

Effectiveness of Guidance and Counseling Services in Enhancing Children's Self-Adjustment at Kindergartens

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ABSTRACT

Self-adjustment is a crucial function for young children in order for them to beneficially socialize and be accepted in each new environment. Self-adjustment during early childhood education can be assisted by guidance and counseling services in the school environment. This study examined the effectiveness of such services towards enhancing children's self-adjustment. Two kindergartens in the Sub-district of Bungkal, Ponorogo, Indonesia, were the sites visited. The study used quantitative research approach with a causal-comparative design. Data collection was carried out by using checklists and documentation within simple random sampling. Product-moment correlation was used to test validity and reliability. Then the Alpha Cronbach technique for data employed t-test analysis. Results showed that mean values of self-adjustment in the two schools were different and that the kindergarten school with guidance and counseling services scored higher than the school without such services. It was also observed that guidance and counseling teachers directed children's self-adjustment appropriately in a personal manner. This included providing relevant books for parents, as well as giving intensive guidance to the children whose initial adjustment was low, so that those children could better obtain suitable development.



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Introduction

Self-adjustment is an individual adaptive process for interacting with the environment effectively and healthily, as suitable to the situations, realistic perspectives, and social relationships, and in an acceptable and enjoyable way (Reber & Reber, 2001; Susanto, 2011). The purpose of this research is to examine the effectiveness of counseling and guidance towards strengthening the self-adjustment of children in two kindergartens in Ponorogo. Specifically, the research will observe whether the children benefit from the services run in the two kindergartens in the Sub-district of Bungkal, Ponorogo, Indonesia, were the sites visited. Moreover, previous research revealed that children who succeed in the self-

adjustment process are adapting themselves and conforming to expectations, while also advancing their interests and ability to achieve goals, without experiencing undue tension. Success in social adjustment occurs when a person learns to function well amid the individuals, groups, and environments encountered (Hurlock, 1990). Hurlock (2000) further conveys the more detailed view that self-adjustment for a student is the ability to usefully react to the reality, situations, and social relationships encountered in school. Susanto (2011) confirmed that this includes aspects of appreciation of adults and peers, participation in lessons, and cooperation with friends, thereby feeling secure in his or her school environment.

Self-adjustment is, thus, a significant process for forming an individual's personality (Reber & Reber, 2001). The process first occurs through individual and group interactions in the home environment and in the family's societal sphere, and then the process continues in the school setting. In other words, making adjustments as an individual encompasses ways to interact within personal, familial, societal, and environmental expectations and limitations. This process calls upon mental responses and individual actions in order to fulfill such goals, while variously dealing with tensions, frustration, and conflict. The benefit is to foster harmonious relationships that achieve a balance between one's personal perspectives and the norms and demands of family and of the society wherein one lives.

Since social adjustment is a significant developmental arena, experts discuss the issues for individual interaction with cultural surroundings. Successful self-adjustment enables this process in the wider environment to occur effectively and in socially acceptable and personally beneficial ways (Susanto, 2011). Children who succeed well in self-adjustment are those who can adapt according to their interests and abilities in order to achieve their most serious goals without prohibitive anxiety. According to Hurlock (1990), social adjustment is done to have success in interactions with other people, overall environments, and certain significant groups. Similarly, as Hurlock (2000) asserted, self-adjustment is a student's ability to react to situations and relationships in the school, including respecting their peers, their teachers, and the staff.

Based on these definitions, it can be summarized that self-adjustment is a process carried out by an individual, both physically and spiritually, to make accommodations with nature, family, society, and even an acknowledged deity, in order to attain life's happiness and serenity. Clearly, self-adjustment is neither easy nor simple, but rather is complex and demanding, and it concerns the fundamental aspects of individual personality (Susanto, 2011). In childhood, the patterns of behavior are established as each child makes self-adjustment amid various environments encountered (Grolnick & Ryan, 1990). Gradually, children start to detach from sole dependence on parents and to develop levels of self-reliance, due to applying and increasing their ability for self-adjustment. Such progress is important in order for them to be accepted in their social environment (Astutik, 2018).

Self-adjustment guides the formation of characteristics through which personality is expressed. During this process, an individual communicates with the surrounding environments of family, society, and school (Lessy et al., 2021). This is not always easily done amid the many new situations that require time for recognizing patterns while becoming familiar with new situations and new environments. The process is especially notable for children's self-adjustment in a new school environment (Susanto, 2011). Individual success relies on a capability to balance interests and skills to achieve goals, but without prohibitive tensions. Characteristics of good self-adjustment include sociability when working and playing together, helping friends supportively, and striving to be polite and friendly (Grolnick & Ryan, 1990). Intellectual aspects of self-adjustment consist of showing understanding, obeying rules, completing tasks, joining in activities, having boldness appropriately, taking initiative, and working carefully and neatly. Physical aspects are marked by clean attire, personal hygiene, and good maintenance of tools brought to and/or used at school.

