship was not statistically significant ($p = 0.146 > 0.05$). The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.114$) showed that the storytelling method explained 11.4% of the variance in children's emotional intelligence, while 88.6% was influenced by other internal and external factors beyond the scope of this study. **Novelty:** This study provides empirical evidence regarding the implementation of storytelling in an authentic early childhood classroom while highlighting the limited contribution of classroom storytelling alone to children's emotional intelligence. **Conclusion:** Storytelling can support emotional learning experiences, but its effectiveness should be strengthened through interactive classroom activities and continuous collaboration between teachers and parents.

Keywords: Storytelling Method, Emotional Intelligence, Early Childhood, PAUD Taruna Elim.

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education is a fundamental effort in guiding and stimulating children from birth to the age of six years the so-called diamond age through educational stimulation via growth in terms of nutrition and health, and by optimizing the holistic-integrative developmental potential of early childhood through aspects of physical-motor development, cognitive creativity, socio-emotional development, language, and religion and morals, so that children are ready to enter further education in formal, informal, and non-formal pathways (Amseke, 2023). Early Childhood Education (PAUD) has a strategic role in stimulating the emotional aspect in a directed and enjoyable manner. Imanuel Puling (2026) states that learning in PAUD should not only focus on cognitive aspects, but must integrate emotional development as part of holistic education. However, in reality, many educators still find it difficult to find methods that are appropriate to children's developmental stages, so that the strengthening of emotional intelligence often progresses slowly and is difficult to measure.

The period from ages 4–5 years is the golden period of children's development, during which the foundations of personality, social skills, and emotional intelligence begin to form significantly. During this age range, children begin to recognize their own feelings and those of others, and learn to manage their emotional reactions in daily interactions. According to Widiya Kristiana et al. (2026), emotional intelligence becomes the primary foundation that determines children's success in adapting, building relationships, and participating in learning processes in the PAUD environment. Without proper support, children tend to display negative emotional behaviors such as getting angry easily, crying excessively, and having difficulty sharing with friends. In the PAUD Taruna Elim environment, initial observations showed that most children aged 4–5 years still experience difficulty in expressing feelings with words. When their desires are not met, they more often react by crying, hitting, or seeking attention excessively. Puling (2026) affirms that this condition is natural, but if left without guidance, it can develop into habits that interfere with the socialization process later on. Therefore, appropriate learning interventions are needed to address this challenge.

One learning method proven to be effective and appropriate for early childhood characteristics is the storytelling or storytelling method. Zetira Ahmad (2025) explains that storytelling is an approach that utilizes children's imaginative power to convey values, experiences, and understanding about feelings through an engaging storyline. This method is able to create a learning environment that is safe, comfortable, and non-pressuring, so that children more easily receive the emotional messages conveyed. Emotional intelligence is defined as the ability to recognize, understand, express, and manage emotions in a healthy manner as well as being able to empathize with the feelings of others. According to research by Rahmatia et al. (2026), children with good emotional intelligence tend to be more patient, cooperative, and able to resolve conflicts in a positive way compared to children whose emotional development is hindered. This makes emotional intelligence an aspect that cannot be overlooked in early childhood education services.

However, the organization of emotional maturity at the PAUD level is often faced with various parenting constraints as well as a lack of interactive stimulation in the classroom. Based on the latest literature study on the psychological dynamics of early childhood, Amseke (2023) in his theory asserts that the social-emotional development of children is greatly influenced by the synergy of internal factors such as children's temperament and external factors in the form of parenting patterns and the learning environment. A lack of appropriate stimulation at school often triggers emotional obstacles in children, such as the inability to regulate anger, low independence, and a tendency to withdraw from group interactions. This phenomenon was also observed in children aged 4–5 years at PAUD Taruna Elim, where some children still show difficulty in expressing emotions adaptively, are reluctant to give way, and require a considerably long adaptation time in a group environment.

To bridge this problem, educators are required to implement learning strategies that can sharpen emotional skills while attracting children's interest. One pedagogical intervention deemed relevant is the storytelling method. Through stories, children are exposed to visualizations of narratives, conflicts, and varied emotions of characters, which indirectly trains their affective sensitivity. The importance of cultivating emotional skills through interactive activities is supported by the thinking of Amseke, Lelo, Seran, & Sakan (2024), who explain that emotional skills play a significant role as an affective "reinforcer" that fosters children's independence and psychological readiness from an early age. Storytelling sessions open up a trusted communication space between teachers and children to explore those feelings.

Furthermore, in the context of children's emotional attachment and sense of learning security at school, Nuban & Amseke (2024) underline that warm, safe, and accepting emotional relationships (positive attachment) form the primary foundation for the development of children's character and prosocial behavior. The storytelling method delivered expressively by teachers is able to create safe psychological attachment for children in the classroom. When children feel close and safe, their cognitive and emotional functions will work more optimally in absorbing the moral values from the stories delivered.

