

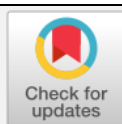
Developing Social Skills in Early Childhood: A Study of Riverside Communities in Banjarmasin, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the development of early childhood social skills within Banjarmasin, Indonesia's riverside communities. Social skills are crucial for the holistic development of children, facilitating better interaction, cooperation, and communication, which are essential for their personal and social growth. The unique socio-cultural dynamics of the riverside communities in Banjarmasin provide a distinctive environment for examining how these skills are nurtured. Utilizing a qualitative research design, this study aims to comprehend the socio-cultural context, identify specific social skills developed in early childhood, and assess the effectiveness of various community-based initiatives designed to foster these skills. The purposive sampling method was employed to select informants who could provide in-depth and relevant data. Data collection involved a combination of observations, semi-structured interviews, and active participation in community activities, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the processes involved. The findings reveal that children in these communities enhance their social skills through a learning process deeply embedded in community values, emphasizing interaction and play. Community values, interactive learning, and cultural integration contribute to social skill development. Reinforcing community values such as togetherness, sharing, and mutual respect plays a critical role in socialization. Activities that promote interaction and play are central to developing social skills, with group activities such as cooperative games, creative arts, and storytelling sessions proving particularly effective in encouraging children to work together, communicate effectively, and build confidence. Additionally, the unique

Banjar River culture significantly influences social behaviors, with activities specific to the river culture, including riverboat play and traditional storytelling, imparting cultural values and enhancing social competencies among children. The study concludes that leveraging the cultural uniqueness of the Banjar River communities is essential in building social skills in early childhood. Children in Banjarmasin's riverside communities develop essential social skills more effectively by integrating community values and interactive learning within this cultural context. This research highlights the importance of culturally relevant approaches in early childhood education and suggests that similar methodologies could be adapted to other cultural settings to support social skill development.

Keywords: *Banjar; Community-Based Learning; Cultural Integration; Early Childhood; Riverside Communities; Social Development; Social Skills Enhancement*

1. Introduction

In the formative years, humans are inherently dynamic and possess an innate curiosity that drives their continuous pursuit of exploration and learning. This fundamental aspect of early childhood shapes individual growth and profoundly influences the social structures and cultural dynamics within communities (Engel, 2015; Hasanah & Deiniatur, 2020; Stoll et al., 2003). The inclination of young minds to explore and transform their surroundings during this developmental stage underscores the significant role of social change (Bessant, 2020; De Winter, 2018; Sanford, 2017).

Social developments catalyze change, with varying impacts observed across different communities (Dreyer et al., 2006; Martinez-Cosio & Rabinowitz Bussell, 2013; Molle, 2009). Early childhood communities in strategic locations often achieve developmental milestones more rapidly than those in isolated areas. The accessibility to diverse external information in strategic locales facilitates swift adaptations to social transformations, fostering dynamic environments characterized by frequent interactions with neighboring communities (Gilbertson et al., 2022; Malizia et al., 2020).

Banjarmasin, known as the “city of a thousand rivers,” has experienced significant transformations over time. Traditional settlements along its riverbanks have evolved, featuring unique buildings originally oriented towards the river. However, recent trends in riverside development indicate a shift towards structures facing the mainland roads. This change impacts the river's role as a primary transportation route, reshaping cultural perceptions of the river and altering the area's aesthetic appeal (Abbas et al., 2020, 2021).

Nevertheless, the physical landscape of riverbank settlements continues to showcase distinctive Banjar architecture. Stilt houses with wood and iron bars remain prominent, symbolizing a deep-rooted connection to local traditions and historical roots (Afdholi et al., 2019; Mentayani & Hadinata, 2021; Michiani & Asano, 2016). Even in early childhood, the community's economic, social, and cultural fabric remains closely intertwined with the river, influencing livelihoods and daily activities centered around its waters.

Given these transformations, the development of social skills becomes paramount, particularly for the young residents of Banjarmasin. Early childhood social skills encompass more than just establishing harmonious relationships; they include adapting to the social environment and addressing unique developmental challenges. These skills require children to articulate aspirations and demonstrate mutual respect, independence, a sense of purpose, discipline, and decision-making abilities. Effective communication, anger management, conflict resolution, fostering friendships, and peer collaboration are crucial (Kingery et al., 2020; Sylva et al., 2020; Tuerk et al., 2021).

Furthermore, cultural preservation is integral to early childhood development (Kral et al., 2021; Padayachee, 2022), focusing on initiatives to safeguard and celebrate Banjar culture. This commitment is foundational in shaping young identities by introducing children to Banjar folklore and traditional stories, fostering a vibrant connection to cultural identity, and imparting moral values. Participation in cultural festivities provides hands-on experiences that deepen understanding and appreciation of Banjar traditions. Through active involvement, children contribute actively to their community's living heritage (Donders, 2020; Pawłowska-Mainville, 2023).

