



Time-Out Method for Developing Social Sensitivity in Children Aged 5–6 Years

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Abstract

This study examines how the time-out method is implemented to support the development of social sensitivity among children aged 5–6 years at TK Islam Nurul Wathon. Using a qualitative descriptive case study design, data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation involving one child as the main subject and one classroom teacher as the primary informant, selected through purposive sampling. The findings suggest a gradual improvement in the child's sharing behaviour and turn-taking skills during the implementation of the time-out method. Supporting factors included teacher consistency and peer cooperation, while inhibiting factors included inconsistent parenting patterns and classroom spatial limitations. The study implies that time-out, when implemented as a reflective and educative strategy, can contribute to fostering prosocial behaviour in the observed early childhood classroom context. Further research is recommended to replicate this study in different educational contexts with larger and more diverse participants.

Keywords: early childhood education, prosocial behaviour, sharing behaviour, social sensitivity, time-out method

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana metode time-out diterapkan untuk mendukung pengembangan kepekaan sosial pada anak usia 5–6 tahun di TK Islam Nurul Wathon. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain studi kasus deskriptif kualitatif. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipan, wawancara semi-terstruktur, dan dokumentasi, dengan melibatkan satu anak sebagai subjek utama dan satu guru kelas sebagai informan utama, yang dipilih melalui teknik purposive sampling. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya perkembangan bertahap dalam perilaku berbagi dan kemampuan menunggu giliran anak selama penerapan metode time-out. Faktor pendukung penerapan metode ini meliputi konsistensi guru dan kerja sama teman sebaya, sedangkan faktor penghambatnya meliputi ketidakkonsistenan pola pengasuhan di rumah dan keterbatasan ruang kelas. Penelitian ini mengimplikasikan bahwa time-out, apabila diterapkan sebagai strategi reflektif dan edukatif, dapat berkontribusi dalam menumbuhkan perilaku prososial dalam konteks kelas anak usia dini yang diamati. Penelitian selanjutnya disarankan untuk mereplikasi studi ini dalam konteks pendidikan yang berbeda dengan jumlah dan karakteristik partisipan yang lebih beragam.

Kata kunci: pendidikan anak usia dini, perilaku prososial, perilaku berbagi, kepekaan sosial, metode *time-out*

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A. Introduction

Early childhood education plays a pivotal role in establishing the foundation for cognitive, linguistic, physical, and social and emotional development. One of the most fundamental and crucial social skills to develop from an early stage is social sensitivity. This ability is academically defined as a child's proficiency in perceiving, understanding, and responding appropriately to social situations and the feelings of others (Hidayah & Khadijah, 2023).

On a national scale and within the general scope of education, the lack of social sensitivity often becomes a primary obstacle in the interaction process. This sensitivity is generally reflected through daily behaviours such as the ability to share, waiting for one's turn, and respecting the rights of others (Romadhoni & Nugroho, 2024). Children who have not yet attained an adequate level of social sensitivity have the potential to trigger conflicts, experience social rejection from peers, and disrupt a conducive learning atmosphere in the classroom (Narti et al., 2025).

This phenomenon of social behaviour issues was empirically observed in class B2 of TK Islam Nurul Wathon, which consists of 17 students aged 5 to 6 years. Although the majority of the children are capable of sharing toys and queuing orderly, there is one child who consistently demonstrates a reluctance to share. This behaviour of unilaterally retaining items frequently leads to physical conflicts, such as pinching and pushing, which ultimately affects the social equilibrium of the class and causes other children to avoid interaction (Defaza & Vitaloka, 2025).

In response to these prominent behavioural issues, the class teacher implemented a strategic intervention to ensure these social interaction barriers do not persist and hinder the development of the class. The strategy employed by the educator is the utilization of the time-out method as a form of social behaviour cultivation. This process is implemented by asking the child to sit briefly on a small chair in a reflective area of the class whenever the child refuses to share or triggers a conflict (Multazami et al., 2025). The time-out method in early childhood education is effective in instilling discipline in children aged 4-6 years by understanding problematic behaviour, applying clear procedures, and providing opportunities for the child to calm down. Furthermore, this method has successfully modified manipulative tantrum behaviour in children aged 4-5 years through consistent application, which reduces the frequency of tantrums and enhances emotional regulation (Asqia et al., 2023).

