

# THE IMPACT OF CHILDREN'S SCHOOL READINESS ON CHILDREN'S LEARNING BEHAVIOUR

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## **ABTRACT**

*School readiness refers to the overall condition of students in answering and responding during the process of teaching and learning activities at school. These conditions can be referred from several development aspects, i.e. the aspects of physical health and welfare, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive, communication skills and knowledge. Children's school readiness are supported by several factors such as health condition, security, children and family welfare, and residency and environment condition. However, the current condition of the Indonesian children in recent years has not fully supported the children school readiness. UNICEF reported, that in 2012 the socioeconomic level of Indonesian children is still low. More than 50% of children, or 44.3 millions, are living in poverty. They are suffering from malnutrition, encountering difficulty to access to clean drinking water, sanitation and hygiene for them to survive. Moreover, the fulfillment of children protection in Indonesia has yet focused on the rehabilitation for children as the victims of violence, abusive acts, neglect, and exploitation. Based on the results of the researcher's study, children's school readiness might have an impact on children's learning behaviors, in which are manifested in the ability to observe, think rationally and critically, and the tendency of attitudes toward people or goods. Therefore, the researcher is interested to examine the impact of children's school readiness on children's learning behaviors.*

**Keywords:** *Readiness of school, children, learning behavior*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

School readiness refers to the overall condition of students in answering and responding during the process of teaching and learning activities at school. These conditions can be referred from several development aspects, i.e. the aspects of physical health and welfare, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive, communication skills and knowledge.

Children's school readiness are supported by several factors such as health condition, security, children and family welfare,

and housing and environment condition. It is in line with the results of the study suggested that children who are exposed to housing and environmental problems have low preschool readiness scores which mediated by mistreatment, housing instability, and high lead levels (Coulton, Richter, Kim, Fischer, & Cho; 2016). Moreover, the family economic conditions also have an impact – especially for children whose parents are divorced so that they are raised by single parent who has to work – on the quality of accompaniment and handling in

preparing children for school (Janus & Duku, 2016). The necessity to stay healthy becomes one of the things that supports the children's school readiness. Doctors can assist children's school readiness by promoting the good nutrition, optimal growth and physical health as part of children's health care, as well as providing immunization and anticipatory guidance (High et al., 2015). Furthermore, parents can support the readiness of children through favorable routine activities such as storytelling, break bread, playing together, and ensure that their children have enough sleep so as it will be reciprocal to the development of children's health (High et al., 2015).

The socioeconomic conditions of the children might also support the children's readiness toward pre-school service facilities. It is in line with the results of the study suggested that children who belong to the groups of high socioeconomic status are better prepared for school than those with low socioeconomic status, which may be influenced by the fulfillment of media procurement, experienced teachers, and pre-school facilities (Ip et al., 2016).

The above elucidation indicates that the support for children's school readiness can be undertaken by parents, educational institutions and the community. The support to the children's school readiness will be more effective if parents, educational institutions, and communities have the same knowledge and understanding of the importance of school readiness. It is in line with the results of the study suggested that the effective institutions in supporting children's school readiness are institutions that can encourage parents to work with pre-school and elementary school teachers (Şahin, 2013).

However, the current conditions of the Indonesian children in recent years has not fully supported the children's school readiness. UNICEF reported, that in 2012 the socioeconomic level of Indonesian children is still low. More than 50% of children, or 44.3 millions, are living in poverty. They are suffering from malnutrition, encountering difficulty to access to clean drinking water, sanitation and hygiene for them to survive. Moreover, the fulfillment of children protection in Indonesia has yet focused on the rehabilitation for children as the victims of violence, abusive acts, neglect, and exploitation. In 2012, Indonesia ranks second from the countries where its inhabitants are still indiscriminately defecate, and the third largest country in the number of unimmunized children and the fifth in the number of children with growth impediments. By 2015, as many as 1.9 million children under 1 year are not fully immunized. By 2014, as many as 37% of children under the age of five years suffered from malnutrition thus caused stunting, and children aged 7-18 years as many as 6.8 million children are not attending school. Only 42% of Indonesian infants under 6 months obtained the exclusive breast-milk (ASI). As many as 63% of children aged 23 months do not obtain adequate complementary foods for breast-milk.

