

Parent's Adjustment in Promoting School Readiness on Preschool Students

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Abstract: Previous researches and current development of school readiness concept shows the important role of parents in shaping children's school readiness. These roles and responsibilities are related to providing physical needs and stimulation for children's readiness. This study aims to obtain empirical data about the description of the process of family self-care with preschool children to prepare children for primary school. This study used qualitative approach with interviews and school readiness measurement as data collection tools. Data were analyzed to obtain important themes in family adjustment experiences to promote children's school readiness. Participants were four parents of "PAUD Nirwana" students, a kindergarten in Semarang that specifically accepts students from lower middle-class families. Data analysis shows that there are five main themes experienced by all subjects relating to the experience of preparing children for school. The five themes lead to the dominant role of mothers as the main contributor to children's school readiness.

Keywords: school readiness, parent's adjustment, preschool

INTRODUCTION

Accordance to article 6 paragraph 1 of the UU (educational decree) No. 20 of 2003 which regulates the education system, the government requires all citizens to take primary education. The level of primary education consists of Elementary Schools / Madrasah Ibtidaiyah and Junior High School / Madrasah Tsanawiyah. Government Regulation No. 17 of 2010 as a guideline for implementing the UU states that one of primary education's objective is to provide the basics of intellectual ability which consist of reading ability, writing ability and maths ability.

This primary education objective was concord to developmental theories in psychology. Erikson's socioemotional development theory reveals that when a child enters formal school, the child bases his behavior on orientation to achieve achievement (Ormrod, 2006). At this stage of development, children begin to expect recognition and appreciation for their achievements. Childrens academics achievement at this time will increase their self-esteem and self confidence to obtain the best results in the future (Santrock, 2012). There are a number of predictors that influence student achievement, especially in the first grade of elementary school (Izzaty, Ayriza, Setiawati, 2017), where one of the most important factors is school readiness (Pianta, Cox, & Snow, 2007; Duncan dkk, 2007, Sabol & Pianta, 2012).

The initial concept of school readiness states that school readiness is the level of child development to master a number of learning processes and skills accompanied by maturity to integrate these mastery in order to study in school (Jensen, 1969; Li-Grining dkk, 2010). School readiness then develops into more detailed concepts which include: 1) adaptive behavior in managing negative emotions such as anger and feeling depressed; 2) language and cognitive skills such as communicating, reading and writing, and getting to know the surrounding environment; 3) self-help skills such as eating-drinking, toilet activities, working independently and asking for help from others; and 4) the availability of support from families such as getting

support and prayer, having a routine at home, and having a habit of reading at home (Hughes, Daly, Foley, White, & Devine, 2015).

The concept of school readiness proposed by Hughes, et al (2015) emphasizes the important role of families in creating an atmosphere for children to be ready to sit in school. A portrait of this role will be very visible to families who have preschool-aged children who will soon be attending elementary school. Various studies have shown the important role of parents in the family to realize children's school readiness. One of the parents' roles can be reflected in their socioeconomic level. The role of parents' socioeconomic level can include the psychological well-being of parents (Hurr, Buetnerr, & Jeon, 2015), location of parent and child residence (Gan, Meng, & Xie, 2016), as well as parental background (Son and Peterson, 2017) which then determines the choice of the condition of the environment in which he lives. The level of education of parents who are lower than the S1 level turns out to contribute to children who do not have special needs but show problems at the beginning of school-related problems related to readiness to attend school (Nelson, et al, 2016). The level of education is also associated with the ability to obtain greater income to meet physical needs and facilitate stimulation of child development (Johnson, Martin, and Gunn, 2013).

Various research results about the important role of the family, especially the important role of parents of preschool children to encourage the growth of children's school readiness, led researchers to conduct research on the process of adjustment experienced by families with preschool age to prepare the child to enter elementary school. This research focuses on the families of Nirwana Kindergarten students who are mostly from a weak socioeconomic background. As in the description of the results of research related to school readiness, the socioeconomic level of parents is an important factor.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with the design of case study. This research focuses on the experience of parent adjustment in preparing children to go to school at kindergarten and elementary school level. Exploration of this research's focus was carried out by examine the results of students' school readiness tests and interviews with their parents. The school readiness test used on this research wa nijmeegsee schoolbekwaamheid test (nst). Whereas the intelligence test used was the binet intelligence scale. Interviews with parents were conducted in a semi-structured manner using interview guides to reveal experiences in building children's school readiness.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of the results of intelligence tests and school readiness tests show the results as illustrated in the following table:

Table 1. Student's ability assessment

No	Subject	Chronological Age	Mental Age	IQ score	NST score	Category
1	Subject 1	5 year 5 month	6 year 1 month	114	98	Ready
2	Subject 2	6 year 5 month	6 year 4 month	98	85	Not ready
3	Subject 3	5 year 7 month	5 year 10 month	105	91	Ready
4	Subject 4	5 year 6 month	5 year 8 month	103	91	Ready
5	Subject 5 *	5 year 7 month	5 year 10 month	105	93	Ready
6	Subject 6 *	5 year 11 month	5 year 9 month	96	94	

*:subject excluded

Based on interview data that has been conducted with parents, a description of the socioeconomic background of students can be summarized in the following table:

Table 2. Student's family background

No	Name	Primary caregiver	Caregiver education	Caregiver occupation	Living with	Caregiver income
1	Subjek 1	Mother (separation with father)	SMA	Housewife (mother) Lecturer (father)	Grandmother, mother, 2 sisters	Rp. 1.500.000 (from father)
2	Subjek 2	Parent	SMA	Cleaning service (father) Nonformal worker (mother)	Parent, 2 sisters, 3 aunt	Rp. 2.100.000 (father) Rp. 600.000 (mother)
3	Subjek 3	Aunt (mother's sister)	SMP	Grocery kiosk	Kakek-nenek, 3 bibi, 2 paman	Rp. 1.000.000
4	Subjek 4	Parent	SMA (father) SMP (mother)	Nonformal worker (father) Housewife (mother)	Parent, 1 sister	Rp. 1.500.000 (father)

Based on data analysis, researchers obtained five groups of themes from the experience of the four research subjects.

Table 3. Subject's theme

No	Themes	Experience of			
		Subject 1	Subject 2	Subject 3	Subject 4
1	Reason of school selection (kindergarten)	- Religion affiliation - Location (near from home) - Teacher persuasion	- School fee feasibility (economic reason) - Location (near from home)	- Go along with neighbors - Teacher persuasion	- Location (near from home) - School fee feasibility - Teacher persuasion
2	Parental role	- Mother as main decision maker - Parent separation (with second husband, subject 1's father)	- Father : public role - Mother : domestic role	- Aunt (single) as primary caregiver - Avoid from father	- Father : public role - Mother : domestic role
3	Parenting style	- Checking children's homework - Quality time with children on evening	- Mother play the main role - Checking children's homework	- Permissive (no routine daily rules) - Go along with neighbors/	- Permissive (father more permissive than mother)
4	Learning habit	- Value internalization of routine learning habit - Mother parents are teacher	- Mother accompany children learning	- No role modelling - Homework only (child by herself)	- Sister as scaffolding - Mother's fatigue - Father ignorant
5	Reason of school selection (elementary school)	- School quality - Public school - Feasibility location - School fee feasibility	- Location (regulation of school zonation) - Economic factor	- Up to child aspiration	- School fee feasibility - Public school
5	Children progress on kindergarten	- More regulate daily routine activity - Vocabulary	- Writing, but not reading yet - More regulate daily routine activity	- Prayer memorizing - Imitation of teacher style - Sing various song	- Self-help (dressing) - Prayer memorizing
6	Elementary school entry's age	6,5 y.o	7 y.o	7 yo	7,5 yo

The first theme is related to the considerations of parents and families on which they choose to send their children to PAUD Nirwana. Teacher and neighborhood persuasion of the child is the background of three out of four parents of students to enter the school. This condition illustrates a congruence of Bronnfenbrenner's theory (Ormrod, 2008, and Santrock, 2011) According to this theory, the child and the surrounding environment are predictors of the child's growth and development [2]. The predictor forms a circular, layered system. Children become a core circle in the multilevel system. All innate characteristics and abilities of children are found in this core circle. The environment around the child is divided into 6 layers of circles [1]. The first layer is called a microsystem, which includes an environment that routinely deals with children, namely family, neighbors, and schools. The second layer is called the mesosystem which includes interactions between elements in the microsystem. The third layer is an ecosystem which is an environment that is not directly related to students but affects the lives of students such as friends from family, mass media, and legal entities. The outermost layer is macrosystem which is a system of values, culture, and beliefs that color a child's life. While the time changes that occur throughout the child's growth are chronosystem. This theory has a micro context from the child's daily life to the macro context of the global situation that occurs during the child's development.

Subsequent themes related to the role of parents illustrate that mothers are the main characters who encourage children's school readiness. Seen from the daily tasks to prepare children's school supplies, accompany children to learn, to instill children's learning habits. The role of mothers in this study as well as the images obtained in the study of Podesta (2014) that mother's care is a contributor to the growth of children's learning readiness. To be able to carry out this role, mothers need a good support system (New, Guilfoyle, and Harman, 2015). The conclusion that can be drawn from the results of this study is that the role of parents, especially mothers, plays an important role for the development of children's learning readiness.

CONCLUSIONS

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