

How to Cite (APA Style):

Salimi M., Hidayah R., Fauziah M., Astuti D., Surya A., & Hahsa N. (2026). Analysis of Social Skills on Elementary School Students in Rural and Urban Area. *Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar*, 13 (2), 518-573. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30659/pendas.13.2.518-537>



JURNAL ILMIAH

PENDIDIKAN DASAR

p-ISSN: 2354-9580
e-ISSN: 2685-211X

Analysis of social skills on elementary school students in rural and urban area

Moh Salimi ^{1*}, Ratna Hidayah ², Muna Fauziah ³, Dewi Astuti ⁴, Anesa Surya ⁵, Nurham Hahsa ⁶

^{1,2,5}Primary teacher education, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia

³Elementary Madrasah Teacher Education, Insitut Agama Islam Nahdlatul Ulama Kebumen, Kebumen, Indonesia

⁴Basic education, Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

⁶Faculty of Education, Prince of Songkla University, Pattani, Thailand

Corresponding author's e-mail: salimi@staff.uns.ac.id

Submitted: May 15th, 2026

DOI: 10.30659/pendas.13.2.518-537

Revised: July 14th, 2026

Accepted: July 31st, 2026

Keywords:	Abstract
social skills; rural; urban, elementary school	<i>Technological advancements have shifted students' social interactions from in-person to virtual, challenging them to develop healthy social relationships and collaborative skills in line with the demands of 21st-century education. Therefore, this study aims to analyse the social skills of elementary school students in Kebumen and Purworejo Regencies, specifically in rural and urban areas. This study employs a mixed-methods design with an explanatory sequential approach. Samples were selected using cluster sampling for students and purposive sampling for teachers, resulting in 107 fifth-grade students and 4 teachers from five elementary schools. Data were collected through a social skills questionnaire containing 20 Likert-scale items and a semi-structured interview guide. Quantitative data were analysed using comparative descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were analysed thematically. The results indicated that the average total social skills scores of both groups were relatively comparable, yet they exhibited complementary profiles. Rural students excelled in cooperation (3.504) and self-control (3.451), rooted in a culture of mutual assistance and social harmony, while urban students significantly excelled in assertiveness (3.783), driven by a competitive learning environment and public speaking training programs. Responsibility indicators were relatively balanced in both regions, with more than 85% of students achieving the high category. These findings imply the need for context-specific educational strategies namely, strengthening self-reliance in rural areas without</i>

Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar Vol. XII, No. 2, July, 2026, Page. 518-537

doi: 10.30659/pendas.13.2. 518-537

© The Author(s). 2026



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons - Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/)

undermining the value of mutual cooperation, and fostering cooperation and empathy in urban areas through collaborative learning. Character education policies must be responsive to regional differences in order to comprehensively develop students' social skills.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Elementary education has a broad scope, focusing on academic development as well as the cultivation of students' social skills as a means of fostering character development and 21st-century competencies. Social skills are increasingly essential for students, as these abilities greatly assist them in building interpersonal relationships, collaborating, communicating effectively, and adapting to social environments at home, in the community, or at school. Based on Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), social skills are an integral part of social-emotional learning, contributing to academic success, mental health, and the development of students' attitudes (Cavioni et al., 2024; Shugufta Naseem et al., 2024). Previous research indicates that students with strong social skills tend to demonstrate greater collaborative abilities, show empathy toward their surroundings, and exhibit higher levels of self-control compared to students with weaker social skills.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development emphasizes that social and emotional skills are among the key competencies for individual success in education, the workplace, and community life (Attarang, 2025; Shek et al., 2025). Social skills facilitate students enhance the ability to collaborate, respect differences, communicate effectively, and build healthy interpersonal relationships starting from elementary school (Ismail et al., 2024; Seprie et al., 2025). Therefore, social skills cannot be underrated as merely supplementary abilities but fundamental to character development and students' social readiness in the 21st century.

The significance of social skills is also increasing in tandem with the digital advancements of the current era, which are altering patterns of individual behaviour and interaction. The frequent use of gadgets and social media influences children to interact virtually rather than in person. This situation significantly impacts the quality of their interactions, such as a lack of empathy, excessive emotional control, and other issues. Several studies have found that students face many obstacles in building positive social relationships with their peers, causing them to become increasingly individualistic and hesitant to express their opinions (Fernandes et al., 2022; Jeng, 2024; Zhang, 2023). This phenomenon indicates that technological advancements have not been accompanied by corresponding development in students' social skills.

In the field of elementary education, social skills have become increasingly crucial since elementary school serves as the foundational phase for the formation of students'

social behavior (Jaedun et al., [2024](#)). This stage facilitates students' learning processes, helps them understand social norms, fosters collaboration, and builds their self-identity within their environment through interactions with peers and teachers. Vygotsky dan Bandura explain that social development is shaped by students' interactions in their learning environments and daily lives, and evolves through observation and experience within those environments (Adi et al., 2026; Asrifan et al., [2025](#); Priyadarshini et al., [2025](#)). Therefore, the social skills of elementary school students deserve serious attention as they form the foundation for the development of students' character in the future.

The Problem of The Study

However, several previous studies have also highlighted the challenges faced by students in enhancing their social skills. Technological advancements and excessive use of electronic devices have led to changes in students' social interaction patterns, resulting in a decline in face-to-face interpersonal communication, particularly within the home and community environments (Diadi et al., [2023](#); Febriani, [2024](#); Kumar, [2025](#)). Other findings also report that some elementary school students experience difficulties in group settings, such as tending to be passive, merely following the group leader's instructions, and rarely voicing their opinions due to fear of being wrong (Fatmawati et al., [2025](#); Nongtji, [2026](#); Nurliana & Sukmawati, [2023](#)).

