

The Use of TikTok Media in Improving the Emotional Abilities of Children Aged 5-6 Years at TK Nurul 'Ilmi

✉¹Winy Wiranti, ²Khadijah

✉^{1, 2}Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini, Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Jalan Williem Iskandar
Pasar V Medan Estate, Sumatera Utara, 20235, Indonesia

✉¹winywiranti46@gmail.com, ²khadijah@uinsu.ac.id

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Abstract

Emotional development is essential in early childhood education because it supports children's ability to understand, express, and regulate emotions and build meaningful social relationships. This study aimed to improve the emotional literacy of children aged 5–6 years through instructional TikTok videos at Nurul Ilmi IT Kindergarten. The study employed Classroom Action Research conducted in two cycles, consisting of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. Fifteen children participated in the study. Instructional TikTok videos were selected according to learning objectives and developmental appropriateness and were followed by teacher-guided discussions, emotion-recognition practices, habituation, and positive reinforcement. Data were collected through observation based on Daniel Goleman's emotional intelligence indicators and analyzed descriptively. The results showed an increase in emotional literacy scores from 252 in the pre-cycle to 375 in Cycle I and 521 in Cycle II. In Cycle II, 13 children reached the Very Well Developed (BSB) category. These findings indicate that appropriately selected instructional TikTok content, combined with teacher guidance, can support children's emotional literacy development.

Keywords: educational TikTok, digital learning media, emotional abilities, early childhood, early childhood education

Abstrak

Perkembangan emosi merupakan aspek penting dalam pendidikan anak usia dini karena mendukung kemampuan anak dalam memahami, mengekspresikan, dan mengendalikan emosi serta membangun hubungan sosial yang bermakna. Penelitian ini bertujuan meningkatkan literasi emosi anak usia 5–6 tahun melalui video TikTok edukatif di TK IT Nurul Ilmi. Penelitian menggunakan Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (PTK) yang dilaksanakan dalam dua siklus, meliputi perencanaan, pelaksanaan, observasi, dan refleksi. Subjek penelitian berjumlah 15 anak. Video TikTok edukatif dipilih berdasarkan tujuan pembelajaran dan kesesuaian dengan tahap perkembangan anak, kemudian dilanjutkan dengan diskusi, latihan mengenali emosi, pembiasaan, dan penguatan positif dengan pendampingan guru. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi berdasarkan indikator kecerdasan emosional Daniel Goleman dan dianalisis secara deskriptif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan peningkatan skor literasi emosi dari 252 pada pra-siklus menjadi 375 pada siklus I dan 521 pada siklus II. Pada siklus II, sebanyak 13 anak mencapai kategori Berkembang Sangat Baik (BSB). Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa video TikTok edukatif yang dipilih secara tepat dan didukung pendampingan guru dapat membantu meningkatkan literasi emosi anak usia 5–6 tahun. Kata kunci: TikTok edukatif, media pembelajaran digital, kemampuan emosional, anak usia dini, pendidikan anak usia dini.

A. INTRODUCTION

Education in early childhood is central to a child's development as a whole person. Learning success in Early Childhood Education (ECE) should cover physical-motor, cognitive, linguistic, social-emotional, and religious-moral growth in addition to academic aptitude (Gökçen, Özel, & Çalışandemir, 2024), and should be implemented in line with children's characteristics and developmental stage within a safe, comfortable, enjoyable, and participatory learning environment (Nabilah & Tirtaningsih, 2026).

The "golden age" birth to age six is a period of rapid development, including emotional growth that lays the groundwork for later personality development (Faqh, 2025). Children need appropriate stimulation to identify their emotions, express them properly, regulate their reactions, and build healthy social relationships; both innate ability and environmental experience shape this process (Madan & Ranganathan, 2023; Syifa, Aisiyah, & Atika, 2024). ECE therefore plays a key role in fostering social-emotional growth through structured stimulation.