Based on the elucidation above, the condition of children will have an impact or effect on their next lifestage. It is in accordance with the results of research suggested that the poor sanitation might induce diarrhea and pneumonia, while children who experience stunting are predicted to encounter constraints to learning in school (Unicef, 2015). Children underwent the chronic malnutrition within the first 1000 days of their life

will encounter the physical and cognitive growth impediments later in their life (Unicef, 2013). Without school preparation there will be an arising impact that often leads to dropouts and the poor development. Children who have at least 1.5 years of preparation are more likely to succeed in school than those who do not receive early education.

## **2 SCHOOL READINEES**

School readiness refers to the overall condition of students in answering and responding during the process of teaching and learning activities at school (Mulyani, 2013). In a narrower sense, school readiness is the ability of children to meet school demands, such as feeling comfortable in exploring and asking questions, the ability to hold a pencil, the ability to listen to the teacher instruction, playing and working, recollecting and following the rules (Janus et al., 2007). Whilst in the broader sense, the school readiness or childhood conditions can be referred from several developmental aspects. The Early Development Instrument (EDI) assesses children aged 4-7 years in five aspects of child development: physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, knowledge and communication skills (Janus et al., 2007, Salua et al., 1999 & Hair et al., 2006).

According to the elucidation above, it is obvious that to prepare children in entering school, all aspects of child development must be fulfilled, i.e. the aspects of physical health and welfare, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, communication and knowledge. It means that both the cognitive and non-cognitive

dimensions must be considered for early childhood development, as it will have an impact on the children's academic achievement in the future (Davies, Janus, Duku, & Gaskin, 2016).

### **2.1 Physical Health and Welfare**

School readiness in relation to the physical health and welfare refers to the situation in which children are in a state of complying with physical readiness and independence to attend school, gross and fine motor skills required (Janus et al., 2007).

### **2.2 Social Competency**

School readiness in relation to the social competence refers to the situation in which children can be responsible and respectful to themselves and others, have an approach to learning and are ready to explore new things (Janus et al., 2007). Many teachers argue that children's readiness to learn and their social learning ability are characterized by positive emotional expressiveness, enthusiasm, and ability to manage emotions and behavior (Denham, 2006).

### **2.3 Emotional Maturity**

School readiness in relation to the moral maturity refers to the situation in which children begin possessing the pro-social and helpful behaviour; they recognize and understand their feelings (Janus et al., 2007). School readiness is also characterized by children's ability to manage emotions and deal with stress unmolestedly (Commodari, 2013).

### **2.4 Language and Cognitive Development**

School readiness in the language and cognitive development dimension refers to

the situation in which children have mastered basic literacy, interested in literacy or arithmetic and utilized literacy memories, and mastered the basic advanced level of literacy (Janus et al., 2007).

## **2.5 Communication Ability and Knowledge**

School readiness in the communication skills dimension refers to the situation in which children are able to communicate their own needs and understand others, showing an interest in general knowledge of the world (Janus et al., 2007).

## **3 THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL READINESS**

The children's readiness in entering school can have an impact on children's learning behavior. The positive learning behavior of children's will constitute a supportive thing for the effective learning process, resulting the achievement of educational goals. School readiness aids children to attain the successful transition in a formal learning environment (Fantuzzo, Bulotsky, McDermott, McWayne, & Frye, 2007). On the contrary, a negative learning behavior will prevent children from achieving the educational goals to be achieved. It is in accordance with the results of research suggested that preschool and first-grade teachers stated that during the transition period they experience difficulties in conducting the learning, in which they should prepare children so as they are able to adapt to more academic learning activities more easily, teaching children to be able to abide by the rules and limit the problem of children's behavior in the classroom (Şahin, 2013).

