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## **Analysis of Factors Influencing Emotional Dependence in Early Childhood at the Gajahwong School Community in Yogyakarta**

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### **Abstract**

**Keywords:**

Emotional Dependence; insecure Attachment; emotion Regulation; separation Anxiety; Early childhood;

This study aims to analyze the factors influencing emotional dependence in early childhood within the Gajahwong School Community in Yogyakarta. A qualitative design was employed, involving four children aged 3–4 years as subjects and parents and teachers as informants. Participants were selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected through observation and in-depth interviews, then analyzed thematically by identifying, categorizing, and interpreting emerging patterns, and presented in narrative form supported by previous research. The study's results indicate that children's emotional dependence is influenced by two primary factors: family and socioeconomic circumstances, and psychological factors. Family factors include insecure attachment patterns, insufficiently emotionally responsive parenting, and parents' limited understanding of how to regulate their children's emotions under socioeconomic stress. Empirical findings indicate that children may exhibit behaviors such as prolonged crying when separated from their parents, difficulty adapting in the classroom, a tendency to cling to teachers as substitute attachment figures, and spontaneous emotional reactions when facing problems with peers. In addition, children's psychological profiles are marked by excessive separation anxiety and a limited capacity for independent self-regulation. The intensity and manifestation of these behaviors vary among children, indicating that emotional dependence is not a fixed condition but is shaped by dynamic interactions between family relational experiences

and the child's psychological state. Based on these findings, collaborative, context-sensitive interventions are needed, such as parenting education programs attuned to families' socioeconomic circumstances, emotion-regulation training for parents and educators, and adjustments to the school environment to better support children's transitions and emotional adaptation.

#### Abstrak

**Kata Kunci:** Ketergantungan emosional; Keterikatan tidak aman; Regulasi emosi; Kecemasan perpisahan; Anak usia dini; Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi ketergantungan emosional anak usia dini di Komunitas Sekolah Gajahwong Yogyakarta. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain kualitatif dengan subjek 4 anak usia 3-4 tahun, serta informan yang terdiri dari orang tua dan guru. Pemilihan partisipan dilakukan melalui teknik purposive sampling. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi dan wawancara mendalam, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik dengan mengidentifikasi, mengelompokkan, dan menafsirkan pola-pola temuan yang muncul, serta disajikan dalam bentuk narasi yang didukung oleh kajian sebelumnya. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ketergantungan emosional anak dipengaruhi oleh dua faktor utama, yaitu faktor keluarga dan sosial ekonomi serta faktor psikologis. Faktor keluarga mencakup pola keterikatan yang tidak aman, pengasuhan yang kurang responsif secara emosional, dan keterbatasan pemahaman orang tua dalam regulasi emosi anak dalam konteks tekanan sosial ekonomi. Temuan empiris memperlihatkan bahwa anak menunjukkan perilaku seperti menangis berkepanjangan saat berpisah dengan orang tua, kesulitan beradaptasi di kelas, kecenderungan menempel pada guru sebagai figur pengganti, dan respons emosional yang spontan ketika menghadapi masalah dengan teman sebaya. Selain itu, faktor psikologis anak ditandai dengan kecemasan perpisahan yang berlebihan dan keterbatasan kemampuan mengatur respons diri secara mandiri. Intensitas dan bentuk perilaku tersebut bervariasi antar anak, menunjukkan bahwa ketergantungan emosional bukanlah kondisi yang tetap, melainkan terbentuk melalui interaksi dinamis antara pengalaman relasional dalam keluarga dan kondisi psikologis anak. Berdasarkan Temuan tersebut, diperlukan intervensi yang kolaboratif dan kontekstual, seperti program pendidikan parenting yang sensitif terhadap kondisi sosial ekonomi keluarga, pelatihan regulasi emosi bagi orang tua dan pendidik, serta penyesuaian lingkungan sekolah untuk proses transisi dan adaptasi emosional anak secara lebih optimal.

