Emotional Intelligence of Elementary School Age Children in Low and High Classes

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Abstract: Children's emotional intelligence plays an important role in their success at school. The emergence of cases resulting from a low ability to manage emotions, such as violence and bullying, has a negative impact both physically and psychologically. Them research aims to determine the level and development of emotional intelligence in elementary school children. The research method used is qualitative with a case study approach. The research was conducted at State Elementary School 02 Tuban Karanganyar, involving students based on class levels, namely low and high class. Data was collected through questionnaires, interviews, and observations. Data validity with data triangulation and techniques. Data analysis uses interactive analysis. The research results show that the characteristics of students' emotional intelligence vary. Low-class emotional intelligence focuses on recognizing one's own and others' emotions, while high-class emotional intelligence focuses on managing emotions, motivating oneself, and building relationships. However, a high-class student experienced delays in emotional intelligence development due to trauma from physical bullying. It is crucial to help children manage emotions healthily and build self-control skills to prevent delays in emotional intelligence development. Developing emotional intelligence from low to high is essential for overall well-being.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of science and technological progress does not always bring goodness to human life. The rapid advancement of technology makes students get and access information easily from various sources, such as social media. The rise of impressions about social violence, such as brawls and fighting, reflects low emotional intelligence, because they are
unable to control their emotions. Excess or uncontrolled emotions can cause bad behavior (Sari, Mursalim, & Ihsan, 2021; Adri HT, et al, 2023).

In Singapore, 12.5% of children aged 6–12 years have emotional and behavioral problems. Meanwhile, one and a half million children and adolescents in the United States are reported by their parents to have emotional and developmental problems. Tthem data illustrates that the number of people experiencing mental and emotional problems is very large, so efforts are needed to prevent them from experiencing mental disorders (Erskine, 2016; Adri HT et al, 2019).

Goleman in Annajih & Sa'idah (2020) explains that intellectual intelligence only contributes 20% to success, while 80% is obtained from other factors including emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence has an important role in an individual's life, because it affects their personal behavior. This intelligence needs to be developed starting as early as possible. Someone who has a high level of emotional intelligence will have self-knowledge, social self-management, and can show empathy, be able to motivate others, and can increase their emotional competence (Papoutsi, Drigas, & Skianis, 2021). Students with high emotional intelligence are believed to improve their critical thinking skills (Costa, Pinto, Martins, & Vieira, 2021; HT Adri & Suwarjono, 2023).

The emotional development of children especially in elementary school students is a very meaningful matter. This is because the emotional development of students has benefits for continuity in their lives. Continuing to be strong, the emotions felt by children will provide a strong insistence so that there will be an imbalance in children when carrying out activities, (Rofiah, 2016). If the activity is balanced with the student's emotions so that the child will like the activity and will increase mental concentration and provide psychological effects such as being able to increase the child's desire and motivation. (Marsari et al., 2021; IY Gultom, et al, 2021)

At elementary school age, children's social interactions develop rapidly. Children have new friends whose friendship relationships are more complex and are certainly colored by
differences of understanding. To be able to help children through their important stage, of course, it is necessary to measure and understand the level of emotional intelligence possessed by each of them. Each elementary school student according to their age, so that it can be easier for teachers to deliver learning according to the characteristics of their students.

In the research, we will examine emotional intelligence to try to help solve problems that often occur, namely the ability to recognize one's own emotions, manage one's own emotions, motivate oneself, recognize the emotions of other people (friends), and build relationships with friends at the right time. These five domains of emotional intelligence must be developed in children, especially at an early age, namely in elementary school, so that if at an early age they are given the knowledge and experience of managing emotions, then when they are adults, the child will undoubtedly be able to conquer various challenges in their life.

The research is the first step to describing the level of students' emotional intelligence so that it can become initial data to determine further steps to increase students' emotional intelligence. The difference in the study lies in the research subjects whose emotional intelligence is analyzed. The results of previous research show that there have been no studies that have tried to analyze emotional intelligence at grade level in elementary school, namely low grade and high grade students. The aim of the research is to determine the level and development of emotional intelligence in elementary school-age children based on class level, namely low class and high class.

**METHODS**

The research method used is a qualitative method with a case study approach where the researcher explores processes, activities, and one or more people. The research was conducted at State Elementary School 02 Tuban, which is located at Tuban Kulon RT 01 RW 02, Tuban, Gondangrejo Subdistrict, Karanganyar regency, Central Java. The research subjects involved at each elementary school level were 30 low-class elementary school students (first-third grade) and 30 high-class students (fourth-sixth grade) at State Elementary School 02 Tuban Karanganyar. The
focus of the research is the emotional intelligence possessed by elementary school-aged children from lower and higher grade levels.