Furthermore, teachers are more concerned about children's readiness in social development than academic readiness in fact, in which case children are able to express what they want and what they think, children are not neglected in class, children are able to take turns and

share (Lin, Lawrence, & Gorrell, 2003). Since there is no doubt that children who are still going through difficulties to adapt socially in the classroom or have behavior problems, will affect the comfort of the classroom environment, whether it is perceived by the child himself or by her/his classmates. The uncomfortable learning environment can affect the focus of the child in listening to the subject matter or learning delivered by the teacher. This is in accordance with the results of research suggested that the aggressive children are receiving rejection from peers, they will find it harder to adapt to school and environment routines, thus risking future the academic difficulties, delinquency and drug abuse in the future (Webster & Jamila, 2004). And otherwise there is a positive interaction with peers and teachers will give them a more positive view of the school, they will more participate in various school activities, and feelings accepted by the environment (Denham, 2006). Hence, it is important for parents, educators, and community to properly comprehend the impact of children's school readiness. The following are the impacts of school readiness on children's learning behavior:

### **3.1 Observation**

Observation is the process of receiving and interpreting through the sense. Observing behaviors is necessary in learning activities, as an effort to comprehend the material submitted by the teacher. Children's school readiness affects children's learning behavior in the future. It is in accordance with the results of several studies suggested that school readiness provides predictions on early math skills, reading skills thereupon, and observation skill eventually (Duncana et al., 2006). This school readiness can be achieved through the fulfillment of children's sense of security early on, either at home or at school. Children who feel safe during preschool are inclined to have higher observation

skills, pre-reading skills and better reading attitudes (Commodari, 2013).

### 3.2 Rational and Critical Way of Thinking

Rational and critical thinking is one of the manifestations of learning behavior. The cognitive strategy is required in rational and critical thinking. Therefore, children should be stimulated early to develop cognitive aspects, such as the ability to solve problems, logical thinking, representative ability and symbolic thinking. Children who have school readiness have strong linkage in third grade of elementary school, such as readiness in cognitive dimensions that have a close link with the ability to read, write, and math (Davies et al., 2016). On the contrary, children who possess the language and cognitive skills with a combination of health aspects below average during pre-school is predicted to obtain low scores on math and reading at the end of first grade (Hair, Halle, Terry-humen, Lavelle, & Calkins, 2006). The ability to read, write, and math is certainly an early basic ability of children to be able to think rationally (research).

### 3.3 Attitude

The language and cognitive skills with a combination of below-average emotional aspects is predicted the lowest level of self-control and motivation in the classroom by the end of first grade (Hair et al., 2006).

Promoting children's well-being since the early years of their life has a close link with children's learning behaviors such as observation skill, persistence and motivation to learn (Kull & Coley, 2015). Aggressive children and got rejected by peers will encounter the difficulties in adapting to school routines and environment, and at risk of academic difficulties, delinquency and drug abuse in the future (Webster & Jamila, 2004).

Children who have not reached the social-emotional maturity is predicted to be less participating in the class, less accepted by their friends, less like school and less learning, display the low academic performance ability in first grade, tend to drop out and even stick out in antisocial behavior (Denham, 2006).

## 4 CONCLUSION

Based on the above explanation, pursuing school readiness is important, in the dimensions of physical health and welfare, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, and communication ability and knowledge. Many factors can affect the children's school readiness, including the factors of health, welfare of children and families, housing and environmental conditions. The readiness factor must also be considered, since it will impact on children's learning behavior in the future, which are manifested in the ability to observe, think rationally and critically, and the tendency of attitudes toward people or goods. By knowing the impact of the readiness of learning in children, parents, teachers or the community might better prepare children's school readiness accordingly.

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