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## 1. Introduction

The emotional development of young children is a crucial aspect that affects various dimensions of a child's life. According to Goleman's Theory, emotional development in early childhood is an important phase where children grow and develop rapidly in physical, mental, and emotional aspects. In this phase, basic stimulation is very important for personality, skills, and mindset, including the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and regulate emotions (Chintya & Sit, 2024). This condition shows that the success of emotional development does not occur directly, but is greatly influenced by the quality of the caregiving environment. Conversely, if emotional independence is not achieved, it will lead to emotional dependence in early childhood (Kartika et al., 2025).

Emotional dependency is a behavior when an individual has an excessive need for attachment to others. For example, the individual constantly seeks recognition, approval, or validation, as well as a sense of security from others as the main source of their emotional stability. This condition of dependency has the potential to hinder an individual's ability to make independent decisions, reduce self-confidence, and create excessive anxiety about the possibility of rejection or abandonment (Alves et al., 2023).

In the perspective of attachment theory, it is also explained that emotional dependence is understood as a consequence of the initial relational patterns formed between the child and their primary caregiver. These relationship patterns become the internal foundation for the child in building trust and emotional closeness in the subsequent stages of life. Where children who develop insecure attachment patterns, such as the preoccupied type (tending to be obsessed with relationships) and fearful type (filled with fear of rejection), generally show higher levels of emotional dependence. However, this is caused by low self-esteem and feelings of worthlessness that drive children to excessively seek certainty and validation from others, leading to the formation of emotional dependence (Merlyn et al., 2024). Therefore, to understand the causes of emotional dependency, it needs to be viewed multidimensionally, encompassing both internal and external factors that influence each other.

Several studies have shown that the factors causing emotional dependency in early childhood are very varied and interconnected. Internal factors, such as innate character, emotional intelligence, or psychological maturity, can influence how a child responds to emotional dependency (Solicha & Na'imah, 2020). Meanwhile, external factors, such as the family and community environment, play an important role, with a supportive and harmonious environment helping children develop better emotional management skills. This shows that emotional dependence is not just a passive state, but a dynamic psychological response shaped by family interactions and attachment experiences keterikatannya (Dwistia et al., 2025).

Neurobiological studies also show that inconsistent or stressful parenting experiences can disrupt the development of brain circuits involved in emotional regulation, such as the connectivity between the

amygdala and the prefrontal cortex, making children more reactive to stress and more vulnerable to psychological disorders (Gee & Cohodes, 2021; Vantieghem & Tottenham, 2018). On the other hand, the increasing use of technology, both by parents and children, can disrupt direct interaction and the quality of emotional dependence. The phenomenon of "technology," where the disruption of parent-child interactions due to digital devices has been shown to reduce parental responsiveness, hinder the development of emotional regulation, and where economic and social pressures on families can lead to excessive attachment or emotional dependence of children on parents, educators, or certain environments, as well as increase behavioral problems and the tendency of children to withdraw socially (Divyasthri & Baskar, 2024; Ventouris et al., 2021).

Thus, the family environment plays an important role in emotional development, as an unsupportive or conflict-ridden environment has the potential to hinder a child's ability to manage emotions effectively. In the research (Fadly & Islawati, 2024), it is revealed that parents and educators must create a nurturing environment that supports psychological growth while also fostering self-management and emotional resilience in children. Therefore, the importance of family support in children's emotional development.

(Goldstein & Lerner, 2018) in his research, he revealed that a game-based approach has proven effective in helping to reduce emotional dependence in early childhood, particularly thru the enhancement of emotional regulation skills and children's socio-emotional competence. One form of play that has high developmental value is pretend play or imaginative play. This activity has both corrective and stimulative functions, as it provides space for children to express their feelings symbolically, understand emotional situations, and practice self-control in a safe and imaginative context. Findings like these can help educators and parents design more balanced interventions or parenting strategies, allowing children to build emotional closeness without losing psychological independence.

Critically, there is a research gap between previous studies, which are generally conducted in formal school contexts or on early childhood children with relatively stable socio-economic parental conditions. This research focuses on early childhood children with underprivileged parents in the Gajahwong School Community.

