



# Implementation of the Media Art Journal to Improve Emotional Regulation in 4–5-Year-Old Children



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## ABSTRACT

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Emotional regulation problems in early childhood are still frequently observed, such as children crying easily, becoming angry, withdrawing, and having difficulty expressing feelings verbally. These conditions indicate that children require emotional stimulation appropriate to their developmental stage. This study aimed to describe the implementation of art journal media in improving emotional regulation among children aged 4–5 years at TK Pembina ABA 54 Semarang. The study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, with three classroom teachers serving as the primary informants. Data analysis utilized the Miles and Huberman model, encompassing data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions. The findings revealed that art journal activities were implemented through drawing, coloring, storytelling, and simple emotional reflection. Following routine implementation, the children became calmer, more communicative, better able to express their feelings verbally, and more capable of controlling their emotional reactions. Teachers also served as emotional facilitators by providing emotional validation and guidance during the activities. The study concludes that art journaling is effective in fostering emotional regulation in early childhood because it offers a safe and enjoyable space for emotional expression.

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## 1. Introduction

Social-emotional development is a fundamental aspect of early childhood education because it is closely related to children's ability to build social relationships, manage behavior, and adapt to the learning environment and daily life. At ages 4–5, children begin to enter a phase of more complex emotional development, marked by the ability to recognize various basic emotions such as anger, sadness, disappointment, fear, and joy. However, the ability to control and adjust emotional responses is still developing, so children often exhibit impulsive behavior, tantrums, excessive crying, difficulty waiting their turn, or conflicts with peers. Emotional regulation in early childhood serves as a crucial foundation for the development of social competencies, school readiness, and mental health in subsequent developmental stages. Research indicates that children with strong emotional regulation skills tend to adapt better in learning environments, maintain positive interpersonal relationships, and demonstrate more optimal academic engagement (Neve et al., 2023; Li, 2023; Rahiem, 2023; Herdiana et al., 2023).



Conceptually, emotional regulation is understood as an individual's ability to recognize, evaluate, modify, and express emotions adaptively in accordance with the demands of the situation at hand (Gross, 2015). In early childhood, this ability is not yet fully developed because children still rely on the support of their surroundings, particularly teachers and parents, to understand and manage their emotions. The developmental process of emotional regulation requires consistent social interaction, a supportive environment, and stimulation appropriate to the child's developmental characteristics. Recent research indicates that emotional regulation is significantly associated with prosocial skills, self-control, and children's readiness to engage in classroom learning activities (Alwaely et al., 2021; Denham et al., 2021; Rahiem, 2023; Fadillah & Cholimah, 2025). Furthermore, poor emotional regulation skills in early childhood can lead to aggressive behavior, anxiety, difficulties in adapting, and long-term social development challenges (Herdiana et al., 2023; Li, 2023; Neve et al., 2023; Mardi & Baharuddin, 2022). Although emotional regulation plays a crucial role in children's development, the implementation of social-emotional learning in early childhood education settings is often limited to verbal approaches such as advice, reprimands, or simple instructions when children exhibit certain behaviors. These approaches are not fully effective because young children are in the concrete operational stage and better understand experiences that are visual, symbolic, and involve direct play activities. In educational practice, cognitive and academic aspects still tend to be the primary focus rather than children's social-emotional development. Yet, emotional development that is not optimally facilitated can impact a child's ability to learn and interact with their social environment. Both national and international research indicates that young children require learning materials that provide a safe, concrete, and enjoyable space for emotional expression so they can better understand their emotional experiences (Aryanti et al., 2024; Nurhafifah et al., 2024; Drake & Drake, 2023; Varnell, 2022).

