

# Integrative Holistic Education: A Framework for Enhancing Early Childhood Numeracy and Literacy Development

Nurul Hasanah<sup>1</sup>, Imron Arifin<sup>2</sup>, Sa'dun Akbar<sup>3</sup>

Universitas Negeri Malang, East Java, Indonesia

Email: [nurul.hasanah.2401548@students.um.ac.id](mailto:nurul.hasanah.2401548@students.um.ac.id)<sup>1</sup>, [imron.arifin.fip@um.ac.id](mailto:imron.arifin.fip@um.ac.id)<sup>2</sup>,  
[sa'dun.akbar.fip@um.ac.id](mailto:sa'dun.akbar.fip@um.ac.id)<sup>3</sup>

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## Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the holistic integrative education implemented by schools to enhance early childhood numeracy and literacy. It employs a qualitative approach, seeking to reveal the meaning of improving numeracy and literacy in children. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, and analyzed using data display, data reduction, and drawing conclusions. The results indicate that holistic integrative education enhances numeracy and literacy development in children through the integration of numeracy and literacy in learning, development of social and emotional skills, parental and community involvement, and supportive learning environments. This study implies that implementing holistic integrative education that integrates numeracy, literacy, social and emotional skills, and involves parents and communities, can create a learning environment that supports overall child development. This strengthens the importance of a holistic approach in early childhood education.

**Keywords:** *Holistic Integrative Education, Numeracy Learning, Children's Literacy*

## Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis tentang pendidikan holistik integratif yang diterapkan oleh sekolah dalam meningkatkan perkembangan numerasi dan literasi pada anak usia dini. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif jenis studi kasus, di mana peneliti berusaha untuk mengungkap makna tentang peningkatan perkembangan numerasi dan literasi anak. Teknik pengumpulan datanya dilakukan melalui observasi, wawancara dan dokumentasi. Analisis data dilakukan melalui display data, reduksi data dan penarikan kesimpulan penelitian. Hasil penelitian bahwa pendidikan holistik integratif yang diterapkan oleh sekolah dalam meningkatkan perkembangan numerasi dan literasi anak dilakukan melalui; pengintegrasian numerasi dan literasi dalam pembelajaran, pengembangan keterampilan sosial dan emosional, keterlibatan orang tua dan komunitas, lingkungan pembelajaran yang mendukung. Penelitian ini memberikan implikasi bahwa penerapan pendidikan holistik integratif yang mengintegrasikan numerasi, literasi, keterampilan sosial, dan emosional, serta melibatkan orang tua dan komunitas, dapat menciptakan lingkungan pembelajaran yang mendukung perkembangan anak secara menyeluruh. Hal ini memperkuat pentingnya pendekatan holistik dalam pendidikan anak usia dini.

**Kata Kunci:** *Pendidikan Holistik Integratif, Pembelajaran Numerasi, Literasi Anak*

**Correspondent Author:** [nurul.hasanah.2401548@students.um.ac.id](mailto:nurul.hasanah.2401548@students.um.ac.id) (Nurul Hasanah)

**Author:**

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## Introduction

Early childhood education (ECE) is crucial for establishing children's literacy and numeracy skills, which are vital for academic success and daily life (Rozi et al., 2023; Manshur et al., 2023). However, research shows a significant gap between theory and practice in early education, especially in numeracy and literacy development. Despite its recognized importance, many children struggle with basic reading and math skills during their early years. This issue is widespread in regions such as Indonesia, where insufficient attention to foundational skills contributes to long-term educational setbacks (Muhith et al., 2023; Sabran et al., 2023). The main question is: Why do literacy and numeracy remain challenging despite their acknowledged importance? A key reason is the lack of an integrative approach that combines cognitive, emotional, and social aspects in early childhood education. This research explores how a holistic educational model can bridge this gap and improve children's literacy and numeracy skills, offering a more comprehensive solution to early education challenges.

In real-world educational settings, inadequate literacy and numeracy skills among young children persists despite various efforts to improve education quality (Baharun, 2024; Khomairotusshiyamah, 2025; Najiburrahman et al., 2025). Children often struggle with basic concepts, such as letter recognition and number understanding. These difficulties are compounded by limited parental and community involvement, which further hinders children's development. Although early education programs exist, they often emphasize cognitive aspects while neglecting emotional, social, and physical development, all of which are crucial in early childhood learning. This discrepancy highlights the need for a more integrative approach addressing all areas of child development. By examining the current situation at TK Negeri Pembina Balen, this study aims to understand how a holistic integrative education approach could improve children's literacy and numeracy skills, contributing to improved future educational outcomes.