The Gajahwong School Community in Yogyakarta is one of the free community-based schools supported by underprivileged parents with various occupations, such as scavengers, freelance workers, and housewives. The Gajahwong School Community consists of two class levels, namely the Root class for ages 3-4 years, and the Grass class for ages 5-6 years. However, it should be noted that this research specifically focuses on the Root class for ages 3-4 years because in this age group, a notable phenomenon of emotional dependency was found in the school environment.

This phenomenon is evident from the observation results, where four children in the Akar class exhibit excessive emotional dependence, such as crying when their parents leave the school, needing parental

accompaniment in class, and refusing to play without parental involvement, specifically their mothers. Even when the teacher tries to calm the child, some of them still show a desire to stay close to their parents or the teacher as a substitute figure. This condition indicates that emotional dependence occurs when feelings of insecurity arise in the child. Based on the dynamics of the problem, this research aims to delve deeper by analyzing the factors that influence children's emotional dependence, particularly the child's personality traits at home and at school, parental upbringing, and interactions with peers. and what efforts are made by parents and teachers to reduce this emotional dependency.

The findings of this research can provide a strong empirical basis to serve as a reference for optimizing children's emotional development by strengthening healthy attachments and reducing the potential for excessive emotional dependency. Thus, this research is expected to contribute new insights into understanding early childhood emotional dependency from a more contextual and multidimensional perspective.

## **2. Methods**

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design within an educational community, namely Gajahwong School Yogyakarta. The qualitative approach was chosen because it aims to deeply understand the phenomenon of emotional dependency in early childhood, specifically how experiences, interactions, and factors influencing emotional dependency occur in real life at school. The location of this research is in the classroom environment, specifically the Akar class group for 3-4 year olds at the Gajahwong School Community in Yogyakarta. With the research subjects being early childhood children, specifically the Akar class aged 3-4 years, totaling 4 (four) children. Meanwhile, the informants in this study are 3 (three) teachers and 4 (four) parents. The selection of informants was conducted using purposive sampling techniques, which involved choosing informants deemed to have relevant experience with the phenomenon of emotional dependency, namely children who exhibit high attachment characteristics, teachers who frequently interact emotionally with the children, and parents with specific parenting styles and other aspects.

The data collection techniques in this study include non-participatory observation and unstructured interviews. Non-participatory observation is conducted by the researcher not being directly involved in the learning activities, but rather systematically observing the child's behavior, interactions with the teacher, interactions with peers, and parental involvement in the school environment. This technique was chosen to obtain a natural depiction of emotional expressions, attachment patterns, and children's responses in everyday classroom situations. Observations were conducted over a certain period with a scheduled frequency, namely at the beginning of the learning activities, the core learning, where children engage in core learning according to the theme jointly determined by the teacher and the children, until the end of the learning session. Observations were

carried out every school meeting day, meaning the research was conducted continuously until data saturation was reached, where the information obtained from the observation process no longer revealed new findings or significant behavioral variations in the subjects being studied. Thus, the cessation of observation is not based solely on the amount of time, but rather on the consideration that the collected data has been sufficient to comprehensively address the focus and objectives of the research.

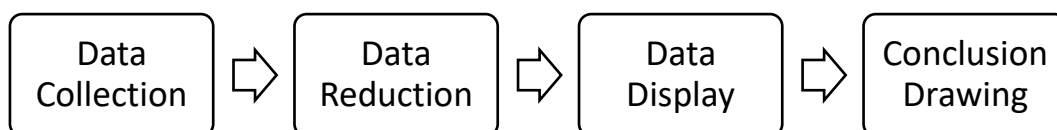


Figure 1. *Data Analysis Techniques*

### 3. Result and Discussion

#### Result

This section presents empirical findings from the analysis of factors influencing the emotional dependence of early childhood children in the Gajahwong School Community, Yogyakarta.

The main findings on the factors influencing the emotional dependence of early childhood children in the Gajahwong School Community, Yogyakarta. Grouped into two themes: family and socio-economic factors, which consist of insecure attachment patterns, less emotionally responsive parenting styles, and a lack of understanding of emotion regulation. Furthermore, child psychological factors include excessive separation anxiety and an inability to self-regulate responses independently. The findings are supported by the results of observational data analysis, informant quotes, and field observations.