One approach considered effective in supporting the development of emotional regulation in young children is art-based learning. This approach provides children with opportunities to express their feelings, experiences, and thoughts through visual media and other creative activities. Art activities allow children to convey emotions they are not yet able to express verbally, as language skills are still developing in early childhood. Additionally, art activities provide reflective experiences that help children recognize their own emotions more deeply. Research indicates that art-based learning contributes to improvements in self-expression, empathy, emotional communication, and emotional regulation in young children (Varnell, 2022; Drake & Drake, 2023; Fernando & Safitri, 2023; Nurhafifah et al., 2024). Art-based approaches have also been shown to create a safer and more enjoyable learning environment, allowing children to feel more comfortable expressing their emotional experiences without fear or pressure.

One promising art-based medium for use in early childhood education is the art journal. An art journal is a medium that combines drawing, coloring, the use of visual symbols, and simple reflection as a means of self-expression. Through art journals, children can express their emotional experiences, feelings, and responses to specific situations in meaningful visual forms. These activities help children recognize the emotions they are feeling, reduce emotional tension, and gradually develop self-reflection skills. The flexible and creative nature of art journals makes them well-suited to the world of early childhood, which is characterized by play and visual exploration. Additionally, art journaling activities can help teachers understand children's emotional states through the symbols, colors, and images created during the learning process. Previous research indicates that visual media and drawing activities have a positive impact on the social-emotional development, communication skills, and self-regulation abilities of young children (Drake & Drake, 2023; Varnell, 2022; Rahmawati et al., 2024; Aryanti et al., 2024).

Various prior studies have examined the use of art as a medium for emotional intervention in children, such as art therapy, storytelling, emotion diaries, and expressive drawing activities. Research findings indicate that art-based media can help children reduce anxiety, improve their ability to recognize emotions, and build social skills in a more positive manner. Storytelling, for example, has proven effective in helping children understand emotions and develop emotional regulation skills through narrative experiences closely tied to their daily lives (Aryanti et al., 2024). Other studies also indicate that fairy tales and visual media can enhance children's ability to manage negative emotions in a more adaptive manner (Nurhafifah et al., 2024). Nevertheless, most previous studies have primarily employed quantitative approaches and focused on the final outcomes of interventions, thus failing to provide an in-depth description of the implementation process of the media, the dynamics of interaction during learning, or children's subjective experiences in art-based emotional regulation activities. Additionally, research on the use of art journals as a structured learning medium within the context of early childhood education in Indonesia remains relatively limited.

The limitations of research on art journal implementation indicate a significant research gap that warrants further investigation, particularly within the context of early childhood education in Indonesia. To date, research on emotional regulation has primarily emphasized the role of parental caregiving, emotional attachment, and verbal learning methods. Rahiem's (2023) research confirms that children's emotional regulation is significantly influenced by the patterns of adult guidance in the child's surrounding environment. Herdiana et al.'s (2023) study also indicates that supportive emotional responses from the environment have a significant relationship with the development of emotional regulation in early childhood. However, studies on creative media that allow children to actively express emotions through visual activities remain scarce. Yet, young children tend to express emotions more easily through visual symbols and play activities than through direct verbal communication (Varnell, 2022; Drake & Drake, 2023; Rahiem, 2023; Herdiana et al., 2023).

Based on initial observations at TK Pembina ABA 54 in Semarang, it was found that some 4–5-year-old children still struggle with emotion regulation, such as becoming easily angry when their desires are not met, crying excessively, having difficulty calming down after a conflict, and exhibiting impulsive behavior in social interactions. Teachers generally use a verbal approach to address these situations, such as giving advice or direct reprimands to the children. However, this approach has not fully helped children understand and manage their emotions independently. Additionally, learning materials specifically designed to facilitate children's emotional expression remain limited, leaving children without sufficient space to channel their emotional experiences in a safer and more creative manner. This situation highlights the need for innovative learning materials that are not only academically oriented but also support children's holistic social-emotional development through activities aligned with their developmental characteristics.