The significance of the Banjar language in early childhood education cannot be overstated, as it helps sustain linguistic heritage and fosters a profound connection to cultural roots. Incorporating traditional arts and crafts into early childhood education offers children a creative outlet and preserves and transmits artistic techniques for cultural continuity. Involving families and the broader community ensures a holistic approach to cultural preservation through community sessions, workshops, and events that create a supportive network for children's cultural learning. Active participation and understanding of cultural heritage are essential to a child's holistic development, making cultural preservation a dynamic living process deeply embedded in early childhood experiences (Darian-Smith & Pascoe, 2012; Nuzzaci, 2020).

This study aims to enhance social skills development among young children in the riverside communities of Banjarmasin, Indonesia. Employing a qualitative approach, the research seeks to grasp the socio-cultural context of these communities comprehensively. It endeavors to identify key social skills pertinent to early childhood development and assess the effectiveness of various initiatives to foster these skills. By delving into the socio-cultural milieu of Banjarmasin's riverside communities, this research seeks to illuminate how local traditions, environmental factors, and community dynamics shape the socialization process of young children. Furthermore, the study aims to provide insights into which social skills are most crucial for children in this context, such as communication, cooperation, conflict resolution, and cultural understanding.

2. Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative approach (Creswell & Poth, 2016), focusing on early childhood development. The data collection and analysis involved narrative, argumentative, and descriptive elements meticulously structured into coherent narratives. The choice of qualitative methodology stemmed from the nature of the data, which centers around capacity-building-based social skills in riverside communities. These skills are inherently qualitative and defy simple numerical quantification.

The qualitative research design was crucial in shaping various aspects of the study. It guided the selection of the research site and the identification of informants, specifically targeting community leaders and individuals with direct experience in capacity-building-based

social skills development in early childhood. Purposive sampling was employed, deliberately selecting informants based on their roles as community leaders and expertise in the subject matter.

Data collection utilized primary and secondary sources, incorporating observation, interviews, and document analysis. Qualitative research activities' interactive and iterative nature continued until data saturation was achieved, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

Data analysis followed the qualitative methodology, involving data reduction, presentation, and conclusion. This iterative process was instrumental in identifying patterns, themes, and nuanced insights related to capacity-building-based social skills among early childhood communities along the riverside in Banjarmasin.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Social Skills in Riverside Communities of Banjarmasin

Social skills such as cooperation and mutual assistance are vital for community cohesion and development (Dobbins et al., 2022; Pierce et al., 2022). This qualitative study explored these essential social skills within the riverside communities of Banjarmasin.

The research findings highlight that social skills rooted in capacity building manifest in diverse forms within the Martapura riverside community in Banjarmasin. Activities such as floating markets, lanting houses, and fish pond cultivation are recognized as integral to capacity-building-based social skills, contributing significantly to the unique cultural heritage of the riverside community.

The ongoing evolution of river culture plays a pivotal role in redefining the roles and benefits of the river as a cultural heritage site. Social skills deeply embedded in the suburban fabric of Banjarmasin contribute to these efforts in cultural preservation. For instance, cultivating social skills through local fish farming involves collaborative efforts in constructing fish nets or cages, promoting cooperation and mutual assistance among community members.

The potential within the local community, particularly in fish farming along the Martapura River, is evident. The river transforms from a mere transportation route to a catalyst for social skills that enhance community life and economic sustainability. Strong social skills foster a sense of kinship and cooperation among community members, fostering a sustainable and mutually beneficial environment.

The Banjarmasin City Fisheries Service plays a significant role in developing river culture and improving conditions in the city's riverside communities. Training centers organized by the service focus on enhancing social skills, particularly in fish cultivation, providing crucial support for community development. These intentional efforts by the government align with broader national development goals.

Development efforts are deliberate initiatives to improve conditions and achieve specific objectives. Siagian describes development as a series of planned growth and change efforts consciously undertaken by a nation, state, or government to promote modernization within the framework of nation-building (Siagian, 2010).

The Fisheries Service of Banjarmasin actively supports riverside communities, promoting the rivers as ecotourism destinations rich in cultural value. The service facilitates community harmony and economic growth through river culture activities, including training in fish cage construction and cultivation techniques. Community informants acknowledge the pivotal role of the government service in fish cage cultivation.

Aristotle's concept of citizenship emphasizes active participation in governance and community life (Frank, 2004; Wuryan & Saifullah, 2013). In Banjarmasin, local communities benefit from traditional knowledge and support the fisheries/livestock service provides. This assistance, through facilities and training, not only enhances economic opportunities but also fosters essential social skills. Information exchange, training sessions, and cooperation among community members are integral aspects influenced by the active role of government services. These multifaceted social skills contribute to economic prosperity and Banjarmasin's riverside communities' overall well-being and cohesion.

