



## THE EFFECT OF PROFESSIONAL THEMATIC PLAY ON CHILDREN'S SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN TK AT-TAUBAH JOMBANG

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ABSTRACT	Keywords
<p>During the preschool age, playing becomes a primary activity that is inseparable from children's lives. A relevant game to stimulate children's social and emotional development is professional thematic play. The purpose of this research was to examine the influence of professional thematic play on children's social and emotional development at AT-Taubah Kindergarten, Jombang. The design of this research used a one-group pre-post test. The population in this research was all mothers and children at AT-Taubah Kindergarten, Jombang, totaling 84 children. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling. The samples in this research were some mothers and children at AT-Taubah Kindergarten, Jombang, totaling 46 children. The measuring instrument used was a questionnaire with test results of 100% validity and reliability, with <math>\rho = 0.738</math>. Data processing, starting from editing, coding, scoring, and data analysis, was carried out using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test. The research results showed that children with good social-emotional development experienced an increase after engaging in professional-themed play, from 22 respondents (48%) to 41 respondents (89%). The Wilcoxon signed-rank test showed a <math>\rho = 0.000</math>. Professional themed play provides children with the opportunity to explore their emotions, enabling them to better understand and manage their emotions.</p>	<p><i>Professional thematic play, children's social and emotional development</i></p>

### INTRODUCTION

During preschool, play becomes a primary activity that is integral to a child's life. Nearly all activities during this phase involve play, which serves as both a means of entertainment and an essential learning tool. Play can be understood as a series of

activities undertaken for enjoyment and to provide meaningful learning experiences for children (Fadlillah, 2019). Through play activities, children will develop various aspects of development, especially social and emotional, so that they are able to

express emotions appropriately and can adjust their behavior according to the norms that apply in their environment.

The social and emotional development of preschool children is greatly influenced by interactions with their surroundings, especially with peers. Children's awareness of the presence of others encourages them to adjust their attitudes, emotions, and behaviors to be accepted within their social group (Izzaty dan Si, 2017). Children's interactions with peers provide opportunities for children to learn various social skills that are important for future life, such as the ability to share, cooperate, develop empathy, understand other people's feelings, and resolve conflicts constructively

Research results (Denham *et al.*, 2020) show that the importance of SEC for early school success, associations of the computerized measures with aggregate teacher ratings of social-emotional behavior and learning behaviors/attitudes were used as indicators of predictive validity. Findings showed that the computerized AKT-S and CST appear reliable. Further, for concurrent validity, both are related to and do not differ from the in-person mode. Predictive validity relations were stronger for the AKT-S than the CST.

One approach that can be used to improve children's social and emotional development is through play-based learning methods, such as storytelling and role-playing. Research result (Purwandari *et al.*, 2022) shows that storytelling can improve children's social-emotional skills, increasing from 25% in cycle I to 65% in cycle II, and reaching 100% in cycle III. Research results (Harianja, Siregar dan Lubis, 2023) indicate that role-playing effectively improves children's social-emotional development. The average pre-cycle score was 0%, the

average cycle score was 58%, and the average cycle was 83%.

A relevant game for stimulating children's social and emotional development is professional-themed play. Professional-themed play allows children to explore and understand various professions and roles in society through interactive and creative play. In this game, children can choose a profession they are interested in, assign roles, and act out a predetermined scenario. Professional-themed play can also help children develop social skills, empathy, creativity, and skills relevant to their chosen profession. Furthermore, this game can help children understand various professions and roles in society, as well as foster independence and self-confidence, which in turn fosters social skills. Play is a natural need for children that must be met; if not met, it can disrupt their development. According to Al-Ghazali in his book, Fadlillah, prohibiting children from playing can impair their intelligence and disrupt their rhythm of life (Fadlillah, 2019).

To foster intimacy and joy in play, we can provide opportunities for children to play with their peers, thereby fostering their socialization and interaction with their environment. Educators and parents can facilitate this by providing a learning environment that supports educational and meaningful play activities.

## **METHOD**

The research design is a one-group pre-post test design (Sahir, 2021). The independent variable in this research is professional thematic play, and the dependent variable is social and emotional development. The population in this research was all mothers and children at AT-Taubah Kindergarten, Jombang, totaling 84 children. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling. The sample of this research was part of the mothers and children at AT-Taubah Kindergarten,

Jombang, totaling 46 children. The measuring instrument used was a questionnaire with test results of 100% validity and reliability, with a  $p = 0.738$ . This research was conducted at AT-Taubah Kindergarten on Jl. Mangga Kebondalem, Mojoagung District, Jombang Regency, in November 2025. Data collection was carried out by assessing the social and emotional development of the respondents using a questionnaire (before the application of professional thematic play). Then, the implementation of the professional thematic play application was followed by an assessment of social and emotional development after the application of professional thematic play (post-test). After the data was collected, editing, coding, scoring, and data analysis were carried out using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test.