Based on the results of the researcher's interview with the teacher, it was found that family factors and socio-economic conditions have a significant influence on the emergence of emotional dependence in children. There are several children who exhibit insecure attachment patterns, as evidenced by their difficulty separating from their parents when going to school. The teacher stated that:

*"There are some children who cry every morning when their parents leave for school. Some even need to be accompanied and sit in class for quite a while before they can calm down." Yes, it can be said that the child does not yet feel safe when having to part with their parents.*" (Teacher, 12/8/2025).

The teacher also added that the socio-economic conditions of families, most of whom work as freelancers or have irregular incomes, also affect the interaction patterns at home. This is based on the busyness of seeking income for daily needs. Thus, it makes the time spent with the child inconsistent. The teacher stated that:

*"Parents admit they are busy working, so when they are at home, they tend to indulge their children's wishes." The intention is good, but without realizing it, it makes it harder for the child to be emotionally independent, right"* (Teacher, 8/12/2025).

The results of the interview were also reinforced by the child's parents' statement to the researcher that:

*"My work is unpredictable, ma'am." Sometimes I spend the whole day outside selling. When I'm at home, sometimes I'm tired, and my child asks for this and that. Sometimes I ignore it, and sometimes I go along with what my child wants. (Parent, 8/12/2025).*

From the statement of the interview results, it can be understood that the family's socio-economic conditions also affect the quality of the child's emotional interactions. Where the parents do not have stable jobs, causing their time with the child to be inconsistent. When they have free time, parents tend to follow their child's wishes as a form of affection, but unknowingly, this makes it increasingly difficult for the child to be independent, manage emotions, and separate.

The condition also shows inconsistent interaction patterns and parenting responses that tend to be permissive, indirectly shaping the child's emotional vulnerability. The impact is not only on the dependency relationship with parents but also on the child's psychological readiness to face social situations outside the home. In this context, the child's psychological factors become increasingly prominent, especially in the form of excessive separation anxiety and the inability to self-regulate their responses independently.

The results of the teacher's interview reinforce the above interpretative analysis, which states that:

*"Yes, every morning there is always a child who cries for quite a long time when their parents say goodbye." Not only do they cry for a short while, but they can also become difficult to join their friends. Sometimes it takes almost an hour for the child to really calm down and be willing to join in." (Teacher, 8/12/2025).*

The teacher also added that this anxiety is often accompanied by behavior of constantly seeking a replacement figure. Where the child will cling to the teacher in class and show restlessness when the teacher moves to another place. This is reinforced by the teacher's statement that:

*"if I stand a bit far away, he immediately follows." As if afraid of being left behind again. So he doesn't feel safe if there isn't an adult nearby." (Teacher, 12/8/2025).*

Beside separation anxiety, based on field observations, children tend to be unable to regulate their responses independently. For example, when fighting over toys or being asked by the teacher to wait their turn, the child immediately shows an emotional outburst without trying to calm down first. These findings were reinforced by the results of the teacher's interview with the researcher that:

*"If there is a small conflict with a friend in class, some children immediately react by crying or getting angry." They are not yet able to express in words what they are feeling. So, the response is still spontaneous and very much depends on the teacher's help to calm them down." (Teacher, 12/8/2015).*

The impact that arises in schools due to these conditions will disrupt the ongoing learning process, limit children's ability to build

healthy social interactions, and reduce their self-confidence when engaging in activities independently.

The results of the interviews with parents also reinforce the above findings regarding the presence of psychological factors in children. Some parents realize that their children show quite intense fear when they have to be separated, especially in school situations. Parent interviews stated that:

*"Every morning when I have to leave him at school, my child always asks me what time I'll be back." If I say goodbye, he immediately cries and hugs tightly. Sometimes I also hesitate to leave right away because I'm afraid my child will get even sadder.*" (Teacher, 12/8/2025).

The findings indicate that separation anxiety and the inability to regulate one's responses are not only observed at school but also form a pattern in the child's daily life at home. This condition shows that children's psychological factors need to be understood comprehensively, and it requires consistent cooperation between parents and teachers to help children develop a sense of security and more mature regulatory abilities.