Under the Merdeka Curriculum for ECE, learning is holistic and adapted to children's age, developmental stage, interests, needs, and well-being, with teachers actively guiding through conversation, meaningful interaction, and support. Technology may be used as a learning resource not as the goal of learning when it is selective, purposeful, and supervised (Qori'ah, 2024).

TikTok, combining moving images, sound, music, facial expressions, body movement, and storylines, offers an alternative audio-visual medium through which teachers can present emotional situations concretely. In this study TikTok is used not for free entertainment access but as a curated instructional stimulus adapted to children's age and the learning objectives (Gökçen, Özel, & Çalışandemir, 2024).

This use of TikTok is grounded in Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1986), in which learning occurs through observing, imitating, and practicing modeled behavior. Here, videos showing facial expressions, intonation, movement, and positive behavior serve as models; after viewing, the teacher guides children through questions, imitation of expressions, discussion, and practice of positive behavior, so that the medium supports a full observation–modeling–practice–reinforcement cycle rather than passive viewing.

Content selection, time limits, and supervision remain essential to keep the media developmentally appropriate (Oktasari, Imran, & Sari, 2024).

Prior studies link digital media to various aspects of early development: Aprilia and Yaswinda (2023) examined TikTok video use among children aged 5–6; Oktasari, Imran, and Sari (2024) found a relationship between TikTok use and social-emotional development; Hasibuan, Lubis, and Harahap (2024) emphasized the need for regulation and supervision; and Kristiana, Chairilisyah, and Novianti (2026) found a relationship between intensity of TikTok use and young children's emotional abilities. Together these findings suggest that TikTok's effects depend on how it is used, its intensity, its content, and the surrounding conditions.

Preliminary observation at TK IT Nurul I'mi showed that children aged 5–6 had not yet reached the expected level of emotional development: they showed limited responsiveness, needed reinforcement to display appropriate emotional behavior, and lacked confidence answering questions. All fifteen children were classified as Beginning to Develop (Mulai Berkembang/MB) in the pre-cycle, indicating a need for an engaging and developmentally concrete teaching approach.

This study's novelty lies in the purposeful use of TikTok to stimulate the emotional abilities of children aged 5–6 through observing, imitating, practicing, and receiving teacher reinforcement. Emotional ability here is limited to recognizing emotional states, expressing and regulating emotion, and demonstrating positive emotional response; at TK IT Nurul I'mi, habituation behaviors such as greeting, asking permission, apologizing, showing confidence, tidying toys, and helping friends serve as observable indicators of self-regulation and positive emotional response (Chintya & Sit, 2024).

B. RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design to help children aged 5–6 improve their emotional abilities through TikTok-based learning. It was conducted at TK IT Nurul Ilmi, Jl. Kolam No. 1, Komp. Univ. Medan Area, Medan Estate Village, Percut Sei Tuan District, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra, Indonesia, during the second

semester of the 2025–2026 academic year, with the aim of improving children's emotional intelligence through TikTok as an audio-visual learning medium.

The research followed the four CAR stages planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. In planning, the researcher and teacher identified problems based on initial observation and developed a learning plan using curated TikTok videos about emotions suited to children aged 5–6, alongside lesson plans, observation sheets, and indicators of emotional ability self-awareness, emotional expression, self-control, self-confidence, independence, and positive social behavior (Arikunto et al., 2019).

The observing stage focused on the learning process and changes in children's emotional abilities during the intervention, using an observation sheet built from the predefined indicators identifying and expressing emotion, self-assurance, emotional regulation, independent task completion, and constructive social interaction alongside observation of the teacher's use of TikTok as a teaching tool (Arikunto et al., 2019).

In the reflecting stage, the researcher and teacher jointly reviewed the observation results at the end of each cycle to evaluate the actions taken, identify behavioral change, and note obstacles and weaknesses, feeding these findings into the planning of Cycle II. Improvements for Cycle II included selecting videos more closely matched to children's characteristics, simplifying questions, providing more intensive assistance, giving children more opportunity to express feelings, and offering consistent positive reinforcement.