This problem-solving approach through the time-out method is strongly supported by experts in child educational psychology. Hamang et al. (2020) emphasize that the application of time-out, when performed calmly, consistently, and accompanied by a rational explanation, can help children develop self-regulation skills. This approach is not essentially designed as an instrument for punishment; rather, it provides a reflective opportunity for the child to soothe their emotions and realize the social consequences of their behaviour toward others (Khovivah et al., 2024).

Previous studies have primarily examined the time-out method as a strategy to reduce problematic behaviours, such as tantrums, discipline problems, aggression, and bullying (Harahap & Taufan, 2023; Sutaryat & Nurhasanah, 2023; Rohma et al., 2023; Fitri & Meiyani, 2020; Asep, 2023). However, these studies mostly position time-out as a corrective strategy rather than a reflective pedagogical process. There remains a research gap in understanding how time-out can be implemented as a formative learning strategy to develop children's social sensitivity, particularly in fostering sharing behaviour as an indicator of early prosocial awareness.

This research gap is highly relevant to investigate as it possesses a strong theoretical foundation based on the literature of children's prosocial development. Social sensitivity

does not emerge by chance as an innate trait; rather, it is the result of a social learning process facilitated by a structured environment. Zinsser et al. (2022) state that emotional support from educators is fundamental in helping children learn to respect the rights of others. Furthermore, sharing behaviour is a crucial indicator that reflects a child's empathetic awareness of the existence of others around them (Hay & Cook, 2007; Ziv & Frye, 2004).

Other theoretical support regarding the uniqueness of this research stems from a paradigm shift concerning the function of time-out itself. Analysis from Woodfield et al. (2021) indicates that time-out holds great potential as a formative strategy in building positive social behaviours, such as empathy and social awareness. Through temporary withdrawal from activities, this behaviour modification method guides children to learn to associate their egocentric behaviour with the social consequences they will receive (Morawska & Sanders, 2011).

Based on the identification of the problem and the research gap, the primary focus of this study is to analyse the implementation of the time-out method in the formation of social sensitivity in children aged 5 to 6 years. This research is specifically designed to explore the processes, experiences, and dynamics of social meaning that occur naturally at TK Islam Nurul Wathon.

More specifically, this study aims to describe the actual steps taken by teachers in applying the time-out process to children who demonstrate a lack of social sensitivity. Moreover, this research is also directed toward uncovering and analyzing various factors that serve as supporters or inhibitors in the successful implementation of the method during group learning activities. Through a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study type, this study does not aim to test the effectiveness of the intervention using quantitative figures, but rather seeks to explore deep phenomena from the perspectives of educators and students. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the literature on early childhood social-emotional development by showing how the time-out method may function beyond behavioural control and serve as a reflective strategy for cultivating social sensitivity in a specific classroom context.

B. Literature Review

1. Social Sensitivity of Early Childhood

Social sensitivity is defined as an individual's ability to recognize, understand, and appropriately respond to the feelings, needs, and rights of others in social interactions (Yuniar, 2025). In children aged 5–6 years, social sensitivity is reflected in behaviors such as sharing, taking turns, and respecting the rights of others. Denham et al. (2015) explain that emotional maturity, social experiences, and the quality of interactions with teachers and peers influence the development of children's social sensitivity. At this age range, children are in a transitional phase from egocentrism toward social awareness, thus requiring consistent guidance in understanding social rules and the feelings of others.

In the context of early childhood education in Indonesia, Maimunah et al. (2025) found that social sensitivity can be developed through habituation in group activities. Children who are accustomed to sharing stationery, toys, and learning facilities demonstrate an increased ability to understand collective interests. Hay & Cook (2007) emphasize that sharing behavior reflects children's awareness that others have equal rights to objects, time, and opportunities. Therefore, social sensitivity is not an innate trait but rather the result of a social learning process facilitated by a structured environment.

The relationship between social sensitivity and sharing behaviour is fundamental in early childhood development. Sharing behaviour serves as a tangible manifestation of a child's growing awareness that others have needs and rights equal to their own (Hay &

Cook, 2007). This awareness does not emerge spontaneously; rather, it requires the development of self-regulation, the ability to manage one's impulses and delay gratification in social situations. Self-regulation enables children to resist the immediate urge to possess an object and instead consider the perspectives and feelings of peers. Teacher guidance plays a critical mediating role in this process. Through consistent modelling, verbal reinforcement, and structured interventions such as time-out, teachers help children connect their actions with social consequences and gradually internalize prosocial norms (Zinsser et al., 2022). In this framework, time-out functions not merely as a disciplinary measure but as a pedagogical tool that supports the integration of self-regulation and social awareness, ultimately fostering the development of sharing behaviour as a component of broader social sensitivity.