## **Discussion**

Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted by the researcher with informants, as outlined in the findings section, to obtain a more comprehensive understanding, all these findings were further grouped into several main sub-themes that represent the factors of emotional dependency in early childhood at the Gajahwong School Community in Yogyakarta. The findings were then interpreted, supported by previous studies.

### **Family and Socioeconomic Factors**

Family and socioeconomic factors are the primary foundations that significantly influence the emergence of emotional dependency in early childhood. This is based on the researchers' analysis of observations and interviews, which show that family and socioeconomic factors play an important role in shaping the emotional attachment of young children.

Field findings indicate that some children exhibit emotional dependence, characterized by excessive anxiety during separations, difficulty adapting to peers, and lack of confidence in interactions. This is reinforced by the results of the researcher's interviews with parents that:

*"The teacher once mentioned that my child has difficulty joining friends if I haven't really come home yet. He also tends to stay closer to the teacher rather than playing alone."* (Parent, 12/5/2025)

That condition is closely related to parenting patterns at home that have not provided a consistent sense of emotional security. This is reinforced by the results of interviews with parents conducted by the researcher, which revealed that:

*"When my child starts crying, I usually just give in to their wishes so they stop quickly. I don't really understand how to explain feelings to*

*a child; what's important is that they calm down first."* (Parent, 12/8/2025).

(Safia & Faiza, 2025), in his research, he revealed that the lack of understanding in helping children recognize and express their feelings indicates that the emotional responses are not yet optimal, consistent, and reflective. Such interaction patterns have the potential to form insecure attachments, as the child does not fully receive guidance in managing emotions and understanding their anxiety, especially when having to part with their primary caregiver, which is the mother (Safia & Faiza, 2025).

Specifically, Khoerunnisa & Kusdiwelirawan 2022, in their research, showed that children with insecure attachment patterns tend to face obstacles in the development of independence. The study's results revealed that out of the three children who were the subjects of the research, those with insecure attachment exhibited more dominant developmental challenges compared to the other subjects (Khoerunnisa & Kusdiwelirawan, 2022).

The findings of this research, analyzed from field observations and interviews, indicate that limited time with children is also a contributing factor. This was expressed by one of the informants, where busyness and fatigue after activities make parent-child interactions more functional, such as physical needs like eating, bathing, and sleeping. The results of the researcher's interview with the parents state that:

*"Sometimes after coming home from work, I don't have time to chat or play with my child for long because I'm too tired." So, usually I focus on his basic needs, like making sure he... (the child) has eaten, bathed, and then goes to bed on time."* (Parent, 12/8/2025).

Markoulaki et al. (2025) revealed that parental responses that tend to ignore, belittle, or quickly ask the child to be quiet when crying or showing anger are referred to as unsupportive emotional socialization. This pattern does not provide space for the child to gradually understand and manage their emotions (Markoulaki et al., 2025). This pattern can hinder a child's ability to recognize, label, and regulate their emotions accurately, potentially increasing the risk of internal problems, such as anxiety and sadness, as well as external problems, such as anger and aggressive behavior (Lin & Faldowski, 2023; Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2022).

In addition, the level of parental understanding regarding socio-economic conditions is a factor that influences access to information about parenting styles and children's emotional development. Based on the findings of this study, it shows that many parents already have gadgets to access information, but none of the parents use gadgets as a tool to seek information about the importance of understanding secure emotional attachment and learning emotional regulation from an early age. This is related to their understanding and awareness of the importance of secure emotional independence and learning to regulate emotions from an early age. This ignorance or lack of understanding can be caused by low digital literacy, limited psychosocial understanding among parents, and more urgent economic needs (Cahyono & Adiaty, 2024; Zhang et al., 2025).