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Pre-Cycle

The research was conducted at TK IT Nurul Ilmi, located at Jl. Kolam No. 1, Universitas Medan Area Complex, Medan Estate, North Sumatra. The research subjects consisted of 15 children aged 5–6 years in Group B, with one teacher serving as an informant. Before the intervention was implemented, the researcher conducted an initial observation to determine the children's emotional abilities through learning activities using educational animated videos introducing various emotions.

The observation results suggested that the children's emotional talents were still relatively low. The kids struggled to comprehend the course material, paid little attention

when explanations were given, answered questions passively, and lacked confidence when expressing their opinions. As a result, engaging, concrete, and developmentally appropriate learning activities were required for youngsters between the ages of five and six. During the pre-cycle stage, the children were shown an educational animated video about various emotions. They were then guided to identify emotions, provide responses, and retell the content of the video in simple language..

Table 1. Number of Children in the Pre-Cycle Stage

No.	Developmental Category	Frequency
1	Not Yet Developed (BB)	0
2	Beginning to Develop (MB)	15
3	Developing as Expected (BSH)	0
4	Developing Very Well (BSB)	0
Total		15

Based on the results, all 15 children (100%) were categorized as Beginning to Develop (MB). The overall emotional ability score was 252, equivalent to 42%, indicating that the children's emotional development had not yet reached the expected level. This condition became the basis for implementing the Cycle I intervention through the use of educational videos about emotions on TikTok in a structured manner and under teacher supervision.

2. Cycle I

Table 2. Number of Children in the Cycle I

No.	Developmental Category	Frequency
1	Not Yet Developed (BB)	0
2	Beginning to Develop (MB)	2
3	Developing as Expected (BSH)	13
4	Developing Very Well (BSB)	0
Total		15

The children's performance following the intervention in Cycle I demonstrated positive outcomes, according to the statistics shown in Table 2. Two kids in all were placed in the Beginning to Develop (MB) group, which denotes a preliminary improvement in their emotional skills. The remaining 13 kids, meanwhile, were in the Developing as Expected (BSH) category. These results show that during the intervention's execution, the kids' emotional skills greatly improved.

3. Cycle II

Table 3. Number of Children in the Cycle II

No.	Developmental Category	Frequency
1	Not Yet Developed (BB)	0
2	Beginning to Develop (MB)	0
3	Developing as Expected (BSH)	2
4	Developing Very Well (BSB)	13
Total		15

The development attained in Cycle II produced improved outcomes, according to the data shown in Table 3. Thirteen children were in the Very Well Developed (BSB) group, while two children were in the Developing as Expected (BSH) category. The choice of pertinent teaching strategies, which allowed the stimulation offered to successfully promote the development of children's emotional talents at TK IT Nurul Ilmi, was closely linked to this gain in achievement.

The comparison of the results shows a gradual improvement in the children's emotional abilities from the pre-cycle to Cycle I, with an increase of 123 points. From Cycle I to Cycle II, the score increased by 146 points. Overall, the total score increased by 269 points from the initial condition to Cycle II. The percentage of achievement also increased from 42.0% to 62.5%, and subsequently to 86.8%.

These data indicate that repeated learning actions, followed by improvements based on reflection, can support the development of children's emotional abilities. The improvement was also evident in the changes in achievement categories. At the beginning of the study,

all children were categorized as MB (Beginning to Develop). After Cycle I, most children had reached the BSH (Developing as Expected) category. In Cycle II, most children had reached the BSB (Developing Very Well) category.

These changes in achievement should be understood within the context of the actions implemented. This study did not examine TikTok as the sole factor responsible for the observed changes. TikTok was used in combination with question-and-answer activities, teacher modeling, practical activities, habituation, teacher child interactions, and positive reinforcement. Therefore, the findings of this study are more appropriately understood as an indication of the potential of educational TikTok videos as part of a structured and purposeful learning strategy.