2. Time-Out Method in Early Childhood Education

The time-out method is a behavior modification technique derived from the concept of behaviorism proposed by B.F. Skinner. In this approach, time-out is viewed as the temporary withdrawal of a child from sources of positive reinforcement, allowing the child to associate certain behaviors with their social consequences (Morawska & Sanders, 2011). In simple terms, time-out refers to giving a child a brief pause by temporarily removing them from an ongoing social situation or activity as a consequence of inappropriate behavior, while also providing time for reflection and emotional regulation (Lestari, 2020).

In practice within early childhood education settings, time-out is often implemented by placing the child in a designated area such as a “calm chair” or “reflection corner.” This space is not intended as a form of punishment, but rather as a reflective environment where the child can regain emotional control (Hemmeter et al., 2016). The duration of time-out is typically short, ranging from 1 to 5 minutes, and its effectiveness largely depends on the consistency and manner in which teachers apply it. Key principles in implementing time-out include selecting a neutral and emotionally safe space, calmly communicating the reasons, and providing positive reinforcement after the child demonstrates more appropriate behavior (Zinsser et al., 2022).

3. Time-Out Effectiveness and Research Gaps

Various previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of the time-out method in addressing problematic behaviors. Sutaryat & Nurhasanah (2023), as well as Harahap & Taufan (2023), found that time-out significantly reduces the frequency and intensity of tantrums in children. Rohma et al. (2023) reported that this method is effective in fostering children's discipline through the habituation of social rules. Furthermore, Fitri & Meiyani (2020) and Asep (2023) emphasized the role of time-out in reducing aggressive behavior and bullying.

However, most of these studies position time-out exclusively as a strategy for controlling negative behavior. There is still a lack of research that specifically explores the role of time-out as a formative learning process to develop social sensitivity, particularly in enhancing sharing behavior. In fact, Woodfield et al. (2021) suggest that time-out holds significant potential as a formative strategy for cultivating positive social behaviors such as empathy and social awareness. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the implementation of time-out in fostering social sensitivity among children aged 5–6 years.

C. Method

This study utilizes a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design. The selection of a qualitative approach is based on the urgency to examine in depth the social

and emotional dynamics of children, which are complex in nature and cannot be merely measured or explained through quantitative figures. Moleong (2017), as a methodological expert, emphasizes that qualitative research is highly appropriate for investigating the condition of objects in a natural setting, where the researcher acts directly as the key instrument. The case study design was specifically chosen because this approach provides a focused exploration space to thoroughly delve into the context, behaviour, and overall changes of the subject. This is supported by the perspective of Yin (as cited in Nur'aini, 2020), who posits that a case study is the most ideal strategy for answering the essential questions of "how" and "why" regarding a social phenomenon that requires profound understanding. The descriptive nature of this research aims to detail systematically how the time-out method is applied in the field, along with the empirical responses demonstrated by the child.

In this qualitative study, the selection of subjects and informants was conducted using a purposive selection technique, which is appropriate for single-case qualitative research. According to Sugiyono (2021), purposive sampling involves the selection of individuals or groups considered the most relevant and insightful for the research topic, such as choosing an experienced teacher to examine the effectiveness of a particular learning method, which is highly suitable for qualitative studies. The primary research subject is narrowed down to one 6-year-old child in Class B2 of TK Islam Nurul Wathon.

The selection of a single child as the research subject was based on three academic considerations. First, the child demonstrated a consistent and intensive pattern of social sensitivity barriers—specifically a persistent reluctance to share—that was highly distinct compared to peers in the same classroom. This constitutes what Yin (2018) categorizes as an "extreme" or "deviant" case, which is particularly informative for qualitative inquiry as it illustrates the phenomenon in its most vivid form. Second, the teacher had already implemented the time-out method with this child over a sustained period before the research began, providing rich contextual background and longitudinal observational data. Third, a single-case design allowed for in-depth, thick description of the child's behavioural dynamics, which would not have been feasible with multiple subjects. Thus, this case was selected for its intensity and relevance to the classroom context, particularly because it clearly illustrated the relationship between the time-out intervention and the development of social sensitivity.