Data collection techniques were carried out using questionnaires, interviews, and observation. Data collection by distributing emotional intelligence questionnaires to students to make it easier for researcher to select interview respondents based on primary data and observation techniques by directly observing and recording students' activities during class hours and outside class hours. Data validity with data triangulation and techniques. Data triangulation involves checking data from various sources. Triangulation of techniques was done through questionnaires and interviews, then double-checked with observation. The data analysis technique for the research uses the model (Miles, Huberman, Saldana, 2018), namely interactive analysis consisting of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The research began by collecting data through questionnaires as supporting data to make it easier for researcher to select interview respondents based on primary data. Data to identify the level of emotional intelligence of students was obtained through a questionnaire consisting of 15 statements and divided into five aspects of emotional intelligence, such as recognizing one's emotions, managing one's emotions, motivating oneself, recognizing other people's emotions, and building relationships. The questionnaire uses a dichotomous scale with two conflicting answer choices, namely "yes" and "no." The dichotomous scale does not provide an opportunity for respondents to be neutral, thus encouraging respondents to give more firm answers. The questionnaire was distributed to 30 low-class students and 30 high-class students and then calculated using percentages. The results of the low- and high-class emotional intelligence questionnaires are presented in tables 1 and 2.
Based on the results of the low-class questionnaire analysis consisting of 30 students, 46.7% of students with a total score of 40–60 had low emotional intelligence, 36.6% of students with a total score of 61–80 had medium emotional intelligence, and 16.7% of students with a total score of 81–100 had high emotional intelligence. It can be concluded that the highest percentage of low-class students are students in the low emotional intelligence category (46.7%).

Based on the results of the high-class questionnaire analysis consisting of 30 students, 33.3% of students with a total score of 40–60 had low emotional intelligence, 50% of students with a total score of 61–80 had medium emotional intelligence, and 16.7% of students with a total score of 81–100 had high emotional intelligence. It can be concluded that the highest percentage of high-class students are students in the medium emotional intelligence category (50%).

The results of the questionnaire analysis show that the level of emotional intelligence of low-class students is lower than that of high-class students. Low-class emotional intelligence is in the low emotional intelligence level category, and high-class emotional intelligence is in the medium emotional intelligence level category. There is an increase in the development of students' emotional intelligence that occurs more rapidly when they move up in grade.

Through questionnaire analysis, interview respondents will be selected based on the proportion of low- and high-class respondents by selecting two respondents for each category of emotional intelligence level (low, medium, or high) from each class. Then, the results obtained from the development of each aspect, which include the ability to recognize one's emotions, manage one's emotions, motivate oneself, recognize the
emotions of others, and foster student relationships through interviews and observations at State Elementary School 02 Tuban Karanganyar, are as follows:

1. **Ability to Recognize Your Own Emotions**

   Low-class students show clear emotional reactions in certain situations, such as nervousness when they are appointed to the front of the class and anger when their friends disturb them. Students expressed that they felt anxiety in various situations in the classroom. Some of them felt anxious when they were appointed to go to the front of the class; some were afraid of getting bad grades when taking tests; and there were also those who expressed annoyance with male friends who often disturbed them.

   Meanwhile, for students in higher classes, researcher found that some students did not pay attention during class time and often felt angry and irritated with their friends, but they knew the cause of these feelings. There are students from high school who say that they feel afraid at school because there are friends who give them the rule of not crying; their friends say that bullying is bad; and they feel annoyed because their friends often bother them.

2. **Ability to Manage The Emotions**

   Low-class students responded to situations during the learning process by showing various reactions, including appearing to be having fun playing when the material was explained, making fun of each other, and even chasing each other. Some students admitted that they would respond to teasing from their friends because they did not accept it. Apart from that, there are students who, if their parents' names are teased, will become angry and refuse to be friends with the person doing the teasing.

   Meanwhile, high-class students showed variations in their responses to emotional situations. Some students appear to be able to demonstrate patience and the ability to remain calm when faced with disturbances or unwanted situations. They try to control their emotional reactions by remaining silent and not responding directly to
provocations from classmates. However, if the teasing touched their parents, these students said they would retaliate.

3. **Ability to Motivate Themself**

Some low-class students are less motivated, appear lazy, or lack focus when completing their assignments. Students say that they feel bored or not interested in certain lessons. They tend to choose to play when told to study. Apart from that, students also said that they did not have learning targets; what was important for them was getting grades and moving up in class. However, there are also students who appear to be starting to actively participate in lessons, ask questions, and feel happy when they can complete their own assignments.