Art journaling is considered relevant for implementation at TK Pembina ABA 54 Semarang because this medium integrates creativity, self-expression, emotional reflection, and play into a single learning activity. Through the process of drawing, choosing colors, creating symbols, and describing their artwork, children can express their emotions more freely without excessive verbal pressure. These activities also allow teachers to understand children's emotional states more deeply, enabling guidance to be provided in a more contextual and responsive manner to the children's needs. In addition to helping children recognize and channel their emotions, art journals can also create a more enjoyable, participatory, and child-centered learning environment.

Based on this description, this study aims to examine the implementation of art journals in enhancing emotional regulation among 4–5-year-old children at TK Pembina ABA 54 in Semarang. The study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to gain a deep understanding of the art journal implementation process, children's emotional experiences during the activities, and teachers' perceptions of changes in children's emotional regulation. The case study design was chosen because it allows the researcher to explore phenomena holistically and contextually within the natural setting of early childhood education (Yin, 2023). This study is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of art-based emotional regulation research in early childhood and to serve as an innovative, practical alternative for social-emotional learning media in early childhood education practices in Indonesia.

## 2. Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to examine the implementation of the Art Journal medium in enhancing emotional regulation among 4–5-year-old children at TK Pembina ABA 54 in Semarang. Research subjects were selected using purposive sampling, specifically 4–5-year-old children participating in learning activities and the classroom teachers involved in those activities. Subject selection was based on initial observations of children's emotional regulation behaviors, such as responses to conflict, self-soothing abilities, and ways of expressing feelings. Purposive sampling was used to identify participants relevant to the study's focus (Ames et al., 2023; Campbell et al., 2020).

The research procedure began with initial observations to identify the children's emotional regulation conditions and to develop an implementation plan for the Art Journal medium. Research instruments included observation guidelines, interview guidelines, and documentation of the children's artwork, which was reviewed through expert judgment. The implementation phase took place over 4–6 weeks through several activity sessions, ranging from an introduction to the medium, drawing activities as a form of emotional expression, to an evaluation of changes in the children's emotional behavior. Visual art media such as Art Journal were used as a means for children to express their emotional experiences through images and colors (Fancourt & Finn, 2020; Bolt & Smith, 2021).

Data collection was conducted through participant observation, interviews with teachers, and documentation of Art Journal works. The data obtained were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques through the stages of data reading, coding, category grouping, and theme determination to identify patterns of changes in children's emotional regulation during the activities (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Kiger & Varpio, 2020). The thematic analysis procedure was used to systematically identify patterns of meaning in qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Kiger & Varpio, 2020). The results of the analysis were then used to draw conclusions regarding the implementation and outcomes of the Art Journal medium in learning activities.

## 3. Result and Discussion

### Children's Emotional Regulation Before the Implementation of Art Journal

The findings of this study indicate that young children's emotional regulation was still in the early stages of development prior to the implementation of the Art Journal activity. Interviews with teachers from Kindergarten A and Kindergarten B, as well as the school principal, revealed that many children arrived at school displaying a variety of emotional conditions, including sadness, crying, irritability, and reluctance to separate from their

parents. These findings suggest that children aged 4–5 years still require substantial adult support to recognize, understand, and regulate their emotions effectively.

Teachers reported that children often carried emotional experiences from home into the school environment. According to the Kindergarten A teacher, children were still adapting to the transition from home to school, causing their moods and emotional states from home to influence their behavior in the classroom. Similarly, the Kindergarten B teacher observed that some children appeared withdrawn, sleepy, or emotionally unprepared to separate from their parents, highlighting the importance of psychological readiness in determining children's emotional states at the beginning of the school day.

The school principal further explained that emotional regulation among children aged 4–5 years remains unstable. Children frequently displayed behaviors such as crying, tantrums, screaming, or social withdrawal when faced with situations that did not align with their expectations. These behaviors reflect the developmental characteristics of early childhood, during which self-regulation skills are still emerging and children continue to depend on adult guidance to manage emotional challenges.