Previous research indicates that elementary school students struggle to control themselves during interactions, such as a tendency to dominate the group or crying due to bullying from their group peers (Burger, [2022](#); Pan et al., [2023](#)). Furthermore, classroom learning activities tend to emphasize cognitive aspects. Although group activities are conducted, these discussions are typically left without in-depth guidance and monitoring from the teacher to ensure that all students share their opinions and accept others' views.

Poor social skills have a significant impact on students' academic and psychosocial development. Students with low social skills tend to face difficulties in group work, are prone to conflicts, lack confidence in communication, and struggle to adapt to the school environment (Hosokawa et al., [2024](#); Supriatna et al., [2024](#); Zamiri & Esmaeili, [2024](#)). In the long term, these conditions significantly affect students' ability to build healthy social relationships and hinder the collaborative skills students need in the 21st century (Ali et al., 2024; Kalmar et al., [2022](#)).

Research's State of the Art

Social skills are an individual's ability to build effective interpersonal relationships through communication, cooperation, empathy, self-control, and social adaptation within their environment (Soares et al., [2023](#)). In the context of elementary education, social skills are crucial and part of students' social-emotional development, as they influence students' ability to interact, resolve conflicts, and actively participate in collaboration. According to Lev Vygotsky (Taber, [2025](#)), children's social development occurs through social interaction

with their surroundings, while Albert Bandura (Rumjaun & Narod, [2025](#)) states that social behaviour develops through the process of observation and social experiences gained by an individual. Thus, students' social skills are greatly influenced by the interactive experiences they gain from their family, school, and community environments.

Research on the social skills of elementary school students has advanced significantly. Previous studies have found that social skills are closely linked to academic achievement, collaborative abilities, and character development in students (Haneef, [2024](#); Zamata et al., [2023](#)). Other researchers emphasize that strengthening students' social and emotional skills has an effect on their prosocial behaviour, communication, and social adaptation (Ansari & Rizvi, [2023](#); Jitaru et al., [2023](#); Xue et al., [2025](#)). Meanwhile, research conducted in Indonesia indicates that elementary school students' social skills develop through cooperative learning activities, group discussions, and effective interactions during the learning process (Hayati et al., [2023](#); Supratman et al., [2025](#)). Social skills indicators used in several studies include cooperation, responsibility, assertiveness, and self-control (Salimi & Fauziah, [2023](#)).

Theoretically, social skills encompass a set of adaptive behaviours that facilitate positive interactions between students and those around them in their social environment. Gresham dan Elliott (Fauzi et al., [2024](#)) explain that social skills include cooperation, assertiveness, responsibility, empathy, dan self-control. These skills play a role in fostering healthy social relationships among students, a tendency to comply with social norms, and the ability to resolve conflicts constructively. At the elementary school level, social skills enhance in tandem with the increasing frequency of peer interactions within the school environment. Therefore, understanding social skills is not merely about communication methods but rather behaviours that drive students' success in lifelong learning processes within their daily social lives.

Novelty, Research Gap, & Objective

Research on elementary school students' social skills has been widely conducted with diverse research focuses. Some previous studies focus on the influence of cooperative learning on students' social skills (Laksmiwati et al., [2022](#); Mulyana et al., [2023](#)), while others examine the relationship between social skills on students' academic achievement and emotional development (Khoirunikmah et al., [2022](#)). Additionally, there is research that has developed a research instrument for assessing social skills in elementary school students (Asyari & Astuti, [2022](#)). There are also studies that have developed educational media as a tool for improving students' social skills (Rahayu et al., [2024](#); Susanti et al., [2025](#)). Other studies have identify the importance of social skills in supporting the character and collaborative development of elementary school students (Ningsih et al., [2025](#)).

However, previous research still reveals limitations. Most studies focus on efforts to enhance social skills through educational interventions, while research that thoroughly examines students' social skills in relation to the characteristics of their school's social

environment tends to be limited. In fact, the school's social and geographical environment also play a role in influencing students' patterns of interaction, communication, and social behaviour. Comparative research on the social skills of elementary school students in rural and urban areas remains limited, particularly regarding fifth-grade students. While some studies have compared rural and urban areas—such as a study conducted in Colombia (Rondón et al., 2024). Research on similar topics in Indonesia remains scarce.

Previous research focusing on social skills in two different regions has yielded varied findings, necessitating more in-depth and follow-up analysis. This situation highlights a research gap regarding the analysis of elementary school students' social skills based on the context of the school's location. Thus, this study is crucial to obtain a comprehensive picture of the social skills of fifth-grade elementary school students in rural and urban areas as a basis for developing learning strategies and social guidance tailored to the characteristics of the students' environment.

The importance of this study is also based on the fact that social skills are one of the essential competencies in character building and future social readiness. The findings of this study are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of elementary education research related to social skills and serve as a practical reference for teachers in planning instruction enhances students' social skills. Therefore, this study aims to analyse the social skills of fifth-grade elementary school students in urban and rural areas of Kebumen and Purworejo Regencies.

METHOD

Type and Design

The study employed a mixed-methods design with a sequential explanatory approach. The quantitative approach was conducted first using a survey method, followed by a qualitative approach through interviews to deepen and explain the quantitative findings (Mahyoub, 2026). It was a survey since the study aimed to obtain an objective picture of the social skills of fifth-grade elementary school students. The survey research was descriptive and comparative since it not only describes the students' social skills but also compares social skills among students in rural and urban areas. A qualitative approach in the form of semi-structured interviews was used as a follow-up method to confirm and deeply explore the root causes of the differences in social skills identified in the quantitative data.