The impact of this condition can be seen in the less-than-optimal parent-child interaction patterns that do not support the child's emotional independence. For example, parents who do not understand the importance of secure emotional attachment may not provide consistent and warm responses to their children's emotional needs. This can hinder the development of a child's ability to regulate their own emotions, which ultimately affects their social skills and psychological well-being in the future (Samsidar, 2025; Zhang et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the stress experienced by parents due to socio-economic pressures can also affect the effectiveness of parenting. According to Barudin, 2025, in his research, it is revealed that parents facing financial pressure and environmental instability may experience stress and fatigue that lead to less responsive and less emotionally supportive parenting (Baharudin, 2025). This condition can lead to an increase in behavioral and emotional problems in children, as well as hinder parents' ability to establish a healthy relationship with their children (Verhagen et al., 2025).

Thus, in addition to providing access to technology, it is also important to enhance parents' understanding and literacy regarding parenting styles that support children's emotional development through various educational programs that are sensitive to the family's socio-economic conditions. An approach that involves evidence-based parenting training and family empowerment, as well as increasing social and mental support for parents, can help improve the quality of parent-child interactions and support children's emotional independence from an early age (Cahyono & Adiawaty, 2024; Tripon, 2024).

Based on this, field observations indicate that there is an empowerment program conducted at the Gajahwong School Community, namely the Parents Meeting program, which is a meeting between parents and the school. The purpose is to provide understanding regarding parenting that needs to be done by parents at home and to serve as a forum for addressing children's emotional imbalance issues in the classroom. Additionally, it serves as a platform for parents to express their needs and vice versa from the school's side. This program is conducted once a week, specifically every Friday.

The results of the researcher's interview with the teacher at the school state that:

*"We at the school have a program called the parents meeting, which is a meeting between parents and teachers here, to convey information, whether it be about the child's needs, the child's problems, for example, we often inform parents about the child's emotional issues." Because there are some children here who have not yet fully matured in managing their emotions, ma'am, some cry but are unable to express their feelings, are not independent, and always want to stick close to the teacher. Of course, some children are also not independent, ma'am, when the teacher asks the children to forgive each other, they are not able to do it yet and we still help them. Well, this program serves as a platform for us to communicate the children's activities to their parents later on." (Teacher, 8/12/2025).*

The findings indicate that there are still children who experience difficulties in emotional management and independence, prompting the school to provide a special communication space thru the parents meeting program as a means of conveying children's development information to parents. This condition indicates that the role of parents in understanding and addressing their child's emotional dependence at home becomes very important.

### Children's Psychological Factors

Based on the results of the analysis thru observation, observation, and interviews. There is excessive separation anxiety and the child's inability to self-regulate their responses independently. These are the factors that emerge and influence the child's emotional dependence in the Gajahwong School Community in Yogyakarta.

The results of the research interviews between researchers and teachers state that:

*"Yes, there are some children who, when their parents say goodbye, can cry for quite a long time, even to the point of being difficult to get into class." Sometimes he refuses to join the circle in class and looks restless, as if afraid his parents will leave. Even in class, the child often asks or looks toward the door to make sure their parents are still there or not. "Even tho we have explained and calmed him down, the child still takes a long time to feel comfortable." (Teacher, 8/12/2025).*

From the description of the interview results, it shows that some children still experience quite intense separation anxiety, thus requiring consistent emotional support and approach from both teachers and parents.

The findings from the interviews with the researchers and teachers are also supported by the study by Celik et al. (2025), which reveals that separation anxiety in preschool-aged children is closely related to self-regulation abilities and executive functions. Children who experience separation anxiety generally show difficulties in managing emotions and concentrating, which affects their ability to adapt to the school environment (Belhan Çelik, S., Bacanak, EB, & Bumin, 2025).

In this context, excessive separation anxiety often arises from dysfunctional attachment patterns, where the relationship with the caregiver does not form a secure base, causing the child to rely on physical presence to manage emotions (Perrotta, 2020). This aligns with the idea of other research findings that children have not yet been able to internalize a sense of security, making the school environment a source of anxiety due to the lack of direct access to primary figures, in this case, the mother and father (Verschueren & Koomen, 2021).