Table 4. Assessment Results in the Pre-Cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II

Stage	Score	Percentage	Description
Per-Cycle	252	42%	Beginning to Develop (MB)
Cycle I	375	62,5%	Developing as Expected (BSH)
Cycle II	521	86,8%	Developing Very Well (BSB)

4. Improvement of Children's Emotional Abilities

Children at TK IT Nurul Ilmi improved their emotional abilities gradually across the two cycles. In the pre-cycle (42%), all 15 children were classified MB, struggling to express emotions, hesitant to answer, low in confidence, and dependent on adult guidance for basic tasks and positive social habits such as asking permission, greeting, apologizing, sharing, and completing tasks independently.

TikTok was used as a teacher-directed medium rather than free entertainment, with videos depicting emotions and positive behavior through expression, movement, dialogue, and simple storylines, followed by question-and-answer, discussion, imitation, role-play, and practice. In Cycle I, achievement rose to 62.5% (13 children BSH, 2 MB); children showed more attention, enthusiasm, and confidence, and began imitating emotional expressions and positive behaviors, though some still needed more intensive assistance, simpler questions, and more opportunity to express feelings.

Cycle II improvements more developmentally suited videos, simpler language, more teacher–child interaction, and consistent positive reinforcement raised achievement to 86.8% (13 children BSB, 2 BSH). Children showed greater self-assurance in answering, better ability to identify and communicate emotion, and improved emotional regulation, along with more consistent positive social behavior (asking permission, greeting, apologizing, helping, tidying, completing tasks independently). This indicates that the deliberate combination of instructional video with direct interaction, modeling, habituation, and reinforcement rather than TikTok alone drove the improvement.

5. Discussion of the Use of TikTok to Develop Children's Emotional Abilities

Achievement rose from 42% (pre-cycle) to 62.5% (Cycle I) to 86.8% (Cycle II) across the emotional-ability indicators of identifying, expressing, and regulating emotion, self-assurance, independent task completion, and positive social relationships. TikTok's audio-visual features expression, movement, sound, speech, and short storylines depicting happiness, sadness, anger, fear, and disappointment alongside positive behaviors such as greeting, asking permission, apologizing, and helping provided children with concrete stimuli that were then connected to daily life through questioning, discussion, role-play, imitation, and practice, consistent with Bandura's Social Learning Theory of learning through observing, remembering, imitating, and repeating modeled behavior.

The further gain in Cycle II underscores the importance of teacher guidance, habituation, and reinforcement alongside the medium itself: TikTok was used as a limited, purposeful stimulus content screened, attention guided, questions simplified, imitation and role-play encouraged, and positive behavior reinforced daily rather than as unrestricted entertainment or a substitute for direct interaction. These findings align with Saputro (2025), on TikTok use, emotional development, and social interaction in young children, and Uhriyah and Dheasari (2024), on TikTok and the moral development of children aged 5–6. The improvement should thus be attributed to TikTok's selective, controlled, planned, teacher-guided integration with direct interaction, modeling, habituation, and reinforcement, rather than to the medium in isolation.

6. Relevance to Islamic Early Childhood Education

The findings are highly relevant to Islamic Early Childhood Education (PIAUD), since children's emotional development was expressed not only through recognizing, expressing, and regulating emotion but also through behaviors reflecting religious, moral, and ethical values greeting, asking permission, apologizing, politeness, respect, helping, sharing, tidying, and responsibility. PIAUD views development holistically, integrating cognitive, emotional, social, moral, and spiritual growth, so that emotional regulation extends beyond controlling anger to avoiding harm to others, speaking politely, apologizing, and resolving problems appropriately; asking permission likewise reflects both self-control and moral habituation.

The selected videos supported these goals by presenting greeting, apologizing, helping, sharing, and respect, while the teacher remained the primary role model reinforcing these behaviors in class. Because moral and religious values require repeated practice rather than explanation alone, habituation was essential in turning the video content into observable behavior strengthening the study's relevance to PIAUD by linking emotional development with the formation of moral and religious character.