Data and Data Sources

This study was conducted in Kebumen and Purworejo, Central Java, Indonesia. Several schools were involved, such as SDN 3 Sidoagung, SDN 5 Sidoagung, SDN 5 Kebumen, SDN Baledono, and SDN Candinasinan. The samples were 107 students and 4 teachers. The selection of the samples was based on cluster sampling since the researcher selected the sample based on specific geographic areas, namely rural and urban areas (Wang, 2024). The

sample schools from rural areas were SDN 3 Sidoagung, SDN 5 Sidoagung, and SDN Candingasinan, while SDN 5 Kebumen and SDN Baledono were selected as sample schools from urban areas. The purposive sampling selected teachers. The qualifications were fifth-grade teachers who had taught for at least two years at their schools, ensuring they possessed a deep understanding of students' characteristics and social skills. There were four teachers as the interviewee, such as two were from rural schools and the other two were from urban schools. Additionally, interviews were conducted on the representatives of students from each region to obtain direct perspectives on their social interaction experiences.

Data Collection Technique

Research data were collected using questionnaires and interview sheets related to social skills, designed based on indicators of cooperation, assertiveness, responsibility, and self-control (Salimi & Fauziah, 2023). The fifth-grade elementary school students in Kebumen and Purworejo worked on the questionnaires. There were 20 statements in the questionnaires. Each social skills indicator was represented by five statements. The response options were based on a 1–4 Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, and 4 = strongly agree). The following table outlines the social skills questionnaire.

Table 1. Social Skills Questionnaire Framework

No.	Aspect	Indicator
1	Cooperation	Able to cooperate with others
		Able to follow others' instructions
		Asks for permission before using items that do not belong to them
		Completes tasks well
2	Assertiveness	Able to make friends easily
		Demonstrates self-confidence when interacting
		Able to initiate conversations
		Willing to help
3	Responsibility	Acts and speaks appropriately
		Follows directions and rules
		Shows concern for friends and the environment
		Reports matters accurately
4	Self-control	Compromising with others' opinions
		Able to control emotions
		Polite in saying no

The interview instrument is designed as a semi-structured interview guide developed based on the similar four social skills indicators. The interview guide contains open-ended questions that explore students' daily social interactions, experiences in collaborating on group tasks, willingness to express opinions in class, adherence to rules, and strategies for managing emotions when facing conflicts. All interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder after obtaining participants' consent, then transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Data Analysis

The data were analysed using two complementary approaches. Quantitative data from the questionnaire were analysed using descriptive and comparative methods to identify the social skills of elementary school students in rural and urban areas (Dayeh & Mohammed, 2023; Farsi et al., 2022). Descriptive analysis described the level of social skills among fifth-grade elementary school students based on mean scores, percentages, and categories. Social skills data were classified into several categories—such as very high, high, moderate, and low—to provide a comprehensive profile of students' social skills. Comparative analysis was conducted to compare the levels of social skills among students in different regions, namely rural and urban areas.

Qualitative data from interview transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis based on the procedures outlined by Miles et al. (2023) which include three stages: data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. Quantitative and qualitative data were integrated through triangulation to strengthen the validity of the findings, that the interview results were used to confirm, deepen, and enrich the interpretation of the questionnaire data.

RESULTS

There were 107 respondents that 58 students were from rural schools and 49 from urban schools. The distribution of social skills categories based on the region is presented in Table 2, while a comparison of the average scores per indicator between the two groups is presented in Table 3.

Table 2. Distribution of Social Skills Categories by Region

Category	Rural (n=58)	Urban (n=49)
	f(%)	f(%)
Low	83,82%	84,58%
Moderate	86%	86,59%
High	87,6%	94,57%

Comparison of Social Skills Between Rural and Urban Students

This difference becomes even clearer when examining the overall distribution of social skills categories and the percentage of students achieving the high category for each

indicator. Nevertheless, analysis by indicator reveals striking and complementary differences between the two regions.

Table 3. Percentage of Students Achieving the High Category by Indicator

Indicator	Rural (n=58)	Urban (n=49)
Cooperation	3,504	3,383
Assertiveness	3,353	3,783
Responsibility	3,428	3,491
Self-control	3,451	3,436

Table 4 shows that although the overall averages for the two regions are nearly equal, there are striking differences in the indicators of cooperation and assertiveness. This suggests that the rural social environment fosters cooperative behaviour and self-control, whereas the urban environment encourages individual assertiveness. These findings are further explored through interviews, which confirmed the roots of these differences in everyday interactions.

The data of questionnaires indicate that rural students, on average, exhibit high levels of cooperation (3.504), whereas urban students score only 3.383. These figures suggest that the rural environment is more conducive to the development of cooperative behaviour. This finding is supported by the interview results.

All interviewed rural students stated that they are accustomed to working together, not only at school but also at home and community. Activities such as doing homework together, taking turns cleaning the classroom, and playing in the rice fields or on the playground naturally foster cooperative habits. He said: "Here, we often do group work at a friend's house. If someone doesn't understand, others will help. So that everyone gets a task; no one just sits around doing nothing." (Interview, May 11, 2026).

Teachers in rural areas emphasize that social cohesion among students is incredibly strong that they rarely work alone and willingly help their peers. She said: "Children in village have close friendships. They are in habit of working together. When I assign group work, the children immediately divide the roles among themselves without needing too much detailed guidance."

The opposite is true in urban areas. Students in city often work on assignments individually even when in a group setting. The collaboration process is more transactional and mechanical. The teacher said: "The group is just for dividing up the questions. Then, we meet again later to combine the answers. So that, we rarely discuss things together. Since we already have a WhatsApp group, everyone just sends their answers and one person compiles them."

The survey revealed the sharpest difference in the assertiveness indicator. Urban students scored higher in assertiveness with an average of 3.783, while rural students scored

only 3.353 (a difference of 0.43). 94.57% of urban students met the high category for assertiveness, compared to only 83.82% in rural areas. This data indicated that the urban environment was more conducive to encourage students to deliver their opinions and initiate interactions.

