

Outdoor Program Based Counseling to Improve Interpersonal Relationship between Special Teachers and Parents of Children with Special Needs in Inclusive School

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Abstract

This study aims to see whether the Outdoor Program Based Counseling method effectively improves interpersonal relationships between Special Assistant Teachers and Parents of Children with Special Needs. This research is quantitative research with an experimental method. Subjects in the study were divided into a control group and an experimental group. Subjects in the experimental group were 28 people. The data obtained in this study used a scale, observation, and interviews which were used as complementary data. The statistical analysis results using the Mann Whitney technique, the significance value obtained is $p = 0.004$, which means it is smaller than 0.05 ($0.004 < 0.05$). From this value, it can be concluded that the Outdoor Based Counseling Program effectively improves the interpersonal relationships of special assistant teachers and parents of children with special needs in inclusive school. From the calculation of effect size, it can be concluded that the effect of Outdoor Based Counseling Program activities on improving interpersonal relationships has a moderate effect. This situation can be caused by several influencing factors such as the influence of the physical environment and nature on the activities carried out, the characteristics of the trainer or facilitator, the grasping power of the debriefing process, as well as attitude towards activities and awareness of their role as parents or teachers.

Keywords

interpersonal relations; special assistant teachers; parents of children with special needs; outdoor based counseling program

I. Introduction

The recent rise to promote inclusive education in Indonesia has led to the proliferation of inclusive schools, especially in big cities, including Surabaya. The phenomenon of inclusive education is in line with the awareness of the necessity to provide education for all. In implementing inclusive education, schools need to restructure so that they become a community that supports the fulfillment of the needs of every child, including children with special needs. For this, of course, schools design and implement strategies as an effort to provide inclusive education. Mc Laughlin (in Astuti, 2012) suggests various essential strategies to build inclusive education in schools, one of which is through offering learning programs for all students and creating a collaborative and flexible climate in the school environment. Creating this strategy, of course, requires a support system which is an essential part of inclusive education. The support system not only comes from the school environment, namely the principal, teachers, and staff but also from the environment outside the school, namely the family (parents) and the community. The support system in the school

environment that is closest to students with special needs is the presence of teachers, especially special assistant teachers. This particular assistant teacher has roles and responsibilities in bridging learning instructions between class teachers and children, controlling children's behavior when in class, helping children to learn and interacting with their friends as well as being a medium of information between class teachers and parents in helping children (Djamaluddin, 2003). A special assistant teacher must have a positive view of children and their education, be proactive about the needs of children with special needs, care about their learning progress, have sufficient competence, and be open to discussion, receive input, and collaborate with others teachers and parents. Collaboration with classroom teachers starts from the implementation of assessments, planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning, accompanied by the division of roles, tasks, and responsibilities in learning. Collaboration with parents is manifested by active communication in providing information related to the development and needs of students and matters relating to the tasks that must be done by parents (Sunaryo, 2009).

However, the reality that occurs in the implementation of inclusive education in the field is that the support system in an effort to accelerate the fulfillment of access and quality of education for all has not run optimally. Sunardi (in Sunaryo, 2009) has conducted research on 12 inclusive schools in the city of Bandung and found issues related to the support system problems that have not been running optimally. Among them is the absence of active collaboration between schools, teachers, parents, and other social institutions. In addition, parental involvement as one of the keys to the success of inclusive education has not been developed properly. Parents and schools, especially teachers, have not created good interpersonal relationships as figures that have an important role in producing the best solutions in serving the learning needs of children at school. Conditions that occur in inclusive schools do show that parents and special assistant teachers do not yet have a good interpersonal relationship. This can be seen from the ineffective communication patterns, the lack of awareness from the parents to listen to what the teacher has said, the lack of self-disclosure to each other, and the lack of awareness to understand each other's roles. Interpersonal relationships are relationships between two or more people who use a consistent pattern of interaction and influence each other (Pearson in Wisnuwardhani, 2012). A good interpersonal relationship always begins with an effective form of communication. By establishing a good relationship with someone, of course, we try to recognize and understand each other's individual needs, form interactions and try to maintain these interactions (Wisnuwardhani, 2012). Good interpersonal relationships, of course, have benefits for individuals who establish relationships, including psychological and social benefits. Interpersonal relationships between teachers and parents, of course, also provide benefits for both. The conditions of unfavorable interpersonal relations between special assistant teachers and parents need to be improved considering how important a good relationship between teachers and parents is in inclusive education. As research conducted by Daven (1999) states that parents feel happy if the teacher has a psychological closeness with them. Because psychological closeness that starts from the teacher's attention is the key to success in fostering good interpersonal relationships between teachers and parents.