7. Relationship between TikTok Media, Learning Objectives, and Assessment of Child Development

TikTok was positioned as one component of a planned strategy targeting children's ability to identify and communicate emotion, regulate emotional reactions, show self-assurance, complete tasks independently, and engage in constructive social behavior. These objectives guided the selection of videos depicting both emotions (happiness, sadness, anger, fear, disappointment) and positive behaviors (greeting, asking permission, apologizing, sharing, helping, waiting turns, tidying), followed by question-and-answer, discussion, identification, imitation, sharing of experience, role-play, and practice.

Assessment relied on direct observation of behavior during and after activities not on recall of video content or viewing duration categorized as Not Yet Developed (BB), Beginning to Develop (MB), Developing as Expected (BSH), and Developing Very Well (BSB). Results moved from all 15 children at MB in the pre-cycle, to 13 BSH/2 MB in

Cycle I, to 13 BSB/2 BSH in Cycle II, confirming that TikTok functioned as an audio-visual stimulus while assessment centered on children's observable emotional and social behavior.

8. TikTok as a Learning Medium

TikTok was used selectively, with videos chosen for educational value, simple language, positive behavior, developmental appropriateness, and relevance to the learning objectives; content with violence, inappropriate language, sexual elements, or values inconsistent with religious and character education was excluded. Videos addressed emotions (happiness, sadness, anger, fear, disappointment) and positive behaviors (greeting, asking permission, apologizing, sharing, helping, regulating emotion). Children did not browse content independently the teacher or researcher pre-screened and time-limited the videos and viewing was followed by question-and-answer, discussion, role-play, imitation, practice, and habituation, with the teacher directing attention, asking questions, modeling, correcting misunderstanding, and reinforcing behavior. TikTok thus supplemented rather than replaced the teacher's role and direct interaction, providing visual and auditory stimuli later reinforced through social experience.

9. Suitability of TikTok Media for the Characteristics of Young Children

Media for children aged 5–6 should be concrete, engaging, enjoyable, and participatory; TikTok's moving images, sound, expression, movement, and simple storylines can provide such concrete models of emotion and positive behavior, though effectiveness depends on how the teacher integrates the medium into the learning process. In Cycle I children began attending to videos, following simple storylines, and answering questions; by Cycle II they better recalled events, identified emotions, and connected video content to daily experience. Questions about characters' feelings, the reasons for emotions, appropriate responses to anger, and actions after mistakes helped children link situation, feeling, and behavior, while role-play and imitation gave them opportunities to practice greeting, apologizing, asking permission, and helping consistent with Bandura's Social Learning Theory of learning through observation, imitation, and practice within a social

environment. TikTok is therefore best positioned as a supporting medium not a replacement for play, direct communication, teacher interaction, and peer relationships whose educational value depends on age-appropriate content, limited duration, supervision, clear objectives, and follow-up activities that let children apply what they observe in real situations.

D. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This Classroom Action Research, conducted across two cycles at TK IT Nurul Ilmi, shows that curated educational TikTok videos can serve as an alternative medium to stimulate the emotional abilities of children aged 5–6. Achievement rose from 42% in the pre-cycle (all 15 children MB), to 62.5% in Cycle I (13 BSH, 2 MB), to 86.8% in Cycle II (13 BSB, 2 BSH), with improvements in identifying and communicating emotion, regulating emotional reactions, self-assurance, independent task completion, and positive social behavior, alongside greater confidence and enthusiasm and more consistent greeting, asking permission, apologizing, helping, tidying, and independent task completion.

TikTok's effectiveness was closely tied to the accompanying strategy: age-appropriate content selection, limited duration, teacher supervision, questioning, discussion, imitation, role-play, habituation, modeling, and positive reinforcement. It should therefore not be viewed as unrestricted entertainment or a substitute for play, direct interaction, and social experience, but used selectively as an audio-visual stimulus supporting observation, recognition, imitation, and practice of emotional and positive social behavior. From the PIAUD perspective, these gains also support children's moral character self-control, politeness, responsibility, helping, and respect for others. Implemented purposefully, appropriately, selectively, within limited duration, and under teacher supervision, TikTok can thus complement early childhood learning and support both the emotional and character development of children aged 5–6.

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