Emotional aspects include refraining from such behavior as feeling gloomy, or visibly weeping, or arguing with the teacher, or bullying, or offending classmates, or doing such actions as hitting, kicking, pinching, and biting (Susanto, 2011).

Factors that can influence children's ability to make self-adjustments include attributes such as mental age, physical age, gender, and prior experiences with friendship. Children will be most easily ready to go to school for the first time through a self-adjustment process when they already know many of the other students. As for gender differences, children usually perceive the dissimilarities. When factors allow children to be accepted in a new environment, they are more likely to accept themselves. Such individuals will also be likely to understand their own strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, they will be better enabled to find their way by making appropriate self-adjustment in accordance with their abilities and their potential (Eccles, 1999).

Another factor is the friendship experience at school, amid the various types of children's relationships with their classmates, such as close friends, pals, peers, and new friends. Some of these friends will play especially vital roles in children's self-adjustment. They can become sources of support; however, they can at times be causes of stress. Additional factors within the school setting have effects on children's performance, such as children's perspective about their school, their level of involvement in classes and activities, and to what extent children feel significant and successful in their school. These experiences affect self-adjustment in their new social environment as well as adaptability in their future lives (Wang et al., 2019).

Supports come from all sections of society, such as teachers, parents, and the children's peers. One of the things expected by the parents is that the teachers have expertise and ability to choose good methods for their children's learning process and for developing their children's social abilities. In addition to the teacher's obligation, the parental role for aiding children's self-adjustment is crucial since children spend most of their time with parents every day. If the children have a close bond with family, they will more easily make self-adjustments. Cultural factors also strongly influence children's character building and behavior, so that the children will be accepted in their environment. Furthermore, through the psychology of a child's religion, there can be assistance in reducing conflict, frustration, and tension, thus helping to reduce tension and encourage calmness, peace, and serenity (Novitasari et al., 2021; Susanto, 2011).

Great efforts are made toward the self-adjustment process of every individual, particularly in school. The school's atmosphere can help by creating a beneficial atmosphere for the students' development socially, physically, and academically. The teaching and learning climate can be crafted to be challenging yet enjoyable for students. Efforts by teachers are important in order for them to understand and assess each student's learning achievements, social abilities, and personality aspects. Teaching methods, materials, and feedback for evaluations should help to bring interest, enthusiasm, and motivation for studying because in a study conducted by Harlen and Crick (2003), it is stated that feedback and evaluation sometimes have a negative impact on motivation for learning. Furthermore, health requirements and behavioral rules should be clear and understandable for the students as this tightly correlates Darling-Hammond et al.'s (2020) study mentioning that there are needs of system supports that enable healthy development, and this includes a multi-tiered system of academic, health, and social support. Teachers should be expected to meet standards in order to be role models for educational understanding and teacher collaboration should be enhanced for implementing activities at school. Especially valuable are guidance and counseling services for students, the responsibilities of school leadership in guiding teachers, and maintaining a good relationship between the school and parents, and between the school and the community (Suhada, 2016).

Method

To examine the effectiveness of guidance and counseling on enhancing school children's self-adjustment, this study was designed and implemented as causal-comparative research. This methodology investigates causality by means of observations of factors and effects, as found in the data collected (Duncan & McInnes, 2020; Neuman, 2017). Differences between two groups are examined in order to identify factors responsible for, or correlated with, the differences (Best & Kahn, 2009). The study was undertaken at two Kindergarten schools in the Subdistrict of Bungkal, Ponorogo in Indonesia.

The two schools were each selected from one of two populations of schools in the Subdistrict, namely the schools with guidance and counseling services versus those without such services. This study solicited 15 samples of children's self-adjustment in the Dharma Wanita Munggu Kindergarten, Bungkal, Ponorogo (TK-A), and 15 samples in the Dharma Wanita Bungu Kindergarten, Bungkal, Ponorogo (TK-B). Data collection used a checklist of students' self-adjustment ability and documentation of guidance and counseling service. The data analysis was done via t-testing, as performed by SPSS software Version 21 for Windows.

Results and Discussions

Description of Children's Self-Adjustment

In this following description, the data is used to determine children's self-adjustment at the two Kindergarten schools that were studied in the Sub-district of Bungkal. Dharma Wanita Munggu Kindergarten (TK-A) has a guidance and counseling service, and Dharma Wanita Bungu Kindergarten (TK-B) does not have a guidance and counseling service. The observation checklist was drawn up for 30 sample participants, consisting of 15 children at TK-A and 15 children at TK-B. The following table demonstrates the calculation for comparisons of mean, median, mode, and standard deviation in the self-adjustment checklist.

