

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COUNSELING GUIDANCE PROGRAMS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY ON STUDENT SOCIAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Rahimah^{1*}

^{*1}Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara

^{*1}email: rahimah@umsu.ac.id

Abstract: The research aims to review the effectiveness of the Guidance Counseling Program in Elementary Schools: Case Study on the Development of Students' Social Skills. The research method uses a qualitative approach with case studies as the main design. Data was collected through observation, interviews and document analysis related to the Guidance Counseling program in Elementary Schools: Case Study on Student Social Skills Development. This case study concentrates on evaluating the methods and approaches used by guidance counseling programs, as well as how they impact students' social skills. This research hopes to provide a better understanding of how guidance and counseling programs contribute to the development of students' social skills. The research results show that it has significant practical implications. First, guidance and counseling programs in elementary schools need to receive greater attention to improve students' social skills. Through effective methods and strategies, students can gain strong social skills that will support their success in social interactions and in their personal and academic lives. Support and cooperation from schools, counselors, teachers and parents are very important in ensuring the success of the counseling guidance program. By continuing to conduct research and develop relevant programs, it is hoped that the world of education can disseminate the benefits generated by this program in order to improve the quality of life of students now and in the future.

Keywords: Guidance counseling, Skills Development, Social

Introduction

This research aims to review the effectiveness of guidance and counseling programs in elementary schools in developing students' social skills. In this increasingly complex era, it is important for elementary schools to recognize the important role of guidance and counseling programs in supporting the development of strong social skills in students. Good social skills are essential in helping children interact well with peers and adults and in achieving good academic performance. During their development, children in elementary school experience various challenges in building strong social skills (Carpenter, Radcliffe : 2018).

They must learn to interact with many friends and face various situations in the school environment. In addition, with the development of technology and social media, the influence of the digital environment can also have a significant impact on the development of children's social skills. Therefore, it is important there is the right support and programs to help them develop the necessary social skills (Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger : 2011). Guidance and counseling programs in elementary schools can be an effective solution in helping develop students' social skills. This program aims to provide guidance to students in understanding and honing the social skills needed in everyday social interactions.

Through this program, students are given the opportunity to learn to communicate well, solve problems, work together in groups, and manage emotions healthily. With the guidance of competent counselors, students can gain basic skills that can be applied in their daily lives.

In addition, guidance and counseling programs in elementary schools are also important in helping students acquire social skills that can provide long-term benefits. Good social skills can assist students in building positive interpersonal relationships, increase their academic success, and assist them in realizing their best potential in their personal and professional lives (Possel, P., Horn, A. B., & Hautmann, C. : 2017). In this increasingly complex and diverse context, it is important for educators and counseling guidance experts to understand the importance of counseling guidance programs in developing students' social skills. The program focuses not only on improving an individual's social skills, but also on establishing a school culture that encourages cooperation, tolerance, and respect for individual differences. Thus, guidance and counseling programs in elementary schools can help students build a strong foundation for success in the future

Literature Review

Development is the process of more complete functioning of the body in terms of the ability to move, speak and human independence. This is carried out through a series of implementation tests which are regulated in accordance with predetermined standards. Growth is an increase or increase in the number of tissue cells in the body. This means a change in the physical size and structure of a person's body, either in whole or in part. (B 2022)

Growth can be seen from body weight, height and head circumference, while development can be seen from motor, social and emotional abilities, language skills and cognitive abilities. (Azijah 2022) Early childhood is a golden period where a child's development experiences many changes. Children will experience a period of sensitivity to their environment. This requires attention through educational stimulation to provide stimulation for the child's overall development. (Nurbaity 2021)

Teachers, posyandu, parents need to pay attention to the growth and development of early childhood. It can be expected to determine steps and efforts to help children develop. (Sinaga 2021) Normally, the growth and development of each child is different and will experience extraordinary stages during its life, starting from the embryo until throughout life, experiencing changes for the better in size and development. The process of child growth and development can be influenced by internal and external factors. And external factors that most influence the change process.

Playing is one of the factors that supports the success of children's growth and development. Because they can stimulate both physical, social, emotional and also their knowledge. Early childhood teachers should provide a learning process appropriate to the child's developmental age. Early childhood education is an educational institution that organizes the early process of children's growth and development. (Kristiawati 2018)

Method

The method used includes a qualitative descriptive approach with field research methods. This research was conducted through direct observation and field interviews with respondents from Madrasah Ibtida'iyah YPRA located on Jalan Batang Kuis, Deli Serdang, North Sumatra. The research also uses an inductive approach, meaning that the data obtained will be used as a basis for drawing conclusions. The population of this study were Madrasah Ibtida'iyah students in the MI YPRA Batang Kuis environment. The sample size was determined using purposive sampling. Data collection techniques in this research include observation, interviews and documentation. Observations are carried out to observe students' social skills. Interviews were

conducted with teachers to gain information about their social experiences. Documentation was carried out to obtain information related to the educational counseling program used by the Islamic educational institution. The collected data was then analyzed using qualitative descriptive data analysis techniques. The analysis includes grouping, classification and interpretation of data. The results of data analysis are then used to draw conclusions in the research.