Exploring social skills within Banjarmasin's riverside communities gains significance when viewed in the context of early childhood development. During these formative years, children exhibit heightened sensitivity to their social environment, making cultivating social skills crucial for their holistic growth. The impact on early childhood experiences becomes particularly pronounced in the unique setting of riverside living.

Early childhood is marked by innate curiosity and receptivity, facilitating the absorption of cultural nuances and social norms with remarkable ease. Within Banjarmasin's riverside communities, social skills are intricately intertwined with cultural practices. Early exposure to cooperative activities, such as collaborative fish net or cage construction, becomes a skill and a cultural tradition. These activities contribute not only to economic sustainability but also to the early formation of cultural identity.

The riverside environment serves as a dynamic classroom for early learners. Nature-based learning experiences, with direct engagement with the river and its surroundings, foster curiosity and appreciation for the natural world. The river represents a geographical feature for young minds and a source of wonder and exploration. These early interactions with nature lay the groundwork for environmental stewardship, nurturing a sense of responsibility toward the natural habitat.

In these early years, the family unit plays a pivotal role in shaping children's social and cultural understanding. The collaborative efforts in fish farming extend beyond neighbors to encompass familial bonds. Children growing up along the banks of the Martapura River witness and actively participate in community activities, fostering a sense of belonging and shared responsibility from an early age. The broader community's support network becomes an extended family, contributing significantly to the holistic development of early childhood social skills.

3.2. Capacity Building in Riverside Communities among the Banjarese

Capacity building is a crucial aspect developed by riverside communities in Banjarmasin. This involves a comprehensive process, including analyzing the environment, identifying organizational problems, exploring self and organizational development needs, and formulating strategies to overcome challenges. The ultimate goal is to design an action plan that ensures proper organizational system arrangements.

Through interviews with community leaders residing in the suburbs along the banks of the Martapura River in Banjarmasin, it was affirmed that capacity building in riverside communities aims to preserve the skills inherited from the past to the present. As expressed by one informant:

"Since the time of our ancestors, we have been able to use the river as a means of meeting our needs, where all the activities we carry out have always been related to the existence of the river."

Another community leader added:

"Our daily lives revolve around the river, from fishing to transportation. We must maintain and pass these skills to our children to ensure our culture and way of life continue."

A third informant highlighted:

"Capacity building helps us adapt to changes. For example, we have learned new techniques in fish farming that are more sustainable and profitable, which is crucial for our survival."

Additionally, another community member emphasized:

"Working together as a community is our strength. The river not only provides resources but also unites us. Through shared efforts and knowledge exchange, we improve our living conditions and preserve our traditions."

These statements underscore the enduring connection between the community's skills and the vital role of the river in their daily activities, and a tradition passed down through generations.

Observations conducted over several months in Banjarmasin revealed that capacity building is essential for developing and adapting riverside communities to the changing local environment. According to community leaders living along the banks of the Martapura River, capacity building is integral to preserving skills inherited from the past. The river has been a vital resource for meeting the community's needs throughout generations, making it imperative to maintain and enhance these skills.

To summarize, capacity building in riverside communities is essential for their continuous development and adaptation to environmental changes. This is particularly crucial for local community organizations, emphasizing the significance of effective human resources capacity building. Examples such as fish farming in cages underscore the multilevel economic changes, requiring individual and organizational adjustments in response to environmental changes in Banjarmasin's riverside communities.

One of the elements of the Banjar ethnic philosophy, as mentioned by Sahriansyah, is the principle of not surrendering and maintaining a firm stance (Sahriansyah, 2015). This philosophy, articulated by "Prince Antasari" during colonial times, signifies the Banjar people's resilience and commitment to their beliefs. A strong stance is an attribute that prevents easy sway and deviation in the face of challenging situations.

The term "*Urang Banjar*" (or *Urang Banua*), referring to those who live on the island, unifies the Banjar population, transcending origin, ethnicity, religion, race, and class differences. Originally popularized in the political realm, this term holds the potential to evolve into a unifying tool for the City of Banjarmasin (Abdurrahman & Abduh, 2019; Hafidzi, 2020).

The concept of "*Bubuhan*" in Banjar culture emphasizes the importance of family (Kiptiah, 2020). This concept extends from the nuclear family to the paternal and maternal sides, fostering kinship bonds that lead to collaborative efforts. Family values are significant in fish farming, cage management, and establishment.

Providing excellent customer service is a distinctive characteristic of Banjar citizenship, encompassing both public and private dimensions. Personal responsibility involves self-care, family support, child-rearing, engagement with public issues, exercising the right to vote, tax payment, community service, and leadership duties. The commitment to customer service, especially during harvest time, aligns with the cultural function of the river. The assistance provided meets the requirements for fish cultivation, reflecting the Banjar principle that the price determines the goods to be purchased.

