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Cyber Counseling for Parents with Self-Help Group Techniques for School Readiness

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Abstrak

Kata Kunci: *Cyber Counseling; Self Help Group; Kesiapan Bersekolah*

Kesiapan bersekolah anak tidak terlepas dari kesiapan keluarga. Kesiapan keluarga berfokus pada sikap dan keterlibatan orang tua dalam pemenuhan kebutuhan belajar anak. Mempersiapkan anak berarti mempersiapkan orang tua secara finansial dan mental. Peran orang tua yang tidak kalah penting adalah sebagai guru di rumah yang juga membutuhkan dukungan dalam upaya mendukung kesiapan anak bersekolah. Sehingga ketika orang tua tidak mendapat dukungan dan kurang mampu membuat perencanaan maka kesiapan anak bersekolah tidak berjalan optimal. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan jenis studi kasus. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa peran kelompok dalam membangun sikap optimis orang tua untuk kesiapan bersekolah dipandang cukup efektif. Orang tua mampu memandang dirinya lebih positif, mampu membuat perencanaan dan memperoleh pandangan yang berbeda dari pengalaman orang lain.

Abstract

Keywords: *Cyber Counseling; Self Help Group; School Readiness.*

School readiness cannot be separated from family readiness. Family readiness focuses on the attitudes and involvement of parents in meeting their children's learning needs. Preparing children means preparing parents financially and mentally. The role of parents that is no less important is as teachers at home who also need support in efforts to support children's readiness for school. That means when parents do not receive support and are unable to plan, their child's readiness for school will not run optimally. Research uses a qualitative method with a case study type. The results of this research indicate that the role of groups in building parents' optimistic attitude towards school readiness is considered quite effective. Parents are able to view themselves more positively, are able to make plans and gain different views from other people's experiences.

INTRODUCTION

School readiness is the ability of children or students to reach the level of development appropriate to their age at the level of education they will enter. Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 1 of 2021 concerning school entry age requirements has clearly explained the age limits for children entering school at each level of education. School readiness proposed by Fitzgeald and Strommen (Damayanti & Kristanti, 2016) defines school readiness as a child's ability to reach an adequate level of emotional, physical and cognitive development so that the child is capable or successful academically. So, school readiness is the ability that children already have to be able to follow elementary school lessons well.

In early childhood, for example, several important components of school readiness that can be supported in early childhood education units include sufficient emotional maturity to overcome everyday problems; Adequate social skills for healthy interactions with peers; Sufficient cognitive maturity to concentrate during play-learning; and Development of adequate motor skills and self-care to be able to participate in the school environment independently (Decision of the Head of the Standards, Curriculum and Assessment Agency of the Ministry of Education and Culture on Learning Achievements in Early Childhood Education, 2022).

It needs to be understood that the concepts of learning readiness and school readiness are two different but interrelated things. Learning readiness is generally defined as a child's readiness in every aspect of his development in achieving readiness to learn material according to his educational level. Readiness to learn is more generally associated with aspects of cognitive development, while school readiness is one of the concepts of readiness to learn. So if a child is ready to learn, he cannot be said to be ready for school, but for children who have shown that they are ready for school, it is included in their readiness to learn.

School readiness includes physical and psychological readiness, namely emotional, social and intellectual readiness. In physical readiness, a child is considered ready if the child's motor development is mature, especially in coordination between eyes and hands (visiomotor) (Sulistyaningsih in Ratin, et.al., 2020).

Apart from that, parents have an important role in preparing children to enter school. Some of the challenges that parents often face when preparing their children for school include emotional problems related to the child's inability to control their anxiety when they have to be in a new environment and the experience of being separated from their parents. Apart from that, some children also do not show academic readiness, for example they are not able to adapt to the new level of learning material, which

causes learning difficulties. Some children also experience difficulty in maintaining focus and concentration in class, especially young children entering elementary school.

The National Institute of Child and Human Development (2002) states that family readiness in supporting children's readiness for school includes parental warmth and sensitivity, (b) support to foster children's autonomy, and (c) active participation in learning. Another role of parents which is no less important is as a teacher at home who also needs support in efforts to achieve maximum child development. Furthermore, parents can also play a role in providing behavioral role models and paying attention to the dynamics of children's behavior.

This shows that parenting styles have an important role in children's readiness for school. Parenting is a process of interaction between parents and children which includes various things, not only limited to fulfilling physical and psychological needs but also in the form of norms that apply in society so that children are able to live in harmony with the surrounding environment (Gunarsa in Ratin, et.all., 2020).