Good quality education can occur through a variety of factors that are related to planning, process, community support, and facilities in schools. Planning in this case means the readiness and strategy of what is done by the teacher through a design created by understanding the condition of the class. The process is aimed at how the classroom engineering is done by the teacher as well as in-depth understanding of the material so as to create conducive learning conditions. (Ainsiyah, E. et al. 2020)

Woolley and Bowen (2007) found that positive interpersonal relationships between parents and teachers were able to reduce or minimize negative things that were raised by students who had problems at school. To overcome conditions related to the relationship between parents and special assistant teachers, it can be resolved through the counseling process. Especially the settlement through group counseling, because counseling can help individuals, especially adult individuals, to understand the problems and conditions around them so that they can overcome the problems they face. One type of counseling whose activities have a positive impact on individual adolescents and adults is the type of adventure-based counseling. Direct learning experienced by participants or clients will affect the affective domain to the behavioral domain (Swank, 2010). The concept of adventure-based counseling emerged as an intervention model in solving problems of behavior disorders, self-development, and the formation of cooperation between groups (Gass, 2004). These activities shape the development of character education, such as the ability to be independent, able to cooperate, have empathy, and responsibility for the environment (Brannan & Ann, 2003). The formation of a community between fellow families also began to emerge after the implementation of activities such as adventure-based counseling (School, 2002). Gilson and Ken (in Gass, 2004) found that through adventure therapy or wilderness therapy, they were able to improve interpersonal relationships in some teenagers who had problems related to interpersonal relationships. So that the author intends to implement an outdoor-based counseling program as a form of step to improve positive interpersonal relationships between special assistant teachers and parents, a positive impact is also manifested in this effort. The hope is that when interpersonal relationships can be established between teachers and parents, it will have a positive impact on students with special needs and the sustainability of inclusive education in schools.

Therefore, based on the explanation above and it is deemed urgent to carry out this research activity as a form of intervention, the purpose of this research is to find out the effectiveness of outdoor-based counseling programs in improving interpersonal relationships between special assistant teachers and parents. Although in Indonesia, activities similar to adventure programs are often carried out in the world of management and organization in various agencies. However, the function of character building in the world of inclusive education, especially between parents and teachers, is still rarely applied.

II. Review of Literature

2.1 Parents of Children with Special Needs

Parents of Children with Special Needs are biological fathers and mothers who have one or more family members, namely children who have special characteristics so that they need special services both in terms of care and education. In Mangungsong (2011) the roles and responsibilities of parents are as decision-makers for their children. In the beginning, whatever the professionals did was just to help serve, provide various alternative solutions to problems, according to the problems faced by children with disabilities. However, the choice of which alternative will be taken is entirely the rights and responsibilities of the parents. Likewise, in the education of children with disabilities, it is the parents who have the right and responsibility to make that decision. To be able to carry out these responsibilities, parents must be directly involved in the whole process systematically, including the identification, evaluation and then deciding on the placement of children with disabilities.

2.2 Special Assistant Teacher

As stated by Djamaluddin (2003), a special assistant teacher is "someone who can assist classroom teachers in dealing with children with special needs when needed, so that the learning process can run smoothly without interruption. The duties of an assistant teacher are as follows:

- a. Bridging instruction between teacher and child
- b. Controlling the behavior of children in class
- c. Helping children to stay concentrated
- d. Helping children learn to play or interact with their friends,
- e. Become a medium of information between teachers and parents in helping children catch up with lessons in class.

Assistant teachers play an important role in assisting academic and non-academic development. Non-academic developments such as the development of socialization, communication, and the development of daily living skills training. From the description above, it can be seen the contribution of a companion teacher at an inclusive school in assisting children with special needs. A good companion teacher is one who knows and understands the needs of his students. As well as being a good partner for parents.

2.3 Outdoor Program Based Counseling

The form of this activity was developed from the concept of adventure-based counseling. This activity is a form of activity that offers an experience through games and can also be a challenging learning activity. In this activity, all kinds of activities require cooperation, mutual trust and communication between group members in completing activities or solving problems. Through activities such as adventure-based counseling, one will develop values in shaping self-concept, including self-image, self-esteem, self-satisfaction, and self-realization in achieving success in facing new challenges. As well as build skills to relate to others. The programs provided in this activity not only lead to recreational activities but are also designed as therapeutic or counseling activities (Swang, 2010). At first this form of activity was often referred to by various terms ranging from wilderness therapy, adventure-based therapy, camp counseling and so on (Anderson in Mc Avoy, Smith & Rynders, 2006). This form of the outdoor-based counseling program is a structured activity and experience designed to develop group cohesion through group communication and collaboration to achieve common goals. This technique is used to carry out tasks relying on group interaction as problem-solving. The existence of activities with an model outdoor-based counseling program can provide benefits for individuals, one of which can be useful in increasing participants' perceptions of group cohesiveness. In addition, for individuals with special needs, this activity can improve self-concept, independence as well as social and life skill development. Another benefit of this activity is to increase the atmosphere that can form interpersonal relationships between groups and form a collective awareness that each participant is an important part (Sutherland, 2010).