Previous studies have emphasized the importance of early childhood literacy and numeracy for long-term academic success (Abella et al., 2024; Laxman, 2024; Tañiza et al., 2024). These studies often address one skill at a time, treating literacy and numeracy as separate components of child development. Research on integrating these skills with emotional, social, and physical development, however, remains limited. Some studies also emphasize the role of character-building and social skills in early education (Ginting, 2024; Mustoip et al., 2023; Sofyan & Saputra, 2022). However, there is a limited exploration of how these aspects support literacy and numeracy development. In the Indonesian context, few studies address the application of a holistic, integrative approach in early childhood education. This gap presents an opportunity for further research, which this study aims to address. By examining how such an approach can enhance literacy and numeracy, this research study makes a unique contribution to the field, particularly in rural Indonesian education settings.

The novelty of this study lies in its approach to integrating literacy and numeracy development with the emotional, social, and physical aspects of early childhood development. While much existing research treats literacy and numeracy separately, this study adopts a comprehensive approach considering the entire child development spectrum. The primary research question is: How can a holistic,

integrative education approach help young children master basic numeracy and literacy skills? This question is crucial because it addresses the current gap in research on integrating cognitive, emotional, and social learning in early childhood education. By answering it, this study aims to propose a model applicable in real educational settings, particularly in rural areas like Bojonegoro, to improve children's overall development and foundational literacy and numeracy skills.

This study argues that an integrative holistic education approach, which addresses cognitive, emotional, social, and physical aspects of child development, can significantly improve early childhood literacy and numeracy skills. Current methods, which often separate cognitive learning from emotional and social development, are insufficient for preparing children for long-term academic success. This study posits that a holistic model not only strengthens basic numeracy and literacy but also fosters a well-rounded set of skills that support overall well-being and readiness for future challenges. Applying this approach in educational institutions can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of holistic learning in improving early childhood education outcomes, thereby addressing a critical gap in theory and practice.

## Method

This study employs a qualitative research design using a case study approach (Mishra & Dey, 2022; Pyo et al., 2023). This design was selected to gain an in-depth understanding of the application of integrative holistic education in enhancing early childhood numeracy and literacy at TK Negeri Pembina Balen, Bojonegoro. Case studies enable exploration of how a holistic approach is applied and how it impacts children's literacy and numeracy development. This study investigates existing educational practices, the challenges encountered, and the successes achieved. By focusing on a single educational context, this approach provides a richer, more contextual understanding of the phenomenon (Adams et al., 2022; Schoepf & Klimow, 2022).

This research was conducted at TK Negeri Pembina Balen, Bojonegoro. The school was selected for several considerations. First, it is a well-established early childhood education institution in the area. Second, the school implements various approaches to improve education quality, including in teaching literacy and numeracy. Third, initial observations indicated that despite these efforts, challenges in developing children's literacy and numeracy remain. Therefore, this location is highly relevant for exploring the implementation of holistic integrative education. This study is expected to provide deeper insight into applying a holistic approach in a local context and its positive impact on kindergarten children.

Data for this study were collected through in-depth interviews and participant observation. Interviews were conducted with teachers, principals, and several parents of students to obtain information on the implementation of holistic integrative education at TK Negeri Pembina Balen. Participant observation involved researchers directly involved in classroom learning activities to understand how literacy and numeracy are taught in a holistic context. Data were collected in three months, where researchers interacted directly with participants and observed the learning process.

Data were analyzed using a qualitative model comprising several stages. First, Data Display: condensed data were presented in narrative and table form to facilitate understanding and further analysis, highlighting the relationship between aspects of

holistic education and their impact on child development. Second, Data Reduction: data from interviews and observations were filtered and summarized to highlight the main themes related to integrative holistic education and the development of literacy and numeracy. Third, Data Verification: researchers verified the findings through data triangulation, comparing interview results, observations, and relevant literature (Asipi et al., 2022; Salmona & Kaczynski, 2024). This process ensures the validity, accuracy, and consistency of the data with the research objectives.