Tabel 1. Description of Children's Self-Adjustment

N	Valid	15	N	Valid	15
	Missing	0		Missing	0
	Mean	90,17		Mean	73,34
	Median	91,25		Median	72,5
	Modus	97,5		Modus	77,5
	Std. Deviation	7,45		Std. Deviation	9,22

Table 1 shows that there is a guidance and counseling service at Kindergarten Dharma Wanita Mungu covering 15 students, Mean 90,17, Median 91,25, Modus 97,5 and SD 7,45. Whereas the number of students without the guidance and counseling service is 15, Mean 73,34, Median 72,5, and SD 9,22. Results show that the school with guidance and counseling service has higher scores than that without the service.

Hypothesis Testing - Analysis Prerequisite Test

a. Normality Test

The normality test is conducted to observe whether data are distributed normally and thereby to ascertain whether the data have met the prerequisite for t-testing. The data is described as normally distributed if the significance is greater than 0,05 (Healey, 2010; Hinkle et al., 1990). In this normality test, the Kolmogorov Smirnov test was employed. The following table shows the results:

Tabel 2. Normality Test

Variable	Significance Score	α	Remark
Self-Adjustment in DW Munggu Kindergarten	0,08	0,05	Data are normally distributed
Self-Adjustment in DW Bungu Kindergarten	0,200	0,05	Data are normally distributed

Table 2 confirms that the normality test result on the variable of children's self-adjustment at Dharma Wanita Munggu Kindergarten (TK-A) is 0.08, and at Dharma Wanita Bungu Kindergarten (TK-B) is 0.200. Both results are above 0.05, so the significance is $\text{sig} > \alpha$. Consequently, H_0 is accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that the samples come from a normally distributed population.

b. Homogeneity Test

The homogeneity test was conducted to assess whether the data are homogeneous. This test is also a prerequisite for the t-test. The data are homogeneous if the significance level was above 0.05. The homogeneity test result is as follows:

Table 3. Homogeneity Test

Variable	Significance Score	α	Remark
Self-Adjustment	0.261	0.05	Homogeneous Data

The calculation for the homogeneity test was assisted by using SPSS software, and it was found that the significance level was 0.261.

Based on the prerequisite test analysis, it showed that the data show a normal distribution and homogeneity of variance. The following table is the t-test result then obtained using SPSS v.16 for windows.

Tabel 4. T-test Results – Statistics Groups

Score	School	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Score	DW Munggu Kindergarten	15	90.1667	7.46819	1.92828
	DW Bungu Kindergarten	15	73.3333	9.21793	2.38006

Table 4 shows that there is a significant influence of guidance and counseling service to a child's self-adjustment. Data shows that the school with guidance and counseling service has higher Mean, that is 90,17, whereas the school without guidance and counseling service has lower Mean, that is 73,33. Thus, the ability of self-adjustment of a child in the school with the guidance and counseling program is high.

Table 5. Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Score of Equal variances assumed	.019	.891	5.495	28	.000	16.83333	3.06316	16.83140	16.83527
Score of Equal variances no assumed			5.495	26.845	.000	16.83333	3.06316	16.83140	16.83527

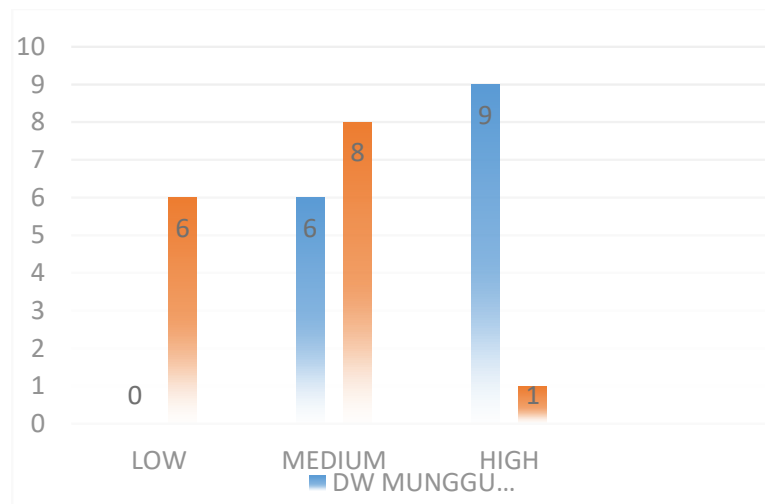
The data t-testing, implemented by using SPSS v.16 for Windows, found a significance level less than 0.0005 (rounded in 3-decimal-digit format as 0.000). Meanwhile, the value of $\alpha = 0.05$ and $0.000 < 0.05$. Even the significance score shows $sig < \alpha$. Consequently, H0 is rejected, and H1 is accepted (Pagano, 2001). Therefore, a notably positive relationship is seen between access to guidance and counseling services and the level of children's self-adjustment at kindergarten schools in Bungkal Subdistrict. In the high category of self-adjustment levels at Dharma Wanita Munggu Kindergarten (TK-A) were 9 students, or 60% of those documented. In the medium category, there were 6 students, which is 40% of the total, and there were no students (0%) categorized as having low self-adjustment. The results for Dharma Wanita Bungu Kindergarten (TK-B), where guidance and counseling services were not available, there was one student, or 6,7%, categorized at the high self-adjustment level;