2.4. Interpersonal Relations

Johnson (2000) defines the ability to establish interpersonal relationships as the sum total of a person's ability to interact effectively with others, namely the ability to initiate, develop and maintain caring and productive relationships. In terms of communication psychology, we can state that the better the interpersonal relationships, the more open people are to expressing themselves (De Vito, 2009). An interpersonal relationship teaches that apart from the family, relationships between community groups have the same nature and dynamics. When people join together and form a relationship, then the relationship will later

become an interpersonal system that influences each other (Connors, 2009). De Vito (2009) characteristic in building interpersonal relationships is always based on openness, trust, supportive attitude, empathy, and positive attitude. Often what happens is ineffective communication, often throwing problems, lack of self-disclosure, and lack of self-awareness to understand each other's conditions.

III. Research Methods

3.1. Research Type

The types of the type used in this research are quantitative research with experimental type. In this study, the authors want to examine the effectiveness of outdoor-based counseling programs in improving interpersonal relationships between parents of children with special needs and special assistant teachers. This experimental research was conducted by researchers with the aim of knowing the effects of manipulation on the observed individual behavior. Experiments can be interpreted as a modification of a certain state, which is then compared with a state without modification (Neuman, 1994).

3.2. Experimental Design

Design The experimental design used in this study was a *pre-test post-test control group design*, using two groups, namely the control group and the experimental group. Before being given treatment, the experimental group (O1) and the control group (O2) will be given a pretest. The pretest was used to measure the dependent variable before the treatment was given. After being given the pretest, the experimental group will receive treatment (X) while the control group will not receive treatment (-). Both groups will still get the post-test (O2 and O4).

3.3. Population and Sample

The population in this study was parents of students with special needs and special assistant teachers. The characteristics for this research sample can be explained as follows:

1. The age of the research sample is between 30-55 years
2. For teachers, has been a special assistant teacher for at least one year
3. Education level is SMA-S2
4. Willing to take part in the activities in this study.

The total control and experimental groups were 56 people with details of 28 experimental groups and 28 control groups.

3.4. Data Collection Techniques Data

Collection techniques were carried out by informal interviews with a checklist guide containing questions about interpersonal relationships that had been carried out by teachers and parents. As well as measurement through the scale of Interpersonal Relation.

IV. Result and Discussion

The results of statistical tests on data obtained through checklist interviews, it can be concluded that the application of outdoor-based counseling programs is effective in improving interpersonal relationships between GPK and parents of children with special needs. This effectiveness can be seen from the efforts made by each party to bond with each other after the activity is completed. And at the time of the activity, they use each other's time to establish a closeness which ultimately leads to the formation of an interpersonal relationship between the two, both from the teacher and from the parents. The following are the results of statistical tests that have been carried out:

Table 1. Statistical Results of Interview Checklist Data

Statistical Results	
	Data
Z	-10.211
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
a. Grouping Variable: group	

The following are statistical results based on data obtained through the interpersonal relationship scale. The results of non-parametric statistical calculations using Mann Whitney, which are operated through SPSS for Windows 16.00 on scores from pretest and post-test data, are as follows:

Table 2. Statistical Calculation Results Based on Interpersonal Relations Scale Data

Test Statistics^a	
	Gainscore
Z	-2.892
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.004
a. Grouping Variable: kelompok	

Based on these results, it is known that the results of calculations using Mann Whitney, the significance value obtained is $p = 0.004$, which means it is smaller than 0.05 ($0.004 < 0.05$). In other words, outdoor activities are effective in increasing individual potential in terms of interpersonal relationships between special assistant teachers and parents of children with special needs. Interpersonal relationships to the formation of active collaboration between teachers and parents will also provide comfort for children. Children will, of course, also feel comfortable and trust the teacher if parents and teachers foster active collaboration related to their learning activities (Keyser in Porter, 2008). When an interpersonal relationship between parents and teachers is formed by openly providing information, active communication, mutual trust, and support, solving problems together, and listening and understanding each other, parents actually also provide opportunities for the progress of their children's education. The positive and continuous interaction between the two after the *outdoor-based counseling program* will also increase their confidence in building their relationship.

V. Conclusion

This study resulted in answer to a hypothesis, which states that *outdoor-based counseling programs are effective in improving interpersonal relationships between parents of students with special needs and special assistant teachers*. The factors that support the success of this research are the support from the teachers and parents as well as the positive enthusiasm of the participants during the activity. Suggestions for the school should be active in organizing activities *parenting class* so that parents can also develop other interpersonal relations attitudes. For example, in a parenting class with the theme of student behavior problems at school, parents, and teachers can have discussions related to student behavior problems. By discussing together, opening up to each other, listening to and understanding each other, and learning to solve problems together, interpersonal relationships will be realized. Interpersonal relationships that are maintained through joint activities will form an active collaboration between teachers and parents.

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