Interview results confirmed these differences. The school environment in urban areas was far more competitive and accustoms students to speaking in public. Student said: "In class, the teacher often gets us to give presentations in front of the class. At first, I was shy, but eventually I got used to it. A lot of my classmates raised their hands too, so I gained the courage to do it as well". Teachers in urban areas also emphasize the importance of habituation programs that build students' self-confidence. She said: "We have a program where students take turns telling stories in front of the class, which helps them gradually get used to it and become more confident."

In contrast, rural students tend to be passive and need extra encouragement to voice their opinions. He said: "I'm afraid of making a mistake, Ma'am. People might laugh at me. It's better to just stay quiet even if I know the answer". Teachers in rural areas confirm that only a few students are active without being called on. Teacher said: "Students tend to be shy. During discussions, it's always the same persons who speak. Most of them are passive. They have to be prompted constantly. But actually, they have ideas; they just don't dare to share them."

Regarding the responsibility indicator, the survey showed nearly identical averages between rural (3.428) and urban (3.491) students. The percentage of students falling into this category was also relatively balanced, at 85.7% in rural areas and 87.275% in urban areas. This indicates that responsibility is a shared strength among students in both regions.

The interviews did not reveal significant differences in this aspect. Both rural and urban teachers emphasized that students were accustomed to obey school rules and complete assignment. There were no specific quotes indicating a disparity, so the survey findings showing parity on this indicator can be accepted without further in-depth explanation.

The average self-control score for rural students (3.451) was slightly higher than that of urban students (3.436), with a difference of 0.015. 86.28% of rural students met the high category for self-control, compared to 85.9% in urban areas. Although the difference is not as significant as for cooperation and assertiveness, this data still indicates a tendency that rural students are better able to manage their emotions and compromise. Rural students tend to be calmer when facing differences of opinion and prefer to avoid conflict. Rural students said: "If a friend gets angry, I just stay quiet. They'll calm down on their own eventually, rather than fighting."

Teachers in rural areas observe that conflicts rarely occur because the value of harmony is highly cherished. One of the teachers said, "Here, when there's a problem, it's

usually resolved amicably. The children are taught not to resort to physical violence. Thank God, serious fights are rare". Meanwhile, urban students are more expressive, and some admit they find it hard to control their emotions. She said: "Sometimes I get really frustrated when someone disagrees with me. After all, my opinion is the right one. But oh well, once I'm home, I'll have forgotten all about it."

A comparison between rural and urban areas shows that although the average total social skills of both groups are relatively equal, there are complementary differences in their profiles. Rural students excel in cooperation (average 3.504) and self-control (average 3.451; 86.28% in the high category), while urban students excel in assertiveness (average 3.783; 94.57% in the high category). Responsibility indicators are relatively balanced in both regions, with over 85% of students achieving the high category, indicating that this value is well-established across all schools. Interview results confirm that the strengths in cooperation and self-control in rural areas stem from a culture of mutual aid and social harmony, while the high levels of assertiveness in urban areas are driven by a competitive learning environment and public speaking programs. These differences do not indicate an absolute gap but rather form distinct profiles of social skills tailored to the context of each environment.

DISCUSSIONS

The average total social skills scores for the two groups were relatively comparable; however, an analysis by indicator revealed complementary differences that reflect the social context of each region. Rural students excelled in cooperation (mean 3.504) and self-control (mean 3.451; 86.28% in the high category), while urban students significantly excelled in assertiveness (mean 3.783; 94.57% in the high category). Meanwhile, the responsibility indicator showed striking parity between the two groups, with over 85% of students achieving the high category in both regions. These findings cannot be separated from fundamental differences in social structure, culture, and parenting practices between rural and urban communities in Indonesia.

The sociocultural advantage of rural students in cooperation can be explained by the strong value of collectivism, particularly the deeply rooted tradition of gotong royong (mutual cooperation). Humaedi et al. (2025) examined in their study how the values of gotong royong continue to be revitalized through village fund policies, affirming that collective cooperation remains the primary social mechanism in rural communities. Practices such as building village infrastructure and cleaning public spaces together are tangible manifestations of gotong royong that strengthen solidarity and collective responsibility. Local wisdom in educational practice has been shown to concretely shape students' social skills. The values of mutual cooperation, deliberation, and harmony serve as cultural tools that strengthen empathy, social responsibility, and prosocial communication

among students. Teachers play a crucial role in helping students internalize these values through contextual pedagogical strategies.

Furthermore, Aritenang ([2021](#)) emphasizes that villages in Indonesia possess strong social and cultural capital, such as the practice of mutual cooperation and a sense of community, which form the foundation of character education for rural children. Interview findings in this study confirm that rural students are naturally accustomed to working together, not only at school through collaborative homework assignments and rotating classroom cleaning duties, but also during play activities. Teachers also highlight the high level of social cohesion among students, which means they rarely work alone (Schiefer & Van Der Noll, [2021](#)). The rural environment, characterized by strong communal bonds (*Gemeinschaft*) fosters a collective identity that is more prominent than individual identity, so that cooperation becomes a natural response in daily social interactions (Lu & Wang, [2025](#)).

Empirical support from cross-cultural studies reinforces these findings. In their research Stengelin et al. ([2022](#)) find that children growing up in rural communities have different social motivations for collaborating with peers compared to urban children, with culture significantly shaping collaboration preferences from an early age. More specifically, a cross-cultural study of social-emotional networks by Ning et al. ([2025](#)) involving over 13,000 children and adolescents in Suzhou (China) and Houston (United States) shows that empathy plays a more central role in the social skills of children in Suzhou, reflecting collectivist values, while sociability is more central in Houston, reflecting individualistic values. These findings confirm that a collectivist cultural orientation in rural areas provides a solid foundation for the development of cooperative skills.