eight students, or 53,3%, in the medium category; and six students, or 40%, in the low level of self-adjustment.

Discussion

The ability of children to self-adjust at TK-A, where there were guidance and counseling services, was higher overall, with an overall average of 90.17 on the self-adjustment observational data and more children in the highest category, by comparison to TK-B. These results help to confirm the value expert counselors providing guidance to help children make self-adjustment easily. This is seen by the higher percentage of children's self-adjustment ability in the setting with guidance and counseling services, namely with nine students, or 60%, in the high category, six students (40%) in the medium category, and no student in the low category.

Figure 1. Children's Self-Adjustment Ability



By contrast, with no guidance and counseling services at TK-B, the children were found to have overall lower levels of self-adjustment ability. Self-adjustment levels, as sampled at this school, had six students, or 40%, in the low category, eight students, or 53,3%, in the medium category, and one student, or 6,7%, in the high category. These data resulted in an overall lower average score for children's self-adjustment at TK-B, namely 73.34, from the observational data.

The ability of children to make self-adjustment was observed to be better with guidance and counseling services without such services. This is a benefit for self-adjustment development at their age. With the help of such services, children who have problems with self-adjustment can more easily be recognized and then helped to look for alternative solutions to develop self-adjustment capabilities appropriate to their age. For example, as Dharma Wanita Munggu Kindergarten (TK-A) the guidance and counseling services direct children's self-adjustment on a personal basis, such as providing relevant and related books (*buku penghubung*) for parents and given intensive guidance to any children who are having difficulties in self-adjustment development appropriate to their age levels.

The findings of this small yet focused research are in line with the theory that guidance and counseling service can influence children's self-adjustment abilities to develop and improve year by year. This result is in line with Maryono's research demonstrating that

guidance and counseling services can help a student solve personal problems and improve relationships among their peers. During such self-adjustment, children can improve self-confidence, diminish feelings of hate, and resist feeling any need to run away from reality. These steps can be assisted when guidance and counseling services are in place and then seen to have significant correlation with students' developmental abilities (Maryono, 2013).

Baker (2006) asserted that guidance and counseling service refers to an assistance for individuals to achieve self-comprehension and self-direction and to make self-adjustment maximally in the school setting. Baker's (2006) study helps to confirm that capable guidance and counseling are influential for self-adjustment development. In accordance with the children's curriculum of 1994 (in Susanto, 2011), guidance and counseling constitute a process of providing ongoing systematic assistance to individuals, as conducted experts who have obtained specific training for these purposes. Such guidance and counseling aim for individuals to make self-adjustments, understand themselves, and thereby conduct themselves in an exemplary manner in their environment. The guidance and counseling services in kindergarten schools are a valuable asset, so that children learn to observe and modify themselves in their own environments, and notably in their own school's environment (Susanto, 2011).

On a final note, as shown in research conducted by Yunianingsih et al. (2016), an alternative method of guidance counseling service was less successful. In this alternative approach, there was less individualized application of guidance for students to learn and practice self-adjustment. As a result, some students could not make good self-adjustments because they were not fully paying attention while a guidance and counseling teacher was providing the service. Furthermore, it was observed that some students were resistant to being given guidance and counseling services, even when the services were conducted individually and intensively. As a result, those students' self-adjustment levels were low (Yunianingsih et al., 2016). This suggests that further studies could examine what factors in guidance and counseling services are most effective in promoting self-adjustment capability and which types of student characteristics should be taken into consideration for optimal methodologies.

Conclusion

Based on the result of observational research at two kindergartens in Indonesia, the in-school guidance and counseling services were seen to be valuable for raising children's self-adjustment abilities, as compared to student self-adjustment capabilities at a school lacking such services. The beneficial effects of such guidance and counseling services in schools, even at kindergarten age, suggest that society will benefit by facilitating such capabilities, so that students have self-adjustment ability for personal empowerment in school and in their overall environment.

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