## RESULTS

**Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Gender at TK AT-Taubah di Jl. Mangga Kebondalem, Mojoagung District, Jombang Regency, in November 2025.**

Gender	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Male	21	46
Woman	25	54
Total	46	100

Based on Table 1, it is known that most of the 25 (54%) respondents are women.

**Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Age at TK AT-Taubah di Jl. Mangga Kebondalem, Mojoagung District, Jombang Regency in November 2025.**

Age	F	%
4 year	9	20
5 year	20	43
6 year	17	37
Total	46	100

Based on Table 2, it is known that most of the 20 (43%) respondents are 5 years old.

**Table 3 Distribution of Frequency Based on Nutritional Status of Toddlers at TK AT-Taubah di Jl. Mangga Kebondalem, Mojoagung District, Jombang Regency, in November 2025.**

Nutritional Status	F	%
Very less	0	0
Not enough	7	15
Normal	35	76
More	4	9
Total	46	100

Based on Table 3, it is known that most of the 35 (76%) children have a normal nutritional status.

**Table 4 Distribution of Frequency Based on Education Level of Mother at TK AT-Taubah di Jl. Mangga Kebondalem, Mojoagung District, Jombang Regency, in November 2025.**

Mother's Education Level	F	%
Did not finish elementary school	0	0
Primary School	3	7
Junior High School	8	17
Senior High School	33	72
College	2	4
Total	46	100

Based on Table 4, it is known that most of the 33 (72%) education levels of the respondents' mothers are in senior high school.

**Table 5 Distribution of Social and Emotional Development at TK AT-Taubah di Jl. Mangga Kebondalem, Mojoagung District, Jombang Regency, in November 2025.**

Social and Emotional Development	Before		After	
	F	%	F	%
Good	22	48	41	89
Good Enough	24	52	5	11
Needs Improvement	0	0	0	0
Total	46	100	46	100

Based on Table 5, it is known that children with good social and emotional development experienced an increase after

playing professionally themed games, from 22 respondents (48%) to 41 respondents (89%). The Wilcoxon signed-rank test results showed  $p=0.000$ , indicating that professional themed play have an effect on the social and emotional development of children at AT-Taubah Kindergarten, Jombang.

## DISCUSSION

Table 5 shows a significant improvement in children's social and emotional development after the implementation of professional-themed play activities. Before the professional-themed play activities, 22 respondents (48%) were in the good social and emotional development category. After the professional-themed play activities, the number of children in this category increased to 41 respondents (89%). The Wilcoxon signed-rank test showed a  $p=0.000$ , indicating an effect of professional-themed play on the social and emotional development of children at AT-Taubah Kindergarten, Jombang.

This improvement indicates that professional-themed play activities have a positive influence on children's social and emotional development. Through role-play activities that highlight various professions, children have the opportunity to interact, collaborate, communicate, and express feelings and responsibilities in a more realistic social context. These activities enable children to learn to understand social roles, appreciate differences, and develop empathy for others.

These research findings align with the theory (Charles dan Bellinson, 2019) that play is truly the elixir of a child's psychological and cognitive development. It is the prime means through which children can best understand the world around them and, therefore, simultaneously the optimal way in which they can learn to best

understand who they are and why they do what they do.

According to (Suryana, 2021), learning activities are carried out through play. Enjoyable play can stimulate children to explore using objects around them, thereby increasing their knowledge. Early childhood learning is most appropriate when implemented through play. Every lesson can be conducted in a playful atmosphere using play tools and play concepts. This allows children to easily acquire knowledge without feeling overwhelmed, stressed, or burdened.

Research results (Husnah dan Hasanah, 2019) indicate that role-playing methods influence children's social and emotional development. This is evidenced by the calculated  $X^2$  value of 4.05, while the chi-square  $X^2$  value at the 5% significance level is 3.841, indicating that the calculated  $X^2$  value is greater than the table  $X^2$  value.

This indicates that the improvement in children's social and emotional development is influenced by professional-themed play activities, which provide opportunities for children to learn through direct experience. In this context, children not only listen to the teacher's explanations but also actively participate in various roles, such as doctor, police officer, teacher, trader, and so on. These activities stimulate children's communication, cooperation, and understanding of roles and responsibilities within a group. Professional-themed play activities also create a fun learning environment, allowing children to feel freer to express themselves. When children feel comfortable in the learning environment, they tend to interact more easily with their peers and exhibit positive social behavior. Therefore, implementing professional-themed play activities is a factor supporting children's social and emotional development.

## CONCLUSIONS

The increase in the number of children who have good social emotional development from 48% to 89% and the results of the Wilcoxon signed ranks test showed  $p = 0.000$  meaning that there is an influence of professional thematic play on the social and emotional development of children in AT-Taubah Kindergarten Jombang, this shows that the implementation of professional thematic play activities is effective in improving the social emotional development of early childhood. Therefore, this activity can be recommended as one of the innovative learning strategies that support the achievement of aspects of social-emotional development in early childhood education institutions.

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