Regarding the self-control indicator, rural students showed a slightly higher average (3.451) compared to urban students (3.436), with 86.28% of rural students achieving the high category. Interview results confirmed that rural students tended to be calmer when facing differences of opinion and choose conflict-avoidance strategies to maintain social harmony. Teachers' observations in rural areas also indicated a low incidence of serious conflict since the value of harmony was highly cherished within the community. This is consistent with findings that rural communities in Indonesia have better capability to preserve traditional values, including social harmony, compared to urban communities, which are experiencing an erosion of values due to globalization and parents' busy schedules. A psychosocial explanation for this phenomenon is supported by the study by Paricio et al. ([2020](#)) which find that adolescents in rural contexts exhibit higher group identification at school compared to in urban counterparts, and that context (rural vs. urban) acts as a moderator in the relationship between group identification and positive developmental variables, including assertiveness and empathy. These stronger social bonds

in rural areas reinforce students' capacity to manage emotions to maintain the integrity of group relationships (Moloi et al., [2024](#)).

The sharpest difference between the two groups was found in the assertiveness indicator. Urban students achieved an average of 3.783, compared to 3.353 for rural students, with a difference of 0.43. 94.57% of urban students achieved the high category on this indicator, indicating that the urban environment significantly encourages to express opinions, initiate interactions, and present oneself in public. The greater assertiveness of urban students can be explained by the characteristics of the urban environment, which is more competitive and oriented toward individual achievement. Interview results reveal that the school culture in urban areas systematically accustoms students to speak up through presentations and class discussions. Habit-forming programs such as "taking turns telling stories in front of the class," when implemented consistently, build students' confidence in delivering their opinions. In contrast, rural students tend to be passive and rarely actively voice their opinions due to concerns about social judgment from peers, as revealed in this interview excerpt: "I'm afraid of getting it wrong, Ma'am. People might laugh at me. It's better to just stay quiet even if I know the answer."

This finding aligns with Fauzi et al. ([2025](#)) show that urban children's social skills fell into the "fairly good" category with an average score of 3.25 or 81.21% found in 507 elementary school students in the urban area of Bandung, indicating that exposure to a dynamic, competition-oriented environment contributes to the formation of a distinctive social profile. Interestingly, a cross-national study by García-Guillén et al. ([2025](#)) involving 807 physical education students in Spain found that rural students outperformed their urban peers in several psychosocial dimensions. These contrasting findings underscore that the influence of rural-urban contexts on social skills is not universal, but rather highly dependent on the cultural configurations and educational systems of each region.

These differences can be explained by the contrast between collectivist and individualist value orientations. As emphasized in the cross-cultural psychology literature, upbringing in collectivist cultures prioritizes social harmony and group needs, whereas upbringing in individualist cultures prioritizes independence and personal development (Yim, [2022](#)). Urban communities, characterized by looser social ties, encourage the development of personal competencies, including the courage to voice opinions, while rural communities, which emphasize group harmony, often hinder individual expression deemed potentially disruptive to social balance.

Responsibility indicators show striking parity between the two groups. The average responsibility score for rural students (3.428) is nearly identical to that of urban students (3.491), with over 85% of students in both regions falling into the high category. These findings suggest that responsibility is a shared strength that is well-established across all environmental contexts. The conducted interviews did not reveal any substantial differences

in this regard; both rural and urban teachers consistently emphasized that students were accustomed to obey school rules and complete assignment. This consistency is most likely due to the existence of national character education standards that are uniformly applied in Indonesian schools through the Character Education Strengthening Program. This program encompasses core values such as religiosity, nationalism, independence, mutual cooperation, and integrity, which are implemented across all regions regardless of urban-rural context (Mevsimler, [2021](#)). The lack of interview quotes specifically highlighting disparities on this indicator, actually reinforces the interpretation that responsibility is a character trait developed through universal mechanisms within the school environment. The instillation of the value of responsibility through academic routines, such as completing assignments and adhering to rules, occurs equally in both rural and urban contexts, resulting in a uniform profile between rural and urban students (Baehaqi & Murdiono, [2020](#)).

The findings of this study have significant practical implications for the holistic development of students' social skills. For schools in rural areas, intervention programs are needed that systematically encourage students to express their opinions and develop assertive communication skills without compromising the values of mutual cooperation that have long been a key strength. Programs such as "taking turns telling stories in front of the class," which have been successfully implemented in urban areas, can be adapted to rural contexts with an emphasis on creating a psychologically safe environment, so that students do not feel threatened by social judgment. For urban schools, efforts are needed to strengthen cooperation and empathy skills through project-based collaborative learning and community social activities that foster awareness of the significance of social solidarity in an environment that tends toward individualism. García-Mieres et al. ([2025](#)) suggest that digital technology can be utilized as a bridge to introduce and preserve local culture; packaging values such as mutual aid in the form of cultural videos and documentation of traditions has proven to make students more engaged and better to understand the character values. The differences in social skills profiles between these two regions also underscore the significance of educational policies that are responsive to local contexts. A "one-size-fits-all" approach to character education will not be effective since there are significant differences in developmental needs between rural and urban areas.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it concludes that the social skills profiles of the two groups are complementary, with each group demonstrating strengths in different indicators. Rural students excel in cooperation, with an average score of 3.504 compared to 3.383 for urban students, as well as in self-control, with an average of 3.451 (86.28% in the high category) compared to 3.436 (85.9% in the high category), rooted in a culture of mutual cooperation and social harmony. Conversely, urban students significantly outperformed

their rural counterparts in assertiveness, with an average of 3.783 and 94.57% reaching the high category, compared to only 3.353 (83.82% in the high category) for rural students, driven by a competitive learning environment and public speaking programs. Meanwhile, the responsibility indicator showed parity, with an average of 3.428 in rural areas and 3.491 in urban areas, and over 85% of students in both regions achieving the high category, indicating that this value has been uniformly instilled through national character education standards. The implications of these findings underscore the need for context-specific educational strategies: rural schools need to develop programs that systematically cultivate the courage to express opinions in order to bridge the assertiveness gap without sacrificing strengths in cooperation and self-control, while urban schools need to strengthen cooperation and empathy skills through collaborative learning to counteract individualistic tendencies; thus, future character education policies must be responsive to the unique contexts of rural and urban areas to optimize the holistic development of students' social skills.