## Results And Discussion

### Result

#### Integrating Numeracy and Literacy in Learning

Integrating numeracy and literacy at TK Negeri Pembina Balen, Bojonegoro involves combining basic mathematical concepts with reading and writing skills in early childhood learning activities. Numeracy includes children's ability to recognize numbers, count, and understand fundamental mathematical concepts, while literacy encompasses reading, writing, and effective communication. These skills are integrated through a fun and contextual approach that connects learning to children's daily life, fostering the development of critical and creative thinking.

**Table 1**

*Integration of Numeracy and Literacy in Learning*

Interview Excerpts	Indicators	Informant
"We use songs and games involving numbers and words to teach children."	Integrated Learning Approach	Teacher
"Children learn about numbers through stories and pictures they create with their friends."	Contextual and Collaborative Learning	Teacher
"We encourage children to write and read through everyday activities such as shopping and visiting."	Real-Life and Experiential Learning	Principal

*Note.* The integration of numeracy and literacy is achieved through contextual, collaborative, and enjoyable learning approaches, such as using songs, stories, and real-life activities

Table 1 shows that numeracy and literacy at TK Negeri Pembina Balen are integrated through a fun and contextual approach. Interviews with Maya Anjarwati indicate that this approach is highly effective for teaching numbers and words, using songs and games as engaging media. This finding aligns with previous research showing that collaborative learning and the use of pictures and stories strengthen children's understanding of numeracy and literacy. Sriani Sulistyawati noted that peer collaboration helps children learn numbers and letters while developing their social skills. In addition, principal Sumianto emphasized connecting learning to children's daily lives, such as through shopping and visiting activities, to provide a real-world context for literacy and numeracy. Observations confirmed that these methods are highly effective in integrating numeracy and literacy. Activities such as creating story books and educational games involving counting or letters recognition were highly engaging for children. Researchers observed that children showed high curiosity and active involvement in all activities involving both aspects. These observations indicate



that a learning approach connecting theory with real experience can improve children's understanding and interest in numeracy and literacy.

The data indicate that integrating numeracy and literacy at school is highly effective. Children not only learn numbers and letters but also understand how these skills apply in daily life. Through a fun and relevant approach, children develop critical thinking and creativity, which support their future academic development.

The results indicate that integrating numeracy and literacy impacts children's understanding. This combined learning process not only improves children's academic abilities but also motivates greater active participation in learning activities. Therefore, this approach is highly recommended for implementation in other kindergartens as a holistic and effective learning model.

### **Development of Social and Emotional Skills**

The development of social and emotional skills at TK Negeri Pembina Balen focuses on helping children interact with peers, recognize and manage emotions, and build effective communication skills. These abilities are crucial for early childhood development, preparing children to face future social challenges. In practice, social and emotional skills are fostered through activities involving cooperation, problem solving, and emotional management in real social context, such as playing together, sharing, and group discussions.

Sri Wahyuni, a teacher, explained that group games requiring collaboration are highly effective in developing children's social skills. This activity encourages children to learn to speak, listen, and cooperate with peers. Researchers note that such games teach not only cooperation but also the importance of communication in groups. Furthermore, Maya Anjarwati emphasized teaching children to share and resolve conflicts. Through these activities, children learn to recognize and manage emotions and find solutions in situations that may trigger frustration or anger.

During observation, researchers noted that children at TK Negeri Pembina Balen were highly active in group activities, eagerly following the teacher's instructions to collaborate and share tasks. When disagreements arose, the teacher patiently guided them to resolve issues through discussion. Despite being in the developmental stage, the children managed their emotions with support and became more open in their interactions. These observations highlight the positive impact of activities that enhance social and emotional skills.

The data indicate that the development of children's social and emotional skills at TK Negeri Pembina Balen has been implemented effectively. Activities such as group games, sharing, and conflict resolution through discussion allow children to cooperate, manage emotions, and communicate more effectively. Teachers play an important role in guiding children to overcome social and emotional challenges, and helping them develop skills that are valuable for their future.

The development of social and emotional skills in schools is effectively achieved through a structured and comprehensive approach. Children learn not only through direct instruction but also through real-life experiences, such as collaborating, sharing, and resolving conflicts. These findings indicate that active involvement in social activities, both inside and outside the classroom, is essential for social and emotional development. Thus, this approach can serve as a model for early childhood education in other settings.