Meanwhile, some high-class students seem to be able to encourage themselves to carry out activities that are useful for themselves. Students show a desire to achieve learning targets and try to get good grades. It can be seen that they use their time efficiently by completing the tasks given by the teacher before playing.

4. **Ability to Recognize Other People's Emotions**

Low-class students have a sense of empathy and concern for their friends who are sad or in difficulty. It can be seen from their actions that they immediately report it to the teacher when a friend is crying. They also try to cheer up friends who are sad by coaxing or telling jokes so that the friend doesn't cry anymore. Apart from that, students also stated that they felt happy when listening to friends' stories but felt sorry when a friend cried.

Meanwhile, high-class students said their perception was that their friends were adults, so they felt there was no need to show empathy or concern for their friends' feelings. Students seem less responsive to the emotional expressions of their friends. They act indifferent and are busy with their own activities when their friends tell stories, and some are not even happy when their friends get good grades. Learners expressed that they thought empathy and concern for friends
had decreased with age. They focus more on themselves than paying attention to other people's feelings.

5. Ability to Build Relationships

Lower-class students are seen adapting to the new environment. They tend to prefer doing assignments independently rather than discussing them with classmates. Students revealed that they were less active in interacting with their friends. Apart from that, there are students who appear to lack confidence in communicating and interacting with other people.

Meanwhile, high-class students are active in interacting with classmates and show a friendly attitude towards their friends' feelings. Some students seem to enjoy hanging out with their friends, doing assignments in groups with their friends, and showing interest in listening to and understanding other people. Students said that they had good relationships with their friends, felt comfortable communicating with classmates, and felt supported and welcomed by their friends.

With these emotional intelligence abilities, there are students from high classes who experience delays in the development of their emotional intelligence. Them case occurred because of trauma due to the unpleasant treatment of them friends, such as physical bullying. Them classmates said that students who were victims of bullying often showed signs of uncontrolled behavior, such as suddenly becoming uncontrollably angry for no apparent reason.

Discussion

Based on research results, the emotional intelligence of low-grade students is still at an early stage in recognizing and managing their emotions, understanding other people's emotions, and building positive relationships. Meanwhile, high-class students show a more mature level of emotional intelligence. They are better able to recognize and manage emotions, motivate themselves, understand other people's emotions, and build good relationships with friends and the environment around them. Even though they have reached the medium
category, students still need to receive guidance to increase their emotional intelligence until they reach the high category.

The emotional intelligence ability shows that the development of students' emotional intelligence occurs more rapidly when they move up in grade, there are differences in levels of emotional intelligence due to several factors that influence emotional intelligence, namely age, gender, and family. On the age factor, older students can be as good or better than younger students at mastering new emotional skills, emotional intelligence will increase with age. This shows that, as children get older, they are able to control their emotions.

The emotional development of each child is different. In the lower grade phase, at the age of 7–9 years, teachers, parents, and the surrounding environment play an important role in providing support, guidance, and opportunities for children to develop their emotional intelligence optimally. While in the high-class phase at the age of 10–12 years, students experience significant emotional development, which includes more advanced recognition of emotions, more effective emotional management, clearer motivation and goals, complex social interactions, and a deeper understanding of connection. Their development is important for educators and parents to pay attention to and support in order to ensure the well-being and emotional development of students.

The ability to recognize one's own emotions indicates that lower-class students have begun to develop an understanding of and response to their emotions. Meanwhile, high-class students show that they have reached a higher level of understanding by recognizing their own emotions and being aware of the factors that influence them.

These results indicate that students, both in low and high classes, are experiencing a learning process in developing their emotional intelligence. Low- and high-class students who recognize their own emotions are in the medium-level category. The ability to recognize one's emotions is related to Daniel Goleman's concept, which emphasizes the importance of the ability to recognize and manage emotions as the key to achieving psychological well-
being and success in life. So under these conditions, there needs to be appropriate support and guidance from educators and the school environment to help students develop these abilities optimally.

In terms of the ability to manage one's emotions, interesting behavior patterns are depicted in both the low and high classes. In the low class, students show that they have not fully mastered the ability to manage their negative emotions in an effective way, which means they are in the low level category. On the other hand, high-class students show development in regulating emotions and controlling unwanted emotional responses.