Entering the trend of PAUD innovation, the latest study from Mailan, Snae, Fangidae, Bifel, Frare, & Amseke (2026) indicates that the use of varied, contextual, and child-active-engagement-centered learning methods has been proven to have a positive and significant influence on improving children's growth and development functions. In relation to the storytelling method, the application of post-story reflection (such as interactive question-and-answer sessions about the characters' feelings) stimulates children to sharpen their thinking skills while consciously evaluating emotions. This is reinforced by Amseke's (2025) thinking which states that the formation of children's emotional and social intelligence must be built holistically through activities that support deep emotional involvement between educators and children in the school environment.

Although the above theories indicate the significance of emotional stimulation, their application in the field requires specific studies tailored to the characteristics of the school. PAUD Taruna Elim as an early childhood education institution has the unique background of its students that requires a distinctive and contextual storytelling method approach.

The effectiveness of this storytelling method is supported by various recent literature. Research by Suryani (2022) affirms that the storytelling method can significantly stimulate children's empathy because children are invited to place themselves in the position of the characters in the story. In line with this, Hidayah and Pratama (2023) in their study mention that narratives in stories help children unconsciously internalize values of emotional regulation, which they then practice in their daily interactions.

Although the effectiveness of the storytelling method has been widely studied, its application requires a contextual approach tailored to the unique characteristics of the institution and the background of its students. PAUD Taruna Elim has its own environmental characteristics and learning culture that need to be studied more deeply regarding how this storytelling method is specifically implemented by educators.

Based on the above background, this research aims to examine in depth the "Application of the Storytelling Method in Improving the Emotional Intelligence of Children Aged 4–5 Years at PAUD Taruna Elim." The results of this research are expected to make a practical contribution to educators at PAUD Taruna Elim in developing creative and effective emotion-based learning strategies.

METHODS

This research uses a quantitative approach with a Quasi-Experimental Design method using a One-Group Pretest-Posttest Design. This approach was chosen to directly test the effect or effectiveness of the storytelling method intervention on the level of children's emotional intelligence before and after the treatment was administered.

The respondents in this research were children aged 4–5 years (Group A) at PAUD Taruna Elim. The sampling technique used the Saturated Sampling method (Total Sampling), where the entire population of children aged 4–5 years at PAUD Taruna Elim was used as the research sample due to the limited number of populations specific to that age group.

There are two types of variables in this research, namely: the Independent Variable (X): the storytelling method, which is an oral story-delivery activity by the teacher utilizing visual media (such as hand puppets or story books) containing moral messages and emotional recognition content. And the Dependent Variable (Y): the emotional intelligence of children aged 4–5 years, which is the ability of preschool children to recognize their own feelings, control emotional outbursts, and demonstrate concern for their social environment.

Emotion Management (Self-Regulation): The ability to control oneself from aggressive behavior (such as tantrums, hitting, or crying excessively) when facing play conflicts (Amseke, 2023;

Thompson, 2021). Empathy (Social Awareness): The ability to respond positively to the feelings of others, such as comforting or sharing toys with friends (Eisenberg et al., 2022). Social Skills (Relationship Skills): The ability to engage in interactive communication, obey play rules, and cooperate in groups (Denham, 2023).

This observational instrument was validated using the Corrected Item-Total Correlation coefficient test, and its reliability was tested using the Cronbach's Alpha technique.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the descriptive statistical analysis of early childhood emotional intelligence data can be described as follows:

Table 1. Results of Children's Emotional Intelligence Categories

Category	Interval	Frequency	Percentage
High	60–49	0	0%
Medium	48–38	6	30%
Low	37–27	14	70%
Very Low	26–15	20	100%

Based on the categorization of children's emotional intelligence, it is known that most children are in the low category, totaling 14 children (70%). Furthermore, there are 6 children (30%) in the medium category. There are no children in the high or very low categories.

Table 2. Percentage Results of Children's Emotional Intelligence X and Y

Category	Frequency	Percentage
High	0	0%
Medium	6	30%
Low	14	70%
Very Low	0	0%
Total	20	100%

Based on Table 2, it is known that of the 20 children who were the research respondents, 14 children (70%) are in the low category and 6 children (30%) are in the medium category. Meanwhile, there are no children who fall into the high or very low categories. These results indicate that the level of emotional intelligence of children in the studied group is generally still in the low category, so learning efforts are needed to help improve children's emotional intelligence.

