

# Is it Different (?): The Socio-Emotional Competence of the Javanese Children Based on Gender

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**Abstract:** *The socio-emotional competence is the ability to understand, manage, and express the social and emotional aspects. This ability gives a chance for individual achieving a good result through learning, relationship building, problem solving, and adapting to the environment. It is influenced by some main factors, such as social interaction, friends, family, and culture. The purpose of this research was to identify different socio-emotional competence of Javanese children based on their gender. The subject in this research was 101 Javanese students aged 10-13 years who were at the 4th to 6th grades and live in Malang and Madiun. The research used purposive sampling technique measured using the competence of socio-emotional scale for children. Hypothesis testing in this research used independent sample t-test technique. The result showed that the socio-emotional competence of the Javanese children tend to be in a high level, which is 96,03%. It was also found that there is no difference in the socio-emotional competence of the Javanese children based on.*

**Keywords:** *the competence of socio-emotional, Javanese, gender*

## Introduction

One key of the development task throughout an individual's life is socio-emotional competence, which includes the ability to understand, regulate, and express social and emotional aspects. These abilities can produce good results through the learning process, making a relationship with others, solving problems, and adapting to the surrounding environments (Elias et al. 1997). These competencies are formed from childhood and continue to develop until adulthood.

Moreover, child egocentrism will decrease while the children are able to consider the feelings, perspectives of others, develop emotional feelings, understand how they behave according to the level of self-understanding and social environment (Elias et al., 1997). Furthermore, social interaction, friends, family, and cultural values are the main factors that influence socio-emotional competence (Guralnick, 2010). Children tend to respond to peer influence. Chen (2012) explains that the process of social evaluation is influenced by the role of norms and cultural values in interacting with peers during childhood.

On the other hand, Hofstede (2001) suggests that different norms and values in each culture will influence social behavior, characteristics, independence, compliance and emotional expression. This is in line with Indonesian various cultures. One of them is the Javanese culture. Javanese culture prioritizes balance and harmony in daily life. Every one has to know their position when dealing with others, behaving and speaking words appropriately according to the context and the interlocutor as a form of respect (Efferin &

Hopper, 2007)

A study conducted by Indati & Ekowarni (2006) showed that many Javanese children did not understand the rules or values of Javanese culture. As a result, young Javanese people are now doing many deviations from the rules and values of Javanese culture. This is supported by Rachim, who found that one of the factors that led to deviant behavior and attitudes among Javanese people is the lack of knowledge about the Javanese cultural values. 77.5% of factors are influenced by family, economic problems, environment and education (Warner, 2014).

According to Chaplin & Aldao (2013), social-emotional competence is not only influenced by culture and interactions among peers, but also by gender and age. The results of the study conducted by Curby et al. (2015) shows that men tend to be lack in attention and less able to control emotions, so they tend to be more aggressive, less sensitive, less able to cooperate, and lack of emotional knowledge. On the other hand, the study by Garner et al. (2014) revealed that women tend to express and control their emotions positively because they are more knowledgeable about emotions in developing various types of emotions and understand the causes and consequences of showing these emotions.

Kress & Elias (2006) explained several aspects of socio-emotional competence, namely 1) self-awareness, that is, appropriately assessing one's feelings, having attention, values, and the strength to maintain good behavior; 2) Self-management. This is the ability to control one's own emotions to deal with stress, controlling impulses, readiness to face challenges, and

setting personal and academic goals; 3) Social awareness. It is the ability to show empathy for other people, understand, appreciate the similarities and differences between individuals and groups; 4) Relationship skills, that is, building and maintaining relationships based on cooperation, rejecting inappropriate social pressure, resolving interpersonal conflicts, and seeking help when needed; 5) Responsible decision making. It refers to the skill in making decisions based on ethical standards, paying attention to safety, behaving in accordance with social norms, respecting others, understanding the consequences of various behaviors, making decisions on academic and social situations, and contributing to the welfare of the school and society.

Referring to the background above, it can be said that the socio-emotional competence of children in Javanese culture shows the tendencies of avoiding conflict and prioritizing togetherness of the group. In addition, there are socio-emotional competences differences from gender aspect. Female children tend to have better socio-emotional competence than the male.

This study is expected to provide knowledge about the depiction of socio-emotional competence of Javanese children and find the differences of gender aspect. Since Indonesia has various cultures, which are heavily influenced by its values and norms, it may bring significant influence to the socio-emotional competence of children. The hypothesis proposed by researchers is that there are gender differences that influence socio-emotional competence of Javanese children.

## Method

This research employed quantitative research design. The sample of this study was selected using purposive sampling technique, involving 101 subjects of 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> graders who aged between 10 and 13 years. The students were all Javanese and lives in Malang and Madiun. The instrument to measure the socio-emotional competency scale used Zhou & Ee (2012), which was previously used for grades 3 to 12. It consists of 25 statement items (Kress & Elias, 2006), with alternative answers range from 1 (very inappropriate) to 6 (very appropriate). The hypothesis testing in this study used the technique of independent sample t-test with SPSS 22 software. The analysis used is to know the value of each aspect of the socio-emotional competency variable and differences in the gender and age of children.

## Results

Based on the analysis, it was found that the socio-emotional competence of Javanese ethnic children did not have a significant difference in terms of gender ( $t = .147$ ;  $= .883$ ). Based on the analysis of aspects of the socio-emotional competence of Javanese children, it was found that self-awareness had an average score of ( $SD =$

$.692$ ;  $M = 5.01$ ), self-management with an average score of ( $SD = .818$ ;  $M = 4.38$ ), social awareness with an average score of ( $SD = .708$ ;  $M = 3.91$ ), relationship skill with an average score of ( $SD = .737$ ;  $M = 4.57$ ), and the responsible decision making with an average score of ( $SD = .787$ ;  $M = 4.65$ ).

The social awareness aspect of children was low, with an average score of 3.91. Only self-awareness had the highest score with an average score of 5.01.

## Discussion

The attitudes and behavior of Javanese children are formed through the learning process of culture (Psikologika, 2002). According to Dariyo (2004), the environment in the cultural life of a society includes elements of values, norms, ethics, habits, and ideals. In Javanese culture, children are taught from an early age to prioritize harmony with their surroundings (Minauli et al., 2006). How individuals live their daily lives is strongly influenced by socio-cultural factors. The cultural life environment of a society contains elements of values, norms, ethics, habits, and ideals. It can affect individual behavior patterns (Dariyo, 2004).

## Conclusion

Culture has an influence on socio-emotional competencies that play a pivotal role to children's attitudes and behavior when facing a challenge. This study found that there is no difference of the socio-emotional competence among Javanese children. It can be influenced by the norms and standards of Javanese cultural values that place more emphasis on harmony with the environment.

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