The criteria for determining this subject are based on the child's characteristics of consistently exhibiting a reluctance to share when using toys, stationery, or communal school facilities. The teacher of Class B2 is positioned as the primary informant to provide comprehensive data regarding the time-out intervention process and daily observations of the child's social interactions. The class teacher, who serves as the primary informant, has been teaching at TK Islam Nurul Wathon for approximately five years and holds a bachelor's degree in early childhood education. She has consistently applied the time-out method in her classroom management and maintains detailed anecdotal records of children's behaviour. The teacher's extensive experience and familiarity with the child's behavioural patterns made her a reliable and insightful informant for this study. To protect the child's privacy, no identifying information about the child is disclosed in this article. TK Islam Nurul Wathon was selected as the research location because this institution possesses a distinctiveness in applying the time-out method authentically and consistently as part of the behavioural development regulations for early childhood. The data collection process was carried out in stages, starting from February 26 to May 8, 2025, and subsequently continued in January 2026, aligned with the academic calendar.

This study adhered to strict ethical research principles, given the involvement of a young child. Prior to data collection, written permission was obtained from the principal

of TK Islam Nurul Wathon. Informed consent was secured from the child's parents or guardians, who were provided with a clear explanation of the research objectives, procedures, and the child's right to withdraw at any time. The child's identity and all personal information were kept confidential; pseudonyms are used throughout this article to protect the subject's privacy. The time-out method implemented by the teacher followed the school's existing behavioural guidelines and was conducted without causing physical or emotional harm. The researcher observed passively without interfering with the teacher's professional judgment, ensuring the study did not disrupt the child's learning process or emotional well-being.

The primary instrument in this study is the researcher themselves, who collects primary and secondary data through participant observation, interviews, and documentation. Primary data were collected through three techniques. Participant observation was conducted over six sessions, each lasting approximately two hours, during morning learning activities and free play in Class B2 from February to April 2025. Observations focused on the child's sharing behaviour during group activities, the teacher's application of time-out, and peer interactions. Observation notes documented specific incidents, such as the child's refusal to share crayons, the teacher's intervention, and subsequent peer responses. Semi-structured interviews with the class teacher were conducted on three separate occasions (March 3, April 15, and May 8, 2025), each lasting 45–60 minutes. These interviews explored the teacher's perceptions of the child's behavioural changes and the time-out process. Interview excerpts, for example, the teacher's statement that "after three months, the child began to give turns voluntarily," were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Documentation included the teacher's daily anecdotal records and lesson plans, which provided supplementary evidence of the child's behavioural trajectory. To ensure validity, source and methodological triangulation were employed by cross-checking observation data with interview statements and written records. Additionally, member checking was conducted by presenting preliminary findings to the teacher for confirmation and clarification of interpretations.

The data analysis process in this study fully adopts the interactive analysis model from the methodologists Miles et al. (2018). The analytical steps begin with data reduction, where the researcher carefully sorts, summarizes, and eliminates raw data to leave only information relevant to the primary focus of social sensitivity formation and time-out procedures. The next stage is data display, which is constructed into a systematic descriptive narrative supported by direct quotes from interview results. This series of analyses culminates in the stage of conclusion drawing and verification, which is the final interpretation process of the presented data to identify the common thread regarding the effectiveness and meaning behind the application of the time-out method toward the child's sharing habits.

D. Result

This study was conducted at TK Islam Nurul Wathon, an Islamic-based early childhood institution in Semarang, Central Java, serving children aged 4–6 years. Class B2, the focus of this study, consists of 17 children aged 5–6 years and is led by a teacher who applies the time-out method as part of classroom behaviour management.

Based on in-depth observations, the initial behavioural profile of children aged five to six years in class B2 was dominated by significant social sensitivity barriers. Before the time-out intervention was applied, the child consistently demonstrated high levels of egocentrism, manifesting in over-possessiveness toward material objects and school facilities. This reluctance to share was clearly visible during the use of stationery, toys, and storybooks in the classroom. The research subject frequently moved objects out of the reach

of peers, hid items behind their bodies, or even reclaimed items currently being borrowed by other children. This social rejection was also often shown through verbal communication in the form of the refusal phrase "wait, me first," which was repeated continuously without ever realizing the act of sharing, thereby triggering frustration in peers.

This issue extended further into the child's inability to understand the concept of turn-taking. The child frequently cut in line when washing hands, performing wudu, or using outdoor play facilities such as slides and swings. This unwillingness to yield often escalated rapidly from verbal disputes into physical altercations. Field observations recorded various aggressive actions such as pinching, pushing, and hair-pulling as a form of the child's ego defense. The impact of this low social sensitivity damaged the overall classroom ecosystem. Peers began to show reactions of fear and confusion, choosing to maintain distance from the aggressor. There was even a phenomenon of social trauma where classmates were reluctant to share their lunch with the subject, who frequently triggered conflict, feeling uncomfortable with the treatment they had previously received.