## Parent and Community Involvement

Parental and community involvement at TK Negeri Pembina Balen refers to the active participation of parents and community members in supporting children's learning activities. This includes collaboration among parents, teachers, and the community to create a learning environment that promotes children's holistic development. This involvement may take the form of participation in school activities, regular communication between parents and teachers, and community support through resources or additional activities that enrich children's **learning**.

One parent stated, "We are always invited to participate in activities such as book parties and other outdoor activities." Such participation demonstrates a parent's active involvement in supporting children's learning. The parent explained that activities such as book parties not only introduce children to literacy but also strengthen the relationship between school and parents. Participation in these activities allows parents to engage directly in their children's learning and contribute to a supportive learning **environment**.

An administrator from the parent association stated, "The community helps by donating learning tools and volunteering at school events," highlighting their significant role in supporting children's education. These contributions enrich learning experiences beyond what the school provides, while volunteers foster a warm, engaging atmosphere that enhances children's social interactions. Parents at TK Negeri Pembina Balen actively participate in activities such as book parties and outdoor events, directly supporting children's literacy development. Community support through donations and volunteering further enriches education by providing valuable resources and **experiences**.

**Figure 1**

*Parent and Community Involvement*



*Note.* The flow of active parent and community involvement in supporting children's learning through direct participation and resource contributions.

The researcher noted that this pattern demonstrates the importance of close cooperation among parents, communities, and schools in creating deeper and more comprehensive learning experiences for children. Parental involvement and community support strengthen the educational process, enriching learning through activities that connect theory with everyday practice.

The data indicate that parental and community involvement in learning has a significant positive impact. Such participation not only improves the quality of school activities but also creates a more dynamic learning environment for children. Collaboration among parents, teachers, and the community enables more creative and engaging learning, which supports the development of children's literacy and numeracy.

The results indicate that parental and the community involvement at TK Negeri Pembina Balen is very integral to the success of the learning process. Active parental participation and community support through resources and manpower strengthen

the school's education system. These findings highlight the importance of collaboration among home, school, and community in supporting the children's holistic **development**.

### Supportive Learning Environment

A supportive learning environment at TK Negeri Pembina Balen refers to the physical and social conditions that promote and accelerate children's learning development. This includes factors such as a comfortable classroom layout, the availability of appropriate learning aids, and a harmonious relationship among teachers, students, and parents. It also includes positive student interactions that facilitate children's cognitive, social, and emotional development. A supportive environment emphasizes not only the physical aspect but also the social aspect, creating a safe and pleasant setting that stimulates active children **participation**.

**Table 1**

*Supportive learning environment at Pembina Balen State Kindergarten*

Interview Excerpts	Interview Excerpts	Informant
"We design the classroom to make children feel comfortable, with lots of interesting and interactive teaching materials."	"We design the classroom to make children feel comfortable, with lots of interesting and interactive teaching materials."	Teacher
"We often hold group activities outside the classroom to create a more lively learning atmosphere."	Kegiatan Pembelajaran yang Menyenangkan dan Kolaboratif	Teacher
"We also include natural elements in the classroom, such as plants and open areas, to make children feel closer to the environment."	Lingkungan Fisik yang Mendukung Keseimbangan Alam dan Belajar	Teacher
"It is important for us to maintain a good relationship with parents, because it supports a positive atmosphere in the classroom."	Kerjasama dengan Orang Tua dan Lingkungan Sekitar	Principal

*Note.* A supportive learning environment is created at Pembina Balen State Kindergarten through comfortable classroom design, collaborative activities, natural elements, and cooperation with parents.

Table 2 highlights the importance of creating a supportive learning environment at TK Negeri Pembina Balen, employing various approaches to enhance children's comfort and involvement. A key aspect is the design of a comfortable and attractive classroom, where interactive teaching materials motivate children to participate actively in learning. This creates a pleasant atmosphere and supports their cognitive development.

Collaborative activities outside the classroom are an important element in creating a more dynamic learning atmosphere. These group activities encourage children to cooperate, share, and develop social skills in a more open setting beyond the classroom. An environment that integrates natural elements, such as plants and open spaces, positively influences children's emotional balance and fosters a connection with nature. Equally important, effective collaboration between the school and parents helps build a supportive classroom atmosphere. This synergy creates a positive learning environment that encourages children's overall development, both

socially, emotionally, and cognitively.