REFERENCES

- Ansari, A. N., & Rizvi, N. F. (2023). School-based interventions promoting social capabilities among students: A scoping review of literature. *Review of Education*, 11(2), e3404. <https://doi.org/10.1002/rev3.3404>
- Aritenang, A. (2021). The Role of Social Capital on Rural Enterprises Economic Performance: A Case Study in Indonesia Villages. *Sage Open*, 11(3), 21582440211044178. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440211044178>
- Asrifan, A., Ilyas, S. N., Hajerah, H., Saodi, S., Amri, N. A., & Dzulfadhilah, F. (2025). Theoretical Insights Into Childhood Education: A Comprehensive Literature Review. In E. ELHarbaoui & E. Driss (Eds.), *Shaping Childhood Through Educational Experiences* (pp. 29–54). IGI Global. <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-9969-9.ch002>
- Asyari, D. O., & Astuti, B. (2022). Social Skills Scale Development for Elementary School Students. *Journal of Advances in Education and Philosophy*, 6(10), 506–510. <https://doi.org/10.36348/jaep.2022.v06i10.001>
- Attarang, T. (2025). Future Human Skills: A Conceptual Framework for Developing 21st Century Competencies. *Journal of Applied Humanities Studies*, 3(2), 33–57. <https://doi.org/10.65680/jahs.v3i2.7828>
- Baehaqi, M. L., & Murdiono, M. (2020). Strengthening Discipline Character of Students at Muhammadiyah Boarding-School (MBS) Muhiba Yogyakarta. *Dinamika Ilmu*, 63–82. <https://doi.org/10.21093/di.v20i1.1671>
- Burger, C. (2022). School Bullying Is Not a Conflict: The Interplay between Conflict Management Styles, Bullying Victimization and Psychological School Adjustment. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(18), 11809. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph191811809>

- Cavioni, V., Broli, L., & Grazzani, I. (2024). Bridging the SEL CASEL Framework with European educational policies and assessment approaches. *International Journal of Emotional Education*, 16(1), 6–25. <https://doi.org/10.56300/ULTX1565>
- Dayeh, S. B., & Mohammed, B. Y. (2023). A Comparative Analytical Descriptive Study. *Proceedings of the First International Conference on Legal Sciences: Intellectual Property - Contemporary Problems & Legal Solutions (ICLS-22)*, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4492812>
- Diadi, A. A., Nurdin, M. F., & Gunawan, W. (2023). Social Interaction of Students with Gadget: Patterns and Experiences during School Time. *Utamax : Journal of Ultimate Research and Trends in Education*, 5(2). <https://doi.org/10.31849/utamax.v5i2.13763>
- Farsi, Z., Nasiri, M., Sajadi, S. A., & Khavasi, M. (2022). Comparison of Iran's nursing education with developed and developing countries: A review on descriptive-comparative studies. *BMC Nursing*, 21(1), 105. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12912-022-00861-x>
- Fatmawati, K., Muhsinin, U., & Jati, M. A. (2025). Enhancing Questioning and Communication Skills in Elementary Science Learning: Challenges and Pedagogical Insights. *Al-Bidayah : Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar Islam*, 17(1), 187–211. <https://doi.org/10.14421/al-bidayah.v17il.12121>
- Fauzi, I., Ahman, Yusuf, S., & Chano, J. (2024). Social Skills of Elementary School Students in Bandung-West Java. *Jurnal Iqra': Kajian Ilmu Pendidikan*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.25217/ji.v9i1.4600>
- Fauzi, I., Wirachman, R., Arisetyawan, A., Yustiana, Y. R., & Kusumawati, D. (2025). Social skills of elementary school-aged children in urban areas: A sample in Bandung-Indonesia. *Edelweiss Applied Science and Technology*, 9(5), 3230–3239. <https://doi.org/10.55214/25768484.v9i5.7674>
- Febriani, B. (2024). The Impact of Gadget Use Habits When Gathering on Family Social Interactions. *Mahogany Journal De Social*, 1(4), 203–213. <https://doi.org/10.37899/mjds.v1i4.156>
- Fernandes, A., Melo, M., & Machado, C. F. (2022). The Use of Gamification in Training and Socialization Processes in a Multicultural Context. In C. Machado (Ed.), *Technological Challenges* (pp. 93–108). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-98040-5_4
- García-Guillén, M. J., Castillo-Paredes, A., Galán-Arroyo, C., & Rojo-Ramos, J. (2025). Group cohesion, motor self-efficacy, and socio-emotional skills in physical education students in a region of Spain: A descriptive study. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 16, 1631231. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2025.1631231>
- García-Mieres, H., Parra, L., Paz-Vázquez, L. M., Castaño, E., & Pedrosa, I. (2025). Bridging generations: The power of digitization and social innovation in preserving rural