Facing these uncondusive classroom conditions, the teacher of class B2 implemented the time-out method not as a punishment, but as a systematic behaviour modification approach prioritizing reflective functions. There are eight operational steps executed consistently by the teacher in the field, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Implementation Stages of the *Time-Out* Method in Class B2

Stage	Teacher Action	Implementation Description	Pedagogical Purpose
1	Verbal Warning	The teacher provides an initial warning regarding the consequences of refusing to share	To make the child aware of the social rule before intervention occurs
2	Physical Withdrawal	Separating the child from the main activity area if physical conflict begins to occur.	To prevent escalation and remove the child from social reinforcement
3	Reflective Isolation	Placing the child in a corner chair with minimal stimulation from peers.	To create a neutral space for emotional regulation without punishment
4	Active Monitoring	Checking the child's emotional stability without providing excessive attention.	To ensure the child is safe while avoiding reinforcing the behaviour
5	Cooling Down Duration	Providing a measured break of five to six minutes to allow the child's emotions to subside.	To allow physiological and emotional calming before reflection
6	Resolution Discussion	Providing a logical explanation regarding the negative impact of their behaviour on others.	To help the child connect actions with social consequences and build empathy
7	Positive Reinforcement	Give praise when the child shows a commitment to improving their attitude.	To encourage internalization of prosocial behaviour
8	Social Reconciliation	Directing the child to apologise and reintegrate with their group.	To restore social relationships and practise prosocial interaction

The implementation process always begins with a clear verbal warning. The teacher uses affirmative sentences such as "if you do not want to be together, you will not have friends" or "if you do not want to queue, you do not need to join." If these warnings are

ignored and physical conflict occurs, the child is immediately withdrawn from the group and placed in the corner chair. During the isolation period, the teacher monitors by posing awareness-triggering questions such as "Are you calm yet?" "is the crying finished?" or "Do you regret it?" to evaluate the child's psychological condition. The duration is maintained at approximately five to six minutes. This timeframe is considered ideal by the teacher to facilitate the cooling-down process without stifling the child's interest in learning. After emotions stabilize, the teacher leads a resolution discussion to explain the harmful effects of hurting others, followed by providing positive reinforcement in the form of praise, and concluding with a mutual apology process.

Field data indicates a noticeable change in the child's behaviour after this method was applied. In the early stages of implementation, the child showed high resistance while in the time-out area, such as loud crying, screaming, singing to seek attention, or even kicking the chair. However, due to the teacher's consistency in not responding to such manipulative behaviour, the child's emotions began to subside, and they became willing to sit quietly awaiting instructions. The improvement in social sensitivity is clearly visible in the child's willingness to share items and use collective facilities. The subject, who initially monopolized facilities, is now willing to share the use of the swing—which has a capacity of six children—without attempting to displace peers. The teacher's observation notes documented this transformation: *"In the third week, the child began to ask permission before taking crayons from a friend, which was a significant step from hiding items behind their back"* (Teacher's note, March 15, 2025). During an interview, the teacher further confirmed: *"At first, the child always said 'no' to sharing. Now, although sometimes still hesitant, the child will say 'can I borrow?' or 'let us use it together.' That is a big change for me"* (Interview, April 15, 2025). The researcher also recorded a peer's spontaneous remark during play: *"She let me use the swing after I said please!"* (Observation note, April 22, 2025), which indicates the child's growing social acceptance among peers. Regarding the use of stationery, the habit of grabbing items has changed into a lending attitude. Although the child occasionally hands over markers or crayons with a flat facial expression, these actions prove an adherence to the newly learned sharing norms. The child's understanding of the turn-taking concept also increased sharply. The child has begun to stand up from their seat or the swing upon seeing another friend waiting for a turn. Compliance with classroom rules has improved alongside the decreasing frequency of anger and physical actions. Aggressive actions have been replaced by prosocial communication patterns, where the child has become accustomed to using permission-seeking sentences like "can I borrow this?" or invitational sentences like "let us do it together." This observed change contributed to a more positive social atmosphere in class B2, as peers gradually began to invite the child to participate in group play again.