During field observations, researchers noted that the classroom was carefully designed for children's comfort. In addition to teaching materials such as story books, educational toys, and interesting props, the classroom included areas for movement and social interaction. Group activities outside the classroom were also enjoyable, providing opportunities for collaboration and experience sharing. These activities develop social skills while allowing children to learn in a more natural setting and reducing the pressure of classroom learning.

The data indicate that a supportive learning environment at TK Negeri Pembina Balen is created through a combination of comfortable physical classroom conditions and learning activities that involve children actively and collaboratively. With classrooms equipped with interesting teaching materials and group activities outside the classroom, children learn in an environment that stimulates their creativity while strengthening social and cooperation skills.

The results indicate that a supportive learning environment is created by combining comfortable and attractive physical conditions with activities that promote social interaction and collaboration among children. This shows that an effective environment depends not only on classroom design but also structuring activities are structured to support the development of social and emotional skills. Collaborative and enjoyable outdoor activities are essential for fostering an active and engaging learning environment.

## Discussion

This study found that integrating numeracy and literacy at TK Negeri Pembina Balen significantly supports the development of children's cognitive and social abilities. This finding aligns with the emphasis that numeracy and literacy skills must be developed simultaneously in early education to create a strong foundation for children's academic development (Laxman, 2024; Shvartsman & Shaul, 2023; Sumarno et al., 2022). In practice, activities that combine number and word learning with enjoyable activities effectively capture children's attention and motivate active participation. However, challenges remain in balancing the two areas, as both require in-depth exploration within limited instructional time.

The findings indicate that activities emphasizing collaboration and cooperation, such as group games and joint conflict resolution, help children develop important social and emotional skills (Damanik, 2023; Hidayah & Khadijah, 2023; Qondias et al., 2024). This aligns with research showing that social and emotional skills emerge through positive social interactions, where children learn to manage emotions and communicate with peers (Garaigordobil et al., 2022; Syakhrani & Aslan, 2024; Váradi, 2022). This study highlights the importance of teachers in guiding children to manage emotions and collaborate effectively. However, managing conflicts that arise outside structured activities remains a challenge in practical application.

The findings on parental and community involvement align with the theory emphasizing the importance of collaboration between schools and their surrounding environment in supporting children's learning. Jeynes (2024) and Sengonul (2022) note that parental involvement significantly impacts children's academic success. In this study, parents directly involved in school activities, such as book parties and group activities, helped create a more conducive learning environment and strengthened children's emotional connection to education. Similarly, community support through



teaching aids or volunteering enriched children's learning experiences (Afreen & Norton, 2024; McWayne et al., 2022). These findings highlight the practical importance of increasing collaboration among parents, teachers, and communities to foster inclusive and holistic learning environments.

A supportive learning environment, both physical and social, is a key finding in this study. Research shows that classrooms designed for comfort, along with activities involving natural elements such as plants and open areas, positively influence children's well-being and concentration. This aligns with the learning environment theory, which explains that a supportive physical setting increases learning by providing a safe, comfortable, and creative space (Charteris et al., 2024; Hardie et al., 2022). In practice, integrating natural elements into classroom design can create a healthier and more enjoyable environment, directly enhancing children's engagement in learning.

Overall, the findings of this study provide significant theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, this study strengthens the importance of integrating various aspects of the learning environment, such as numeracy, literacy, social skills, and parental and community involvement, to support holistic early childhood development. Practically, it highlights the need to implement a holistic approach in early childhood education, involving various environmental elements to foster cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. Therefore, educators should consider these factors when designing and implementing effective school curricula (Wahid et al., 2024).

## Conclusion

This study highlights the importance of integrating numeracy and literacy, fostering social and emotional skills, promoting parental and community involvement, and creating a supportive learning environment. The key takeaway is that a holistic approach involving various aspects of early childhood education is essential for supporting children's overall development. Implementing activities that combine academic learning with social and emotional development, alongside collaboration among schools, parents, and communities, fosters a supportive environment for children to develop their potential. This study also highlights the need to create an enjoyable and conducive learning atmosphere, enabling children to learn with motivation and stronger connection to the educational process.

The strength of this study lies in its contribution to early childhood education, especially in integrating various elements that support children's overall development. It reinforces the importance of parental and community involvement and a supportive physical environment as key components of educational success. However, this study is limited by its focus on a single school, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Future research should involve a broader range of schools and areas and explore additional factors that influence the successful integration of numeracy, literacy and social skills in early childhood.

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