Figure 2. *Insecure Attachment Relationship Diagram*

The diagram above illustrates the relationship between insecure attachment and its impact on separation anxiety and children's

adaptation at school. This insecure attachment condition causes difficulties in school adaptation, where children tend to rely on the adults around them for emotional stability, such as teachers as substitutes for primary figures. Other research highlights that excessive separation anxiety can develop into reactive attachment disorder (RAD), where children exhibit maladaptive emotional dependence and difficulty separating, especially in new environments such as school (Oliveira et al., 2022).

The results of the research interview between the researcher and the teacher state that:

*"Children who usually cry and have difficulty separating take longer to adjust, as we often encounter in class, especially in the Akar class." Because children tend to be emotionally unstable, when they are in a new environment like school, their anxiety becomes excessive. If not handled properly, this child's emotional dependence can continue and affect their interactions later on.*" (Teacher, 8/12/2025).

In these conditions, children often show crying, withdrawal, or intense seeking of the teacher's attention. Emotional regulation refers to a child's ability to influence or modify their emotional experiences to align with social situations and the child's age (Paley & Hajal, 2022).

having difficulty managing negative emotions, such as anger, disappointment, fear, or frustration, especially when facing situations that do not align with the child's desires (Silkenbeumer et al., 2024). This can trigger behaviors such as crying, withdrawing, or seeking intense attention, which are similar to the observations mentioned in this research (Carlson et al., 2023; LS et al., 2022).

Supportive parental responses are an important factor in helping children develop healthy emotional regulation. When parents respond positively and understand their children's negative emotions, such as anger or frustration, children learn to identify and manage their feelings in an adaptive way. Research shows that these positive and supportive responses contribute to the development of empathy and better coping strategies in children. Positive, warm, and responsive parenting is an important foundation that helps children grow into confident, independent, and socially skilled individuals, while also developing optimal emotional intelligence (Finanto et al., 2024).

Several studies, including Dwistia et al., 2025, emphasize that parents must first recognize their own emotions before helping their children understand theirs. This research also emphasizes that two-way interaction and positive parenting support the healthy emotional development of children. Specifically, children who grow up in a supportive and harmonious family environment tend to have better emotional regulation and empathy (Dwistia et al., 2025).

Putri et al., 2025 In their research, this also reinforces that democratic parenting with emotional support positively contributes to children's emotional growth. Where, if children raised with consistent emotional support show better emotional regulation, higher self-confidence, and more effective social interactions (Putri et al., 2025).

Thus, the psychological factors of the child, such as excessive separation anxiety and the inability to self-regulate responses

independently, are interrelated and reinforce the emotional dependence of early childhood children. These two factors do not appear separately, but are influenced by the child's emotional experiences in the family environment and reinforced by socio-economic conditions and less supportive parenting patterns. These psychological factors are then reflected in the child's behavior at school, particularly in the form of high emotional dependence on teachers and parents, especially the mother as a source of security.

#### **4. Conclusion**

This study analyzes the factors influencing the emotional dependence of early childhood children in the Gajahwong School Community in Yogyakarta. Based on empirical findings obtained through field observations and interviews with teachers and parents, it was found that children's emotional dependence is formed through a dynamic interaction between family factors, socio-economic conditions, and the child's psychological factors. Empirical data shows that insecure attachment patterns and inconsistent parenting responses, such as the tendency to give in to a child when they cry without emotional regulation support, as well as limited interaction time due to economic pressures, contribute to the emergence of insecurity in children. Empirically, these conditions are reflected in children's behavior at school, such as prolonged crying when separated from parents, difficulty joining class activities, a tendency to cling to teachers as substitute figures, and spontaneous emotional responses when facing simple problems with peers. However, the intensity and form of such behaviors are not uniform across all children, but rather vary according to each child's upbringing and family context. This emphasizes that emotional dependence is a contextual phenomenon and develops gradually through the child's relational experiences in their immediate environment.

Based on these results, the necessary interventions should not only focus on the child but also on strengthening parental caregiving capacity and support from the school environment. Relevant strategies include emotion regulation-based parenting training, enhancing parenting literacy related to secure attachment, optimizing parents' meeting programs as spaces for reflection and education for parents, and implementing social-emotional learning approaches in the classroom.

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