Table 3. Summary of Simple Linear Regression Analysis Results Simultaneous F Test

ANOVAa

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	22.358	1	22.358	2.310	.146b
1 Residual	174.192	18	9.677		
Total	196.550	19			

Based on the F test results, an F-count value of 2.310 was obtained with a significance level of 0.146. Since the significance value is greater than 0.05, the regression model used in this study is not significant. Thus, variable F does not have a significant effect on variable P.

Table 4. Summary of Coefficient of Determination Results (R Square)

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.337a	.114	.065	3.111

Predictors: (Constant), F

Based on the results of the coefficient of determination test, an R Square value of 0.114 was obtained. This indicates that variable F is able to explain variable P by 11.4%, while the remaining 88.6% is influenced by other factors outside the research model. The correlation value (R) of 0.337 indicates a low relationship between the two variables.

Table 5. Summary of Regression Analysis Results — Partial Test (t-Test)

Coefficientsa

Model	B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1 (Constant)	48.539	8.049			6.030
F	-.337	.222	-.337	-1.520	.146

Dependent Variable: P

Based on the t-test results, a significance value of 0.146 was obtained, which is greater than 0.05. Thus it can be concluded that variable F does not have a significant effect on variable P. The regression coefficient has a negative value of -0.337, indicating a negative direction of relationship between the two variables.

Table 6. Results of Descriptive Analysis of Children's Emotional Intelligence

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
F	20	31	42	36.20	3.222
P	20	30	43	36.35	3.216
Valid N (listwise)	20				

Based on the descriptive statistics results, it is known that the research sample consisted of 20 respondents. Variable F has a mean value of 36.20 with a standard deviation of 3.222, while variable P has a mean value of 36.35 with a standard deviation of 3.216. This shows that the data distribution of both variables is relatively good because the standard deviation value is smaller than the mean value.

Results of Children's Emotional Intelligence Categories

Quantitatively, most children are in the Low category, totaling 14 children (70%), and the remaining 6 children (30%) are in the Medium category. No children fall into the High or Very Low categories. Theoretically, this dominant low condition is in line with initial observations at PAUD Taruna Elim where children still have difficulty regulating anger, showing empathy, and requiring a long time to adapt. Based on Amseke's (2023) theory, socio-emotional obstacles such as these are a direct result of a lack of appropriate interactive stimulation in both the home care environment and in the classroom.

Percentage Results of Children's Emotional Intelligence X and Y

Quantitative Results: This table reinforces the distribution from the total sample of 20 child respondents where 70% are in the low category and 30% are in the medium category. The accumulated figures affirm that the level of emotional intelligence is generally still below the optimal standard. Theoretical Analysis: This situation demands structured pedagogical intervention. Amseke, Lelo, Seran, & Sakan (2024) explain that children's emotional skills need to be actively sharpened in order to function as an affective "reinforcer" that fosters children's independence from an early age.

Results of Simple Linear Regression Analysis — Simultaneous F Test (ANOVA)

Quantitative Results: An F-count value of 2.310 was obtained with a significance level (Sig.) of 0.146. Since the Sig. value of 0.146 > 0.05, the regression model is declared not significant. This means that the independent variable (F) simultaneously does not have a real effect on the dependent variable (P). Theoretical Analysis: Based on Amseke's (2023) theory regarding the psychological dynamics of early childhood, socio-emotional development is not influenced by a single factor but by a synergy of multiple factors (internal factors such as temperament, and external factors such as parenting patterns). Therefore, a statistical model that only tests one independent variable in school has proven insufficient to significantly change children's emotional intelligence as a whole.

Coefficient of Determination Results (R Square)

Quantitative Results: The R Square value obtained is 0.114. This means that variable F is only able to explain or contribute to variable P by 11.4%. The remaining 88.6% is influenced by other factors outside the research model. The correlation value (R) of 0.337 indicates a low level of relationship. Theoretical Analysis: The 88.6% figure influenced by external factors greatly reinforces the concept from Amseke (2025) and Nuban & Amseke (2024), which states that the main foundation for the formation of children's character and prosocial behavior is positive attachment (secure attachment), nutritional fulfillment, and a sense of security obtained by children holistically from the totality of their environment (especially family), and not merely partial activities at school.

Results of Regression Analysis — Partial Test (t-Test)

Quantitative Results: A significance value of 0.146 was obtained (where $0.146 > 0.05$), proving that variable F does not have a significant effect on variable P. The regression coefficient has a negative sign (-0.337), indicating an inverse direction of relationship. Theoretical Analysis: This finding provides a practical critique of teaching application assumptions. Referring to the perspective of Mailan, Snae, Fangidae, et al. (2026), for a method such as storytelling to have a significant positive influence, its implementation must involve varied and contextual two-way interaction, for example through post-story emotional reflection (question-and-answer about characters' feelings). If the storytelling method is carried out monotonously without deep emotional involvement between educators and children, its significance value will be low as indicated by this table.