The convergence of various supporting factors influences the success of the intervention in the field. The primary factor is the school's managerial support and the teacher's consistency in enforcing rules without personal emotional outbursts. Providing consequences immediately after a violation occurs is crucial in helping the child associate bad behaviour with the loss of positive reinforcement. Additionally, social support from cooperative peers by giving kind reminders, such as saying "do not grab, wait for my turn," has accelerated the adaptation process. The installation of visual slogans in the classroom corner, reading "love friends, share, live in harmony", also provides continuous stimulation toward the formation of social norms. On the other hand, the implementation of this method also encountered several significant obstacles. The greatest constraint stems from the inconsistency of parenting patterns between the school and home environments, causing the child to often be confused in applying the sharing concept. Internal biological conditions, such as hunger, sleepiness, or physical fatigue, also frequently lower the child's

receptiveness to reflective guidance during the time-out process. The final obstacle is the limitation of classroom infrastructure. The location of the time-out area, which is not fully isolated, occasionally causes the child's concentration to be disrupted by the sounds or activities of peers playing nearby.

E. Discussion

The findings align with social development theories, which posit that egocentrism is a typical phase in children aged 5–6 years as they transition toward social awareness (Denham et al., 2015). The reluctance to share observed in this study confirms that prosocial attitudes do not emerge spontaneously; rather, they require continuous learning and guidance from adults and peers (Hay & Cook, 2007). This supports the view that children need direct interaction experiences and consistent direction to develop voluntary sharing behaviour (Zinsser et al., 2022).

The teacher's approach—using calm language, placing the child in a neutral area, and providing positive reinforcement—is consistent with ideal supportive intervention principles (Hemmeter et al., 2016; Zinsser et al., 2022). These findings support previous research showing that time-out is effective in reducing aggressive behaviour and tantrums (Harahap & Taufan, 2023; Sutaryat & Nurhasanah, 2023). However, this study offers an additional insight: the time-out method can serve not only as a corrective tool but also as a formative pedagogical strategy. In this case, the cooling-down period provided the child with cognitive space to activate emotional regulation and reflect on social consequences, which contributed to the gradual development of sharing behaviour. The cooling-down period appeared to function not only as a pause from inappropriate behaviour, but also as an opportunity for the child to regulate emotions, reflect on social consequences, and gradually develop more appropriate sharing behaviour.

While the findings indicate positive outcomes, it is important to acknowledge that the time-out method carries potential emotional risks if implemented without pedagogical sensitivity. In some educational contexts, time-out may be perceived by children as rejection or punishment, potentially leading to distress, shame, or withdrawal (Morawska & Sanders, 2011). This study, however, observed several safeguards that minimized such risks. First, the teacher consistently accompanied the time-out with verbal explanations that emphasized the behaviour as the problem, not the child (e.g., "your action was hurtful to your friend," not "you are bad"). Second, the teacher maintained a calm, neutral tone throughout the process, avoiding harsh language or punitive gestures. Third, the isolation area was located within the classroom rather than outside, allowing the child to remain in the learning environment without being completely excluded. Fourth, the reconciliation process with peers actively facilitated social reintegration, preventing prolonged isolation. These safeguards helped ensure that the time-out remained a reflective, educational tool rather than a source of emotional harm. Nevertheless, teachers should remain vigilant about the child's emotional responses during time-out and adjust the approach if signs of significant distress emerge.

These findings suggest that teachers may view time-out not as isolation punishment but as a space for social reflection. The reconciliation process and post-time-out discussions are important moments where children learn to connect their actions with others' feelings. Teacher consistency in implementing the method is essential for children to understand social boundaries. However, the inhibiting factors identified—particularly the mismatch between school values and parenting patterns—indicate that parental involvement may be beneficial for sustaining behavioural changes. Further studies integrating parent engagement programmes are recommended to align prosocial character building between school and home environments.

F. Conclusion

This study concludes that the time-out method can contribute to the development of social sensitivity in children aged 5–6 years when implemented as a reflective and educative strategy rather than as a punitive measure. The findings indicate that a structured emotional break, followed by pedagogical discussion and positive reinforcement, was associated with gradual improvement in the child's sharing behaviour, turn-taking ability, and awareness of peers' rights within group interaction. In the observed classroom context, teacher consistency played an important role in helping the child understand social boundaries and internalize prosocial behaviour. However, the implementation of the method was also influenced by classroom spatial limitations, the child's internal conditions, such as fatigue or hunger, and differences between school values and parenting patterns at home. Therefore, the findings should be understood as contextual insights from a single case and cannot be generalized to all early childhood settings. Further research involving larger samples, different classroom contexts, and stronger comparative designs is recommended to examine the broader applicability of reflective time-out in supporting children's social sensitivity.

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