- cultural heritage. *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, 38(3), 1184–1197. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13511610.2024.2424773>
- Haneef, A. (2024). Impact of Social Skills on High School Students' Academic Performance. *Kurdish Studies*, 12(25), 391–396. [https://doi.org/10.59644/oaer.1\(2\).2024.89](https://doi.org/10.59644/oaer.1(2).2024.89)
- Hayati, E. M., Purwanto, A., & Hidayat, D. R. (2023). Analysis of the Cooperative Learning Effectiveness on Students' Critical Thinking Skills in Science Learning for Primary Students. *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 15(1), 1145–1153. <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v15i1.994>
- Hosokawa, R., Matsumoto, Y., Nishida, C., Funato, K., & Mitani, A. (2024). Enhancing social-emotional skills in early childhood: Intervention study on the effectiveness of social and emotional learning. *BMC Psychology*, 12(1), 761. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-024-02280-w>
- Humaedi, M. A., Wibowo, D. P., Hariyanto, W., Susilo, S. R. T., Wijayanti, F., Hakim, F. N., Martino, M., Wijaya, G., Andari, R. N., Yumantoko, Y., & Tessa, A. (2025). Shifting collective values: The role of rural women and gotong royong in village fund policy. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 12(1), 411. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-025-04577-6>
- Ismail, N. M., Putri, Z., Moriyanti, M., & Rahma, E. A. (2024). Examining the Development of Social Skills in First-Grade Elementary School Children. *Al-Adzka: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*, 14(2), 162–175. <https://doi.org/10.18592/aladzkapgmi.v14i2.13868>
- Jaedun, A., Nurtanto, M., Mutohhari, F., Saputro, I. N., & Kholifah, N. (2024). Perceptions of vocational school students and teachers on the development of interpersonal skills towards Industry 5.0. *Cogent Education*, 11(1), 2375184. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2024.2375184>
- Jeng, A. (2024). Individualism and collectivism's impact on students' academic helping interactions: An integrative review. *Social Psychology of Education*, 27(5), 2771–2807. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-024-09920-4>
- Jitaru, O., Bobu, R., & Bostan, C. M. (2023). Social and Emotional Skills in Adapting Students to the Academic Environment. *Revista Romaneasca Pentru Educatie Multidimensionala*, 15(1), 590–605. <https://doi.org/10.18662/rrem/15.1/713>
- Kalmar, E., Aarts, T., Bosman, E., Ford, C., De Kluijver, L., Beets, J., Veldkamp, L., Timmers, P., Besseling, D., Koopman, J., Fan, C., Berrevoets, E., Trotsenburg, M., Maton, L., Van Remundt, J., Sari, E., Omar, L.-W., Beinema, E., Winkel, R., & Van Der Sanden, M. (2022). The COVID-19 paradox of online collaborative education: When you cannot physically meet, you need more social interactions. *Heliyon*, 8(1), e08823. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e08823>
- Khoirunikmah, B., Marmoah, S., & Indriayu, M. (2022). The Effect of Social Skills and Emotional Intelligence on Learning Outcomes of Elementary School Students.

-
- QALAMUNA: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sosial, Dan Agama, 14(2), 877–894.
<https://doi.org/10.37680/qalamuna.v14i2.3779>
- Kumar, A. (2025). Decline of face-to-face communication in Modern society. *Knowledgeable Research*, 4(9), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.57067/>
- Laksmiwati, H., Rusijono, R., Mariono, A., & Arianto, F. (2022). The Influence of Collaborative Learning on Social Skills in Higher Education. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Analysis*, 05(11), 2997–3000.
<https://doi.org/10.47191/ijmra/v5-i11-05>
- Mahyoub, R. A. (2026). Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches. *Dibon Journal of Education*, 2(2), 672–674.
<https://doi.org/10.64169/dje.209>
- Mevsimler, M. (2021). *Translocal Modes of Belonging: Diasporic Identity and Digital Media Amongst Migrant Women in London* [Utrecht University].
<https://doi.org/10.33540/551>
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2023). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook (3rd ed.)*. SAGE Publication.
- Moloi, M. N., Dlomo, S. S., & University of KwaZulu-Natal. (2024). Revitalizing rural areas by boosting educational advancement through social capital integration. *International Journal of Educational Management & Development Studies*, 5(4), 112–135.
<https://doi.org/10.53378/ijemds.353116>
- Mulyana, F., JuniAr, D. T., MaliK, A. A., Mulyana, D., & HaniEf, Y. N. (2023). The Influence of Cooperative Learning Models and Learning Styles on Social Skills in University Student. *International Journal of Disabilities Sports and Health Sciences*, 7(1), 9–19.
<https://doi.org/10.33438/ijds.1368958>
- Ning, B., Du, Y., Wang, L., & Huo, M. (2025). Mapping Social-Emotional Skills: A Cross-Cultural Network Analysis of Children and Adolescents in Suzhou and Houston. *Child Indicators Research*, 18(5), 2183–2202. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12187-025-10273-3>
- Ningsih, T. Z., Aman, A., Nasrulloh, A., Ofianto, O., Erniwati, E., Asri, Z., Judijanto, L., & Firza, F. (2025). Enhancing communication and collaboration skills through discovery, cooperative and problem-based learning models in Social Studies education. *Cogent Education*, 12(1), 2500110. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2025.2500110>
- Nongtji, M. (2026). Implementation of Student Centered Learning in History Class: A Qualitative Study at SMA Lab School Untad Palu. *Journal of Educational Sciences*, 10(4), 319–335. <https://doi.org/10.31258/jes.10.4.p.319-335>
- Nurliana, N., & Sukmawati, W. (2023). Stacking Analysis on the Application of the RADEC Model to the Creativity of Fifth Grade Elementary School Students on Water Cycle