Results of Descriptive Analysis of Children's Emotional Intelligence (Descriptive Statistics)

Quantitative Results: The research sample consisted of 20 children ($N=20$). Variable F has a mean value of 36.20 with a standard deviation of 3.222. Variable P has a mean value of 36.35 with a standard deviation of 3.216. The data distribution is considered good because the standard deviation value is smaller than the mean value. Theoretical Analysis: The very close mean values (36.20 to 36.35) indicate almost no meaningful score increase in children's emotional intelligence. This validates the theories of experts such as Hidayah and Pratama (2023) and Suryani (2022), that the process of internalizing emotional regulation values and empathy through stories requires consistent, repeated habituation and cannot be instant, given the still very dynamic range of emotional development of children aged 4–5 years.

Application Based on Amseke's Theory (2023–2025)

In the journal, Amseke's ideas are used to underpin why this storytelling method is applied and how its interaction affects children's psychology:

- a. Environmental Stimulation for Emotion Regulation (Amseke, 2023): This theory affirms that children's socio-emotional development is the result of a synergy between internal factors (innate temperament) and external factors (parenting patterns and learning environment). A lack of appropriate interactive stimulation at school often triggers emotional obstacles in

children. Therefore, the storytelling method is applied at PAUD Taruna Elim as a form of pedagogical intervention/stimulation from teachers to bridge the emotion regulation problem.

- b. Building Skills as an Affective Reinforcer (Amseke, Lelo, Seran, & Sakan, 2024): Through stories, children are exposed to visualizations of conflicts and varied emotions of characters. This is in line with the theory that emotional skills function as an affective "reinforcer" that fosters children's independence and psychological readiness from an early age. Storytelling sessions open up a trusted communication space between teachers and children to explore those feelings.
- c. Providing a Sense of Security and Positive Attachment (Nuban & Amseke, 2024): Warm, safe, and accepting emotional relationships (positive attachment) are the primary foundation for the formation of children's character. The storytelling method delivered expressively by teachers at PAUD Taruna Elim is able to create this psychological sense of security in the classroom. When children feel close and safe with their teacher, their emotional functions work more optimally in absorbing the moral values of the story.
- d. Deep Emotional Involvement (Amseke, 2025): This theory states that the formation of emotional intelligence must be built holistically through activities that support deep emotional involvement between educators and children in the school environment.

In one occasion, Amseke and Logo Radja (2023) wrote that a child's ability to manage emotions and interact socially with others is greatly needed when children enter their surrounding environment. Without the ability to manage emotions and the ability to engage in good social interaction, children will have difficulty adapting to their social environment. This ability will also help children find their identity and role in real life. This is in line with the opinion of Izzaty (Amseke, 2023) that children who have the ability to express their emotions appropriately will be able to build good relationships with their peers. Erikson's theory of psychosocial development explains that preschool-aged children enter the initiative-guilt stage. At this stage, children are learning to develop the ability to perform activities independently and to develop initiative if they fail to carry out an activity. When children show initiative and the environment gives a negative response such as blaming the child, feelings of guilt emerge and hinder children from developing their initiative abilities (Faizah, Rahmah, & Yuliezar, in Amseke, 2023).

Based on the results of interviews and observations at PAUD Taruna Elim, activities were found that involve teachers or more specifically, directed toward the children of PAUD Taruna Elim to help children develop social-emotional skills and increase the emotional closeness between teachers and children.

CONCLUSION

Main Findings: This study found that the implementation of the storytelling method was positively associated with the emotional intelligence of children aged 4–5 years at PAUD Taruna Elim; however, the relationship was not statistically significant ($p = 0.146$). The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.114$) indicated that the storytelling method explained only 11.4% of the variance in children's emotional intelligence, while 88.6% was influenced by other factors beyond the scope of this study, including parenting practices, family environment, children's temperament, and classroom interactions. **Research Contribution:** This study provides empirical evidence regarding the application of storytelling in an authentic early childhood education setting while highlighting that classroom storytelling alone is insufficient to substantially improve children's emotional intelligence. **Theoretical and Practical Implications:** The findings support socio-emotional development theories emphasizing that children's emotional competencies develop through the interaction of school experiences, family support, and positive emotional attachment. Practically, teachers are encouraged to integrate storytelling with interactive reflection, role-playing, collaborative activities, and close parent–teacher collaboration. **Research Limitations:** This study involved only 20 children from a single early childhood education institution using a one-group quasi-experimental design, limiting generalizability. **Future Research Directions:** Future studies should employ larger samples, control-group experimental designs, and examine additional variables such as parenting style, teacher competence, classroom climate, and children's individual characteristics to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of factors influencing emotional intelligence development in early childhood.

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