Observational data supported the interview findings. Several children cried when left by their parents, became upset when competing for drawing materials, or chose to remain silent when feeling uncomfortable during classroom activities. In addition, children experiencing emotional distress often struggled to focus on learning tasks, were easily distracted, and required additional time to adapt to the classroom environment. These observations indicate that emotional regulation plays a significant role in children's overall readiness to participate in learning activities.

The results are consistent with the findings of [Denham et al. \(2021\)](#), who argue that young children possess limited self-regulatory abilities, causing emotions to be expressed impulsively through crying, tantrums, or mild aggressive behaviors. At this developmental stage, children require continuous emotional support and guidance from adults to help them develop adaptive strategies for managing their emotions. Therefore, emotional regulation should be viewed as a developmental process that requires systematic stimulation and assistance from teachers and parents.

Furthermore, emotional regulation was found to be closely related to children's learning readiness. Children who had difficulty managing their emotions were more likely to lose concentration, struggle to follow instructions, and experience challenges in interacting positively with their peers. These findings support the study of [Graziano et al. \(2022\)](#), which emphasizes that emotional regulation contributes significantly to school readiness, adaptive functioning, and successful social interactions. Children who can regulate their emotions effectively tend to participate more actively and confidently in classroom activities.

The development of emotional regulation is also influenced by the surrounding social environment. [Li et al. \(2023\)](#) explain that emotional regulation develops through positive social interactions and consistent environmental support. In this study, teachers actively created emotionally supportive classroom environments through warm communication, emotional validation, and responsive interactions. Such practices helped children feel psychologically safe and encouraged them to express their emotions more openly before engaging in learning activities.

Another important finding concerns children's limited verbal abilities in expressing emotions. Consistent with the findings of [Sari & Nugraheni \(2022\)](#), children in this study often communicated their emotions through nonverbal behaviors such as crying, silence, facial expressions, and body language rather than verbal explanations. Consequently, teachers played a crucial role in interpreting these emotional signals and helping children

label and communicate their feelings appropriately. This process enabled children to gradually develop emotional awareness and emotional vocabulary.

The findings also highlight the importance of supportive learning environments and continuous emotional stimulation. [Wulandari et al. \(2021\)](#) found that emotionally supportive classrooms facilitate children's ability to express and regulate emotions. Likewise, [Amini & Hasanah \(2024\)](#) emphasized that emotional regulation develops through repeated practice and meaningful emotional experiences. In this study, teachers encouraged children to share their experiences and feelings before lessons began, providing opportunities for emotional reflection and self-expression that contributed to the gradual development of emotional competence.

Finally, the study demonstrates that creative activities can serve as effective tools for promoting emotional regulation in early childhood. [Putri et al. \(2023\)](#) suggest that creative activities such as drawing, storytelling, and expressive play provide children with safe and meaningful opportunities to express emotions. Similarly, [Yusuf & Kurniawati \(2021\)](#) found that self-expression-based learning enhances children's ability to recognize and understand both their own emotions and those of others. These findings are further supported by [Eisenberg et al. \(2020\)](#), who identify emotional regulation as a fundamental component of children's academic and social development. Therefore, the Art Journal activity represents a developmentally appropriate medium that enables young children to recognize, express, and manage their emotions in a positive and enjoyable manner.

### **Implementation of Art Journaling in Learning**

Based on interviews with the kindergarten A teacher, the kindergarten B teacher, and the principal, it was found that art journal activities are implemented gradually through drawing, coloring, storytelling, and simple reflections on the children's experiences and feelings. Before the activity begins, the teacher first conducts an emotional warm-up by encouraging the children to talk lightly about how they are feeling that day. This approach is used to help the children feel comfortable and have a safe space to express themselves without pressure. In the early stages, some children still use their journals merely as a medium for doodling, but gradually they begin to be able to depict their personal experiences and emotional states. The kindergarten A teacher explained that in the early stages, children only made simple scribbles, but as the activity progressed, they began to draw in accordance with their experiences and feelings. This indicates that the implementation of art journals occurs gradually in line with the development of children's expressive abilities.