Result and Discussion

In the counseling guidance program in elementary schools, there are several methods and strategies used to develop students' social skills. One method commonly used is through group activities, where students are placed in small groups guided by a counselor. In this group, students are invited to interact, listen to each other, share experiences, and learn social skills with the guidance of a counselor.

Group activities are an effective approach in developing students' social skills in elementary schools. In small groups, students have the opportunity to practice social skills directly with their peers. They can learn from their own experiences and from the experiences of their peers. Additionally, counselors can provide constructive feedback and assist students in improving their social skills. Through these group activities, students can develop skills such as effective communication, cooperation, and problem solving (Weissberg, R. P., Durlak, J. A., Domitrovich, C. E., & Gullotta, T. P. (Eds.). : 2015).

The use of role plays and simulations is also often used in counseling guidance programs to teach social skills to students. In role-playing games, students are assigned specific roles or characters and they can practice interacting with their peers in realistic situations. For example, they may act as decision makers in the family, members of work groups, or friends who help in conflict situations. In this process, students can learn to understand other people's perspectives, solve problems constructively, and build empathy skills (Masitah, W., & Setiawan, H. R : (2018).

Apart from that, the use of stories or media content can also be effective in teaching social skills to students. Stories or media content that is relevant and related to students' lives can be used to illustrate social situations and provide examples of how to deal with them. For example, a story about a child learning the meaning of friendship or managing emotions can help students understand values and expected behavior in social interactions. In this context, the counselor's role is very important in guiding students to connect the story with their own experiences and learn the necessary lessons (Sinaga, Plora Novita Febrina : 2021).

Previous research has shown that guidance counseling programs in elementary schools can significantly improve students' social skills. A study by Carpenter and Radcliffe found that guidance counseling programs that integrated participatory strategies, role-playing, and group activities were effective in improving students' social skills and had a positive long-term impact. This is accompanied by increased self-confidence, reduced levels of social anxiety, and increased participation in social activities. (Carpenter E. M., (2018).

Another study conducted by Possel, Horn, and Hautmann revealed that guidance counseling programs in elementary schools can help children with mental health problems develop healthy social skills. This program helps children learn to manage their emotions, improve communication skills, and work well together in groups. (Possel, (2017). However, it is important to remember that the effectiveness of guidance and counseling programs in elementary schools can depend on factors such as counselor competency, a supportive school culture, and collaboration between counselors, teachers, and parents. With good cooperation between all related parties, counseling guidance programs can be more effective in developing students' social skills (Nation, M., Allen, T. D., & Toussaint, L. L. : 2015)

In this research, a case study conducted on the effectiveness of guidance and counseling programs in elementary schools will provide further insight into the methods and strategies used in developing students' social skills. It is hoped that the results of this research will provide strong support for the importance of counseling guidance programs in elementary schools in supporting the development of students' social skills and provide a foundation for the development of effective counseling guidance programs in the future (Jamila, M., Hasibuan, M. F., & Wastuti, S. N. Y : 2021)

Conclusion

In this research, the importance of counseling guidance programs in elementary schools in developing students' social skills has been discussed. Strong social skills are critical to students' personal and academic development, especially in this increasingly complex and diverse era. Counseling guidance programs can be an effective means of helping students develop the social skills needed in everyday social interactions.

The results of this research have significant practical implications. First, guidance and counseling programs in elementary schools need to receive greater attention to improve students' social skills. Schools and governments need to provide adequate resources to develop such programs, including the necessary training for counselors. Second, there needs to be close collaboration between counselors, teachers and parents in supporting the development of students' social skills inside and outside the school environment. This can be done through regular meetings, joint training, and effective information sharing. Third, it is also important to continue to evaluate and develop existing counseling guidance programs so that they remain relevant and effective in line with current developments.

Although there has been successful research in showing the effectiveness of guidance and counseling programs in elementary schools, there is still room for further research. Research comparing the effectiveness of different types of guidance and counseling programs, research on the factors that influence program success, and long-term evaluation research will provide a better understanding of the importance of such programs and ways to improve them.

Overall, guidance and counseling programs in elementary schools have an important role in developing students' social skills. Through effective methods and strategies, students can gain strong social skills that will support their success in social interactions and in their personal and academic lives. Support and cooperation from schools, counselors, teachers and parents are very important in ensuring the success of the counseling guidance program. By continuing to conduct research and develop relevant programs, it is hoped that the world of education can disseminate the benefits generated by this program in order to improve the quality of life of students now and in the future.

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