Based on this, it means the ability to manage one's emotions is at a high level in the high-level category. So under these conditions, teachers and parents need to provide lessons on how to manage negative emotions effectively as well as guide students in dealing with conflict in a healthy and productive way. This is in line with the phase of emotional development in elementary school-aged children, according to the opinion of Labudasari and Sriastria (2018), which states that when children are 9–10 years old in third and forth grades of elementary school, they can already manage emotional expressions in social interactions and respond to negative emotions experienced by other people. And at the age of 11–12 years in fifth and sixth grade of elementary school, children will be more flexible and understand the importance of rules that have an impact on themselves and the local environment.

In the ability to motivate oneself, there are differences between low- and high-class students. Some lower-class students show a lack of motivation when completing their assignments. On the other hand, high-class students show better abilities in self-motivation. They seem to be able to encourage themselves to carry out useful activities.

Based on these findings, self-motivation in the low class is in the low level category, and that of the high class is in the high level. So in conditions like these, it is important to pay attention to and encourage the development of student motivation from an early age. Teachers and parents need to create a learning environment that supports and provides opportunities for students to explore their own interests and desires.
In the lower classes, students show development in their ability to recognize other people's emotions, showing a sense of empathy and concern for their friends who are experiencing difficulties or sadness. Meanwhile, high-class students showed a decline in their ability to recognize other people's emotions. One of the factors causing this decline is students' perception that their friends are adults. Based on these findings, recognizing other people's emotions in the low class is in the high level category, and the high class experiences a decrease at the low level. Under these conditions, it is important to support the development of empathy and social awareness in students from an early age, with teachers and parents needing to provide examples and guide students in understanding and respecting other people's feelings.

Regarding the ability to build relationships, low-class students are still entering the initial stage of adapting to a new environment. They tend to be less active when interacting with their friends. On the other hand, high-class students show a more mature development of social skills. They look active when interacting with classmates and show a friendly attitude towards their friends' feelings. Based on these findings, the ability to build relationships in the low class is in the low level category, and the high class is in the high level. Teachers and parents need to provide opportunities for students to interact with their friends, as well as support and guidance in building good and healthy relationships with other people.

With these emotional intelligence abilities, there are students from high classes who experience delays in the development of their emotional intelligence. This case occurred because of trauma due to the unpleasant treatment of his friends, such as physical bullying. This means demeaning and hurting someone. Children who experience trauma from bullying can affect a child's self-confidence and ability to form healthy social relationships. This can cause children to become less confident, anxious, or even isolate themselves from social relationships.

These students also suddenly become uncontrollably angry, which can be caused by several factors. One of
them is the accumulation of negative emotions that are not well managed. Experiencing humiliation and bullying can cause feelings of anger, frustration, and suppressed anger in children. When this buildup reaches a certain point, the child may explode and act out in uncontrolled anger. In conditions like this, it is important to help children manage emotions healthily and build good self-control skills. Handling conflict effectively and creating a safe and inclusive environment can help children learn to recognize, process, and express their emotions in good ways.

The development of emotional intelligence in low- and high-class students at State Elementary School 02 Tuban is in accordance with previous research and theory. This research is supported by other research that has been conducted by Khairul Bariyyah and Leny Latifah, who researched emotional intelligence in state middle schools in Malang City in terms of class levels, namely seventh and eighth grade. Seventh grade with 133 students scored 24.8% of students at a high emotional intelligence level, 57.9% at medium emotional intelligence, and 17.3% at low emotional intelligence, while in eight grade with 180 students, a score of 26.7% of students was at a high emotional intelligence level, 63.9% at moderate emotional intelligence, and 9.4% at low emotional intelligence. This shows that there is a significant difference between the levels of emotional intelligence of seventh and eighth grade students; in other words, there is a significant difference in the level of emotional intelligence of students at each grade level.

**CONCLUSION**

The characteristics of students' emotional intelligence vary. Low emotional intelligence class with 30 students in the low emotional intelligence category (46.7%). Low-class emotional intelligence has developed in recognizing the emotions of oneself and others but has not yet developed in managing one's emotions, motivating oneself, and building relationships. Meanwhile, there are 30 students in the medium emotional intelligence category (50%). High-class emotional intelligence has developed in recognizing and managing one's emotions, motivating oneself, and building relationships, but recognizing
other people's emotions has not yet developed.

The development of emotional intelligence increases more rapidly when you move up from low to high class because human emotional intelligence will increase with age. As children get older, they are able to control or manage their emotions. However, there are students from high classes who experience delays in the development of their emotional intelligence due to trauma from unpleasant bullying treatment by their friends. This case shows the need for special attention and guidance to help children manage emotions healthily and build good self-control skills.

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