A similar point was made by a Kindergarten B teacher, who explained that children are taught that a journal is not a medium that demands beautiful or neat drawings, but rather a free space for self-expression. This statement indicates that art journaling activities are not focused on aesthetic outcomes but rather emphasize the process of children's self-expression. Teachers give children the freedom to use colors, shapes, and stories based on their own experiences. Throughout the process, the teacher also serves as an emotional facilitator, accompanying the children during the activity.

The principal also explained that teachers move from one child to another, encouraging the children to talk about the drawings they have created. This approach demonstrates that art journaling is not solely focused on drawing activities but also involves reflective communication between teachers and children. Teachers strive to help children connect their drawings with the emotional experiences they have had, so that children feel more comfortable expressing their feelings.

Based on the researcher's observations, during the art journaling activity, most children appeared calmer, more focused, and more enthusiastic about participating compared to during regular lessons. The children seemed to enjoy the drawing process while chatting with friends or the teacher. Some children used bright colors when depicting pleasant experiences, while darker colors emerged when children depicted feelings of sadness or disappointment. Additionally, the children began to be able to explain the meaning of the drawings they created, such as experiences of playing with family, feelings of joy when receiving a gift, and feelings of sadness when arguing with a friend. These findings indicate that visual media helps children express emotions that were previously difficult to articulate verbally.

Based on the results of these interviews and observations, it can be understood that the implementation of art journaling activities helps children express their emotional experiences more freely and safely. A kindergarten A teacher explained that children begin to draw based on personal experiences they have had, so art journaling helps children channel their emotional experiences through visual media. The kindergarten B teacher also explained that children are given the freedom to express themselves without the pressure to produce perfect results, making the learning process child-centered and supportive of children's self-expression development. Additionally, the principal explained that teachers accompany and explore the children's stories during the journaling process, thereby acting as emotional facilitators in helping children understand and express their feelings.

Based on the research findings, it is evident that art journaling activities provide a safer and more comfortable space for young children to express their emotions. Young children inherently have limitations in verbally communicating their feelings, so visual media such as drawings and colors serve as an alternative that is easier for them to understand. Through journaling activities, children not only draw but also learn to connect experiences, emotions, and stories they encounter in their daily lives. This process helps children recognize their emotions in a more concrete and gradual manner.

The results of this study indicate that freedom of expression is a key factor in the successful implementation of art journaling. Children appear more confident when not pressured to produce "good" or "neat" drawings. This environment allows them to express their experiences and feelings more spontaneously. This study found that children who initially only scribbled began to develop the ability to draw specific situations and explain the emotional meaning behind those drawings. This indicates that art journaling is not merely an artistic activity but also serves as a simple tool for emotional reflection for young children.

These findings align with research by [Malchiodi \(2020\)](#), which explains that artistic activities can help children express emotional experiences symbolically through images, colors, and visual forms. Children tend to feel safer expressing emotions through artistic media compared to direct verbal communication. This was evident in this study, where children found it easier to describe feelings of sadness, disappointment, or happiness after first depicting them in their journals.

Additionally, the observation results showed that art journaling activities helped create a calmer and more enjoyable learning atmosphere. Children appeared more focused on the activities and were able to sustain their engagement longer during the learning process. Some children even showed high enthusiasm and requested extra time to finish their drawings. This indicates that creative activities can enhance children's emotional engagement in learning. These findings align with the research by [Kim & Park \(2021\)](#), which states that art activities can improve concentration, learning engagement, and help reduce emotional tension in young children.