Based on the results of interviews conducted by researchers, several parents complained about the same thing regarding preparing their children for school. Especially at the elementary school level. Some of them: children still find it difficult to maintain concentration in studying, are unable to

sit still for long periods, and children show little interest in studying in class. In addition, the subject had difficulty adjusting the child's sleep routine to suit the school schedule. In addition, the subject is still reluctant to communicate with school teachers to ensure that the child has received the learning support they need, so this of course makes the subject anxious about the condition of his children. In overcoming this problem, researchers and several subjects agreed to conduct counseling using cyber counseling methods to follow up on interventions that can be carried out by parents so that children can be ready for school.

Cyber Counseling is provided with the consideration that the subjects are mothers with multiple roles and have their own busy schedules so it is difficult to schedule face-to-face meetings. Apart from that, Cyber Counseling is considered more practical and flexible so that subjects feel they can adjust their time to their conditions. In theory, Cyber Counseling or online counseling is a counseling process carried out using network tools as a link between the counselor and the counselee. Furthermore, cyber counseling is a relatively new counseling service and is starting to develop in this digital era (Pasmawati, 2016).

Cyber counseling services have become very popular in Indonesia since the Covid 19 pandemic with the presence of metaverse-based counseling services. Furthermore, cyber counseling

is the process of providing psychological assistance from a professional counselor to clients who have problems. Furthermore, cyber counseling is an indirect interaction based on text or video in the exchange of therapeutic communication between the counselor and the client with the help of media such as websites, email, Facebook, Zoom, Google Meet, or online applications that can be accessed via gadgets (Bastomi, 2019; Fadhilah, Alkindi, & Muhid, 2021).

Cyber Counseling techniques carried out individually are not much different from groups. Cyber Counseling is carried out in groups as a form of intervention carried out virtually, where subjects with the same problems gather to share experiences, provide support to each other, and receive guidance from professional counselors. The advantages of cyber counseling are that the process of providing assistance is faster, more flexible, building closer relationships because it uses online media, can be accessed anytime and anywhere, and can reach clients more widely (Putri, 2023).

The benefits of cyber counseling include being able to help parents get out of problems by adapting therapeutic elements and the principle of confidentiality (Gunawan & Nugroho, 2023). Apart from that, cyber counseling can also help in the self-regulation process. (Fahyuni, Akbar, Hadi, et al, 2020).

Due to the benefits of cyber counseling services, counselors can take advantage of the advantages of the Internet in connecting them more closely with teachers, parents and students. This is in line with one of the counselor's roles, namely combining resources to maximize the expansion of their services. Counselor wisdom combines Internet helpful skills to build a collaborative environment between students, teachers, and parents (Amir Awang in Zainudin & Yusop, 2018).

Based on previous information, with cyber counseling services, parents can easily form a support group, namely a self-help group, as a place to train themselves to manage themselves and communicate with other parents in the process of preparing their children to enter school.

A self-help group is a group consisting of individuals who meet regularly to help each other overcome life problems. They provide many benefits that professionals cannot provide, including friendship, mutual support, experiential knowledge, identity, a sense of belonging, and other byproducts of positive group processes (APA, 2023).

Through self-help groups, parents can share experiences and knowledge regarding parenting patterns to prepare their children for school. Parental parenting styles have an important role in children's school readiness. Implementing appropriate parenting styles will have an impact on a child's readiness to enter elementary school.

The preparations made by parents are not only related to aspects of cognition and reading ability, but parents also need to pay attention to physical health, age, intelligence, motivation, interests, social-language and emotional factors in children (Ratin, et.all, 2020).

The results of research Izza and Mariyati (2023) show that democratic parenting has a positive relationship with children's readiness to enter elementary school. This means that the higher the parents' democratic parenting style, the higher the readiness of school children to enter elementary school. On the other hand, the lower the parents' democratic parenting style, the lower the children's readiness to enter elementary school.

RESEARCH METHOD

The methodology used in this research is based on the objectives of the research to be conducted. The objectives of this research are: cyber counseling through self-help group techniques for parents to prepare children for school; and To find out the efforts made by parents in preparing their children to enter elementary school. Judging from the research objectives, the researcher used a qualitative approach with a case study type of research.

Qualitative methods are research that are used to examine the condition of natural objects. The aim is to fully understand the phenomena experienced by research subjects such as behavior,

perception, motivation, actions and so on by describing them in the form of scientific narratives using various other scientific methods (Nasution, 2023).

In collecting the required data, researchers are directly and actively involved in the field and become the main instrument. Because the presence of researchers is a benchmark for understanding several cases. The main data collection technique in this research is interviews which will then be analyzed using the stages of data reduction, organization and interpretation. This research was conducted virtually with five parents as informants.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Cyber counseling is carried out in groups in informal situations and guided by a counselor. In its implementation, counselors were involved as facilitators who directed, informants as group members and there were also observers who recorded behavior which was considered as data from the implementation of this research. In this session, each member was able to play an active role in various feelings, knowledge, and how to find solutions related to school readiness.