-
- Material. *Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan IPA*, 9(8), 5964–5970. <https://doi.org/10.29303/jppipa.v9i8.3951>
- Pan, B., Garandeau, C. F., Li, T., Ji, L., Salmivalli, C., & Zhang, W. (2023). The dynamic associations between social dominance goals and bullying from middle to late childhood: The moderating role of classroom bystander behaviors. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 115(2), 349–362. <https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000776>
- Paricio, D., Herrera, M., Rodrigo, M. F., & Viguer, P. (2020). Association Between Group Identification at School and Positive Youth Development: Moderating Role of Rural and Urban Contexts. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, 1971. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01971>
- Priyadarshini, A., Sanyal, D., & Sindhu Vasanth, B. (2025). Integration of Social and Psychological Perspectives in Education: In E. ELHarbaoui & E. Driss (Eds.), *Shaping Childhood Through Educational Experiences* (pp. 55–104). IGI Global. <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-9969-9.ch003>
- Rahayu, N. N. S., Astawan, I. G., & Ambara, D. P. (2024). 3D Animation Video Learning Media Contains Character Education to Improve Social Skills. *Journal of Education Technology*, 8(2), 362–370. <https://doi.org/10.23887/jet.v8i2.75063>
- Rondón, T. M. M., Saavedra Barrera, G., & Prada, N. J. (2024). Análisis comparativo de las habilidades sociales en un contexto rural y urbano de Colombia. *Pensamiento Americano*, 17(34). <https://doi.org/10.21803/penamer.17.34.730>
- Rumjaun, A., & Narod, F. (2025). Social Learning Theory—Albert Bandura. In B. Akpan & T. J. Kennedy (Eds.), *Science Education in Theory and Practice* (pp. 65–82). Springer Nature Switzerland. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-81351-1_5
- Salimi, M., & Fauziah, M. (2023). Social skills in early childhood and primary schools: A systematic review. *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun*, 11(2), 441–474. <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v11i2.930>
- Schiefer, D., & Van Der Noll, J. (2021). The Essentials of Social Cohesion: A Literature Review. *Social Indicators Research*, 132(2), 579–603. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-016-1314-5>
- Seprie, Wuryandani, W., & Muthmainah. (2025). Transforming primary education: Balancing social skills and academic achievement through global inquiry-based learning models. *Frontiers in Education*, 10, 1512274. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2025.1512274>
- Shek, D. T. L., Chau, G. C. C., & Lee, B. M. (2025). Development of 21st-Century Skills: A Comprehensive Analysis Based on the OECD Learning Compass 2030. In D. T. L. Shek, *Promoting Holistic Development in University Students* (Vol. 17, pp. 89–118). Springer Nature Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-96-0251-3_4
-

-
- Shugufta Naseem, Dr. Naila Naseer, & Mujeebur Rahim. (2024). Testing the CASEL Model: Exploring Relationship between Social Emotional Competencies and Academic Performance of Distance Learners. *The Critical Review of Social Sciences Studies*, 2(2), 370–383. <https://doi.org/10.59075/3am7tr30>
- Soares, A. B., Angeli Dos Santos, A. A., Brito, A. D., De Almeida Maia, F., Ferraresi Rodrigues Queluz, F. N., Lima Rocha, H., Alves Mendes, V. S., & De Almeida Santos, Z. (2023). Social Skills: How to Improve Interpersonal Relationships During the Pandemic? In N. Portillo, M. L. Morgan, & M. Gallegos (Eds.), *Psychology and Covid-19 in the Americas* (pp. 203–210). Springer Nature Switzerland. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-38627-5_23
- Stengelin, R., Hepach, R., & Haun, D. B. M. (2022). Cultural variation in young children's social motivation for peer collaboration and its relation to the ontogeny of Theory of Mind. *PLOS ONE*, 15(11), e0242071. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0242071>
- Supratman, S., Mariani Ramlan, A., Ode Sirad, L., & Bonyah, E. (2025). Optimizing social skills of elementary school students through cooperative and collaborative learning approaches. *EduStream: Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar*, 9(2), 202–213. <https://doi.org/10.26740/eds.v9n2.p202-213>
- Supriatna, E., Hanurawan, F., Eva, N., Rahmawati, H., & Yusuf, H. (2024). Analyzing Factors Affecting Social Skills Development Among Students in Indonesian Schools. *Islamic Guidance and Counseling Journal*, 7(1). <https://doi.org/10.25217/0020247447100>
- Susanti, R. A., Wahyuningtyas, D. P., & Mufidah, N. (2025). Development of Traditional Game Media for Social Skills of Early Childhood with Special Needs. *Jurnal Humanitas: Katalisator Perubahan Dan Inovator Pendidikan*, 11(3), 654–671. <https://doi.org/10.29408/jhm.v11i3.32144>
- Taber, K. S. (2025). Mediated Learning Leading Development—The Social Development Theory of Lev Vygotsky. In B. Akpan & T. J. Kennedy (Eds.), *Science Education in Theory and Practice* (pp. 275–292). Springer Nature Switzerland. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-81351-1_16
- Wang, X. (2024). Use of proper sampling techniques to research studies. *Applied and Computational Engineering*, 57(1), 141–145. <https://doi.org/10.54254/2755-2721/57/20241324>
- Xue, Q., Wang, T., Nie, Y., Wang, X., Yao, X., Zhang, J., Li, Y., Sun, H., Liu, C., & Gao, J. (2025). The mediating effect of social adaptation and the moderating effect of prosocial behavior on the relationship between physical activity and psychological capital. *Scientific Reports*, 15(1), 30811. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-025-16269-x>
- Yim, E. P.-Y. (2022). Effects of Asian cultural values on parenting style and young children's perceived competence: A cross-sectional study. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 905093. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.905093>

- Zamata, P. M. C., Saavedra, L. R., & López, R. M. G. (2023). Educational Program to Strengthen School Coexistence and Social Skills in Student. *International Journal of Instruction*, 16(3), 77–94. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2023.1635a>
- Zamiri, M., & Esmaeili, A. (2024). Strategies, Methods, and Supports for Developing Skills within Learning Communities: A Systematic Review of the Literature. *Administrative Sciences*, 14(9), 231. <https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci14090231>
- Zhang, X. (2023). The Impact of Online Socialization on Adolescent Mental Health: The Mediating Role of Friendship Quality and Family Relationships. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, 2023, 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2023/7007025>

Conflict of Interest Statement: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be constructed as a potential conflict of interest.