In the implementation process, teachers play a crucial role as emotional guides for the children. Teachers not only provide drawing instructions but also actively engage children in dialogue about the stories behind the drawings they create. Through this communication, teachers can help children recognize and validate their emotions. This approach appears effective because children become more open to sharing personal experiences or conflicts they have experienced with peers. The teacher's role as an emotional facilitator also helps children feel accepted and valued throughout the learning process.

Research by [Wulandari et al. \(2021\)](#) explains that a learning environment that is supportive and responsive to children's emotions can help foster optimal social-emotional development. Children who receive emotional validation from teachers tend to find it easier to calm themselves and have the courage to express their feelings. This was evident in the study, where children became more communicative when teachers provided positive responses to the stories and drawings they created.

Furthermore, art journaling activities also help children develop basic reflective skills regarding their emotional experiences. Children begin to connect events they experience with the resulting feelings, such as feeling sad when fighting over a toy or feeling happy after playing with friends. This reflective process is a crucial component of emotional regulation development in young children, as they start to understand the causes of their own emotions. Thus, the research findings indicate that the implementation of art journaling serves not merely as a routine drawing activity but as a medium for emotional expression that helps children recognize, channel, and communicate their feelings in a safer and more enjoyable manner. This activity also strengthens the interpersonal relationship between teachers and children through the reflective communication that takes place during the journaling process.

### **Changes in Children's Emotional Regulation Following the Implementation of Art Journaling**

Based on interviews with the kindergarten A teacher, the kindergarten B teacher, and the principal, it was found that after art journaling activities were conducted regularly, changes occurred in the emotional regulation abilities of young children. These changes were evident in the children's ability to become calmer, more communicative, and capable of controlling their emotional responses when facing specific situations. Children who previously cried easily, got angry, or withdrew began to demonstrate the ability to calm themselves and express their feelings in a more adaptive manner. The Kindergarten A teacher explained that after the children regularly participated in journaling activities, they appeared calmer and became easier to communicate with. This statement indicates that art journaling helps children feel more comfortable expressing their emotions, thereby improving interpersonal communication between children and teachers.

A similar observation was made by a kindergarten B teacher, who noted that children began to pause before displaying emotional reactions such as anger or crying. This indicates that children are gradually learning to control their emotional impulses. They no longer immediately exhibit spontaneous emotional outbursts but instead try to calm themselves and understand the situation they are facing before reacting. This change indicates the development of self-regulation skills in young children following the regular implementation of art journaling activities.

Additionally, the principal explained that art journaling activities make children more open to sharing their experiences and feelings with teachers and peers. Children begin to feel more confident sharing stories about both enjoyable experiences and those that make

them sad or disappointed. This suggests that journaling helps children build emotional security, allowing them to feel more comfortable expressing their emotional states.

Based on the researcher's observations, it was found that after several sessions of art journaling, the children began to show significant changes in their emotional behavior. Children who previously cried easily during conflicts now appeared capable of expressing their feelings through stories or drawings. Some children also appeared calmer when facing disappointment, such as when taking turns using art supplies or when their drawings differed from their peers'. Additionally, children began demonstrating more positive social behaviors, such as apologizing, sharing art supplies, and being willing to listen to the teacher's explanations during minor conflicts that arose during learning activities.

Based on the results of these interviews and observations, it can be understood that the implementation of art journaling activities helps the gradual development of emotional regulation in young children. The Kindergarten A teacher explained that the children became calmer and more communicative after regularly participating in journaling activities, indicating that their emotional regulation is beginning to develop more effectively. The kindergarten B teacher also noted that children began to pause before reacting emotionally, indicating they were starting to control their emotional responses when facing specific situations. Additionally, the principal explained that children became more open in sharing their experiences and feelings, indicating that children's emotional expression skills improve after art journaling activities are consistently conducted.

Based on these research findings, it is evident that art journaling helps children recognize, understand, and express their emotions in a more positive way. The process of drawing and storytelling provides children with an opportunity to reflect on emotional experiences that were previously difficult to express verbally. Young children, by nature, have not yet developed mature emotional regulation skills, so they require media appropriate to their developmental stage. In this study, art journaling served as a tool to help children gradually build emotional awareness through visual activities and simple communication.