In the counseling process, each group member understands how to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of each member who is conducting group counseling. Apart from that, informants are able to be responsible in making decisions independently. Even

though in the end the informants had different strategies, they were able to share relevant information and felt helped by being able to exchange ideas with other people who had the same problems.

Research presented by Aulia (2017) explains that Self Help Groups have proven effective in dealing with various health problems. The effectiveness of these groups stems from various assumptions. Emotional support from others reduces the social isolation experienced by many people with chronic conditions. Creating a collective self-identity through group participation. Each member has the opportunity to develop new concepts that exist within him. Participation between group members allows for activities to share experiences, knowledge and suggestions to overcome the problems they experience.

The behavior that emerged in the informants after carrying out group cyber counseling was to increase the informants' hopes that this activity could help them in a better direction, giving rise to a shared belief that problems in life are challenges to develop positively, so they are not a threat to their sense of security. When the informant is part of a group, he believes that his group is able to contribute to alleviating problems, then his overall feelings become calmer.

In line with research conducted by Arfianto, et. al (2021) that the discussion process in a therapeutic group provides an opportunity for

members to share experiences. Apart from that, mothers can help each other to find ways to solve problems, and anticipate problems that will be faced by teaching them effective ways to control stress. Therapeutic group therapy aims to develop empathy among group members to strengthen adaptive behavior.

In addition, the informants revealed that they had the same feelings as each other, so the ability to open up and not feel alone was quite effective in helping them see difficulties from various points of view. The awareness that emerged in this situation made the informants more optimistic in determining plans related to preparing children for school. This is because informants are still carried away by the social stigma of comparing their children with other people's children but not focusing on aspects of their development. So, during the process of identifying problems, each informant provided responses to each other. This raises the informant's self-confidence and awareness that he is not alone in facing his problems.

In accordance with research conducted by Daroni, et. Al (2018) states that through counseling using the REBT technique, parents with autistic children are helped to change distorted thinking into more rational thoughts regarding the child's condition and the parents' expectations and help parents to accept the child's condition. In the counseling process, parents are also given positive reinforcement and

appreciation for the efforts made to accept the child's condition.

In line with research conducted by Arfianto, et. al (2021) that counseling groups provide opportunities for groups of mothers who have the same age characteristics as their children to stimulate children's growth and development, which results in the development of pre-school age children's initiatives to prepare children to have the competence to continue the next stage of psychosocial development, especially when entering school age.

Apart from that, there is also research conducted by Astutiningrum, Hapsari, & Purwanta (2016) that through parenting self-efficacy through counseling can change understanding, create a feeling of acceptance so that the process of healing wounds in mothers after section section is faster. Apart from that, through counseling mothers also gain skills in caring for newborns so that they are better able to take care of their children when they return home.

In the next session, informants carried out activities to share good practices related to preparing children for school. Basically, preparing children for school is something that every parent needs to pay attention to, because parents have responsibility for their children's development and education. Parents who choose to send their children to school without paying attention to the child's level of developmental maturity and abilities

can have a bad impact on the child. This is an important concern for parents to determine appropriate stimulation so that the child's psychological development maturity takes priority, compared to other preparations. So the role of parents has a particular influence on children's learning activities at home.

The role of parents is very important in accompanying children to learn from home. Early childhood children cannot yet be released independently to study or even play, therefore parents need an important role in accompanying and providing learning support. Parents are the first teachers since the birth of a child and this role will remain with their children until they grow up (Ambarita, et.all., 2022).

Then in the evaluation session, the informants stated that they gained knowledge that could help in optimizing more adaptive treatment for children at home. Informants realized that they had received new treatment so they found it easier to determine solution steps related to providing stimulation to prepare children for school. Apart from that, informants also gain experience from fellow group members in the form of knowledge and experience. Experiential knowledge is defined as information obtained from the life experiences of group members. So they get a different view from a professional review that focuses on theory.

CONCLUSION

School readiness is the responsibility of parents as the child's primary caregiver. Of course, a child's readiness cannot be separated from the readiness of their parents. Preparations made by parents can include support for developmental stimulation through daily activities, communication with children, sensitivity to children's needs and mental readiness of parents to adapt to the child's educational level. In preparing parents mentally, it turns out that some parents cannot do it

themselves. Need support from other people to share life experiences so that parents view themselves more positively in parenting. This research shows that the role of groups in building parents' optimistic attitude towards school readiness is considered quite effective. Parents are able to view themselves more positively, are able to make plans and gain different views from other people's experiences. So parents are expected to be able to develop positive interactions with their children. This interaction is a form of support to prepare children to enter school.

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