In essence, capacity building in riverside communities serves to maintain the skills and abilities of the workforce, aligning with the cultural significance of the river. Cultivating fish ponds exemplifies how communities use the river, which flows behind their houses. Overall, capacity building is seen as a process of enhancing knowledge and skills related to the unique skills of the people on the banks of the Martapura River in Banjarmasin City.

The significance of capacity building in riverside communities extends beyond the immediate organizational context; it plays a crucial role in shaping the early childhood development of community members. The intricate connection between community skills and the Martapura River's vital role is not merely a tradition but a foundation upon which the holistic growth of young minds is built.

In the context of early childhood, the Martapura River becomes more than a physical resource; it transforms into an interactive learning environment. The sensory-rich experiences of river-related activities contribute to young children's cognitive, emotional, and social development. Nature-based learning provides a unique platform for early learners to explore, ask questions, and develop a profound connection with their surroundings.

As a central element in Banjar culture, family influences early childhood development. The collaborative efforts observed in fish farming extend to familial bonds. Children growing up along the banks of the Martapura River are not mere observers; they actively participate in community activities, instilling a sense of belonging and shared responsibility from an early age. The close-knit support network within the broader community becomes an extended family, contributing significantly to the holistic development of early childhood social skills.

Moreover, the principles embedded in Banjar's philosophy, such as not surrendering and maintaining a firm stance, can serve as valuable life lessons for the community's youngest members. These principles instill resilience, determination, and a strong sense of identity, laying the groundwork for Banjarese children's moral and ethical development.

As capacity-building endeavors continue to shape the community's skills and abilities, they contribute to the cultural continuity experienced by the youngest generation. Cultivating fish ponds and other river-related practices becomes a hands-on learning experience, passing down traditional knowledge and skills from one generation to the next.

The interplay between capacity building, early childhood development, and Banjar cultural elements creates a harmonious tapestry that fosters the sustainability of community skills and the holistic growth of Banjarese children. The Martapura River, with its cultural and educational significance, emerges as a dynamic catalyst for shaping the future generations of riverside communities in Banjarmasin.

4. Conclusion

This study has explored how the social fabric woven into the outskirts of Banjarmasin City plays a pivotal role in shaping young learners' experiences. Early childhood is characterized by heightened sensitivity to the social environment, underscoring the critical importance of cultivating foundational social skills during this formative period. Cultural practices such as

constructing wooden houses and participating in floating markets provide immersive experiences for young minds. These activities impart essential life skills and contribute significantly to the early formation of cultural identity. Engaging in practices like fish cage cultivation transcends mere skill acquisition; it becomes a cherished cultural tradition that fosters a profound sense of belonging and shared responsibility among community members.

The riverside environment itself serves as a dynamic classroom for early learners. Nature-based learning experiences, including direct interactions with the river and its surroundings, nurture curiosity and instill appreciation for the natural world. Beyond its physical features, the river becomes a source of wonder and exploration, laying the groundwork for environmental stewardship and a deep sense of responsibility towards the natural habitat. Within the family unit, pivotal in shaping a child's social and cultural understanding, collaborative efforts such as fish farming extend familial bonds beyond immediate neighbors. Children growing up along the banks of the Martapura River witness and actively participate in community activities, fostering a sense of collective responsibility from an early age. The broader community acts as an extended family, significantly contributing to the holistic development of early childhood social skills. This study has shed light on the social skills ingrained in Banjarmasin's riverside communities, enriching individual lives while profoundly impacting the holistic growth of the community's youngest members. These social skills, intricately intertwined with cultural practices and environmental interactions, lay the foundation for developing essential skills and values among Banjarmasin's future citizens. The riverside communities exemplify the harmonious interplay between cultural heritage, environmental awareness, and the nurturing of social skills, creating a nurturing environment conducive to the flourishing of the next generation.

Despite the insights gained, this study is not without limitations. Firstly, the qualitative nature of the research may limit generalizability beyond Banjarmasin's specific context. Future research could employ a mixed-methods approach to quantitatively assess the impact of social skill development initiatives in riverside communities. Additionally, longitudinal studies could provide a deeper understanding of how early childhood experiences in riverside environments influence long-term social and cultural outcomes. Further research could also explore the role of digital literacy and technology in enhancing social skills among young learners in riverside communities. As technology increasingly permeates daily life, understanding its potential to complement traditional cultural practices could inform future capacity-building efforts. Lastly, investigating the role of policy frameworks and governance in sustaining and scaling community-driven social skill initiatives would be beneficial for fostering sustainable development in riverside communities across similar geographical contexts.

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6. Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author has declared no potential conflicts of interest concerning this article's research, authorship, and/or publication.

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