Research findings indicate that changes in children's emotional regulation do not occur instantly, but rather develop through consistent practice. In the early stages, some children still exhibit impulsive behaviors such as crying, getting angry, or withdrawing when facing conflict. However, after journaling activities were conducted routinely, children began to develop the ability to calm themselves before reacting. Children were observed to start thinking and attempting to express their feelings first rather than immediately displaying an emotional outburst. This indicates the development of self-regulation skills in young children.

These research findings align with the theory of emotional regulation proposed by [James J. Gross \(2022\)](#), which explains that emotional regulation develops when individuals are able to recognize the emotions they are feeling and find appropriate strategies for expressing those emotions. In the context of young children, these strategies can be implemented through creative activities such as drawing, coloring, and storytelling. Through this process, children learn to understand the relationship between experiences, emotions, and the resulting behavioral responses. Additionally, research findings indicate that art journaling helps children develop basic emotional reflection skills. Children begin to be able to name feelings such as sadness, joy, disappointment, or anger when describing the drawings they create. Some children even start to understand the causes of their own emotions, for example, feeling sad because of a toy dispute or feeling happy after playing with family. This ability serves as an important indicator of emotional regulation development because children begin to consciously recognize their emotional states.

Thompson & Meyer's (2021) research explains that the development of emotional regulation in young children occurs through a process of co-regulation, which involves emotional support provided in collaboration with adults. In this study, teachers played an active role in helping children understand their emotions through reflective questions, emotional validation, and interpersonal communication following the journaling activity. Teachers did not immediately judge the children's emotions but helped them understand that every feeling can be expressed in a safer and more positive way. Furthermore, the observation results show that changes in emotional regulation also impact children's social skills. Children began to be better able to cooperate, share art supplies, and resolve conflicts more calmly than before. Children who initially became easily upset when their friends used art supplies began to be able to wait their turn or ask the teacher for help. Additionally, some children began to show empathy toward a sad friend by approaching them or inviting them to play together. These conditions indicate that the development of emotional regulation is closely linked to the social development of young children.

These findings are supported by the research of Raver et al. (2020), which explains that emotional regulation skills have a significant relationship with children's social competence. Children who can control their emotions tend to form positive relationships with peers more easily, are able to cooperate, and exhibit better prosocial behavior compared to children with low emotional regulation. Research by Fernando & Safitri (2022) also explains that the use of visual media such as an emotion journal can enhance children's emotional openness because children feel more comfortable expressing their experiences through images rather than direct verbal communication. This finding is evident in this study, where children became more spontaneous in sharing their personal experiences and conflicts after the art journal activity was conducted regularly.

In addition to aiding emotional expression, art journaling activities also have a positive impact on children's readiness for learning. Based on observation results, children appeared more focused, found it easier to follow the teacher's instructions, and were able to sustain their attention longer during learning activities. Children with more stable emotions appeared better prepared to participate in classroom activities without significant behavioral disruptions. This indicates that emotional regulation serves as a crucial foundation in supporting the learning process of young children. Thus, the research findings indicate that the implementation of art journaling has a positive influence on the development of emotional regulation in young children. This activity helps children recognize emotions, control emotional responses, increase openness in communication, and develop more positive social interactions. These changes occur gradually through a consistent process of emotional guidance and a learning environment that supports children's self-expression in a safe and enjoyable manner.

### **The Role of Teachers in Supporting Children's Emotional Regulation**

Based on interviews with the kindergarten A teacher, the kindergarten B teacher, and the principal, it was found that teachers play a crucial role in supporting children's emotional regulation development during art journaling activities. Teachers serve not only as educators but also as emotional facilitators who help children understand, recognize, and manage their feelings. This support is provided through warm interpersonal communication, emotional validation, and creating a sense of safety for children as they express themselves. The Kindergarten A teacher explained that teachers help children unpack their feelings and validate the emotions they experience during the activity. This statement indicates that teachers actively assist children in recognizing their emotional states, enabling them to better understand what they are feeling.

A similar point was made by a Kindergarten B teacher, who explained that teachers create a comfortable atmosphere so that children feel safe to share stories and express their personal experiences. This environment demonstrates that a supportive emotional setting is a crucial component in helping children express their emotions more openly. Children who feel accepted and unjudged tend to be more confident in sharing their feelings with both teachers and peers. Additionally, the principal explained that teachers adopt an individualized approach toward children during the activity by accompanying them one-on-one while encouraging them to talk about the drawings they created. This personalized approach indicates that teachers do not merely focus on the outcomes of the drawing activity but also pay attention to each child's emotional state individually. Through this interpersonal communication, teachers help children connect their drawings with the emotional experiences they have undergone.

Based on the researcher's observations, the teacher was seen actively moving around to accompany the children throughout the art journaling activity. The teacher asked simple questions about the content of the drawings or the feelings the children were experiencing to help them reflect on their emotions. Additionally, the teacher provided positive responses to the children's stories, making the children appear more confident when expressing their feelings. In some situations involving minor conflicts, the teacher helped the children calm down first before discussing the issue with them.

Based on these interview and observation results, it can be understood that teachers play a crucial role in supporting children's emotional regulation development during the art journaling process. A kindergarten A teacher explained that teachers help validate children's feelings, enabling them to better recognize the emotions they are experiencing. The kindergarten B teacher also explained that the teacher creates a safe emotional environment so that children feel comfortable expressing themselves and sharing their personal experiences. Additionally, the principal explained that teachers provide individual guidance to children, and this personalized approach helps children's emotional development in a more optimal way.

Research findings indicate that the success of art journal implementation is significantly influenced by the quality of emotional interaction between teachers and children. Young children need adult figures who can provide a sense of psychological safety so they feel confident expressing their emotions. In this study, teachers did not force children to immediately share their stories but instead provided space and time for children to gradually express their feelings through drawings or simple verbal communication.

This approach made children feel accepted and unafraid when expressing negative emotions such as sadness, disappointment, or anger. Teachers were also consistently seen validating children's emotions by providing non-judgmental responses, such as stating that feeling sad or disappointed is normal. This validation process helped children understand that every emotion is acceptable and can be expressed in a healthy way. The findings of this study align with the research by [Pianta et al. \(2021\)](#), which explains that a positive emotional bond between teachers and children can enhance children's emotional regulation skills and sense of security in the school environment. Children who have an emotional connection with their teachers tend to find it easier to control their behavior, are more open in communication, and are better able to adapt in social situations.

Additionally, the study by [Yusuf et al. \(2023\)](#) explains that early childhood education (PAUD) teachers need to employ a supportive emotional approach to ensure children's social-emotional development progresses optimally. In this study, teachers did not focus solely on the children's artwork but emphasized the emotional communication process throughout the activity. This made children feel valued and more comfortable expressing their personal experiences. Thus, the research findings indicate that teachers play a central

role in the success of art journaling activities as a medium for regulating emotions in young children. The emotional support provided by teachers through the validation of feelings, reflective communication, and a warm interpersonal approach helps children feel safe to recognize and express their emotions in a more adaptive manner.

#### 4. Conclusion

The implementation of art journaling serves as an effective medium in supporting the development of emotional regulation in young children through drawing, storytelling, and simple reflection activities. These activities help children recognize, express, and manage emotions more adaptively in accordance with their developmental stage. Research findings indicate that children become more communicative, able to control their emotional responses, and demonstrate more positive social interactions. Additionally, the success of art journal implementation is influenced by responsive teacher guidance and an emotionally safe learning environment, enabling children to feel comfortable expressing their experiences and feelings.

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