



The Role of Parents in Supporting Children's Mental Health

Cendy Luciana Lotulung¹; Sennyta Andrea Triasta²; Juwinner Dedy Kasingku^{3*}

Universitas Klabat^{1,2,3*}

*Corresponding Author: kasingkujuwinnerdedy@gmail.com

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian deskriptif-kualitatif dengan pendekatan library research yang membahas tentang peran orang tua dalam mendukung kesehatan mental anak-anak. Kesehatan mental seorang anak merupakan hal yang harus diperhatikan oleh para orang tua. Orang tua memiliki tanggung jawab sebagai guru pertama dalam mendukung berbagai aspek kehidupan anak-anak, terutama dalam menjaga kesehatan mental mereka agar tidak mengalami masalah dalam perkembangan mental. Penelitian ini juga bertujuan untuk mengetahui tipe dan gejala dari kesehatan mental serta faktor-faktor yang dapat mempengaruhinya. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa peran orang tua sangat penting dalam mendukung kesehatan mental anak-anak, agar mereka terhindar dari gejala-gejala yang dapat mengganggu kehidupan dan masa depan mereka. Orang tua perlu menciptakan lingkungan yang aman dan mendukung, memperhatikan kebutuhan emosional anak, dan memfasilitasi komunikasi terbuka. Dengan demikian, anak-anak dapat berkembang dengan baik dan memiliki kesehatan mental yang optimal, yang sangat penting untuk keberhasilan mereka di masa depan.

Kata Kunci: Peran Orang Tua, Kesehatan Mental, Anak-Anak

Abstract

This study is descriptive-qualitative research using a library research approach, focusing on the role of parents in supporting children's mental health. Children's mental health is something parents need to pay attention to. Parents have a responsibility as the primary educators in supporting various aspects of their children's lives, especially in maintaining their mental health to avoid issues with their mental development. This study also aims to understand the types and symptoms of mental health issues and the factors that can influence them. The results show that parents play a crucial role in supporting children's mental health to prevent issues that could affect their lives and futures. Parents need to create a safe and supportive environment, attend to their children's emotional needs, and facilitate open communication. By doing so, children can develop well and have optimal mental health, which is essential for their future success.

Keywords: *The Role of Parents, Mental Health, Children*

Introduction

The role of parents includes many important aspects of a child's life. This role can be described as the activities or behaviors expected from parents to influence the growth and development of their children. If a family effectively fulfills its role, children will feel comfortable in their family environment (Rakhmawati, 2015). As the first teachers, parents have a big responsibility in nurturing, educating, and preparing children for social life. Besides providing examples and advice, parents also create a strong foundation for their children's development by offering love, protection, and well-being. Their role is not only limited to emotional aspects but also includes character education at home, which shapes children's ethics and moral values.

In helping children plan their future, parents need to understand their children's interests and talents, provide appropriate guidance, and work together with others like schools, families, and the community. This awareness is key to creating an environment that supports children's holistic development, including psychological, moral, and social aspects. Character education at home also plays an important role in shaping children's self-perception and mental health. An environment that provides enough emotional support and promotes positive values can contribute to better mental health in children. Therefore, the role of parents is not only limited to physical care but also involves creating well-rounded individuals. Family members understand us since the beginning of our lives. Therefore, the family can be a place where we can talk about various problems we face, not an additional source of burden. The role of parents in the family is especially significant in helping maintain the mental health of other family members (Umroh, 2019).

Mental health is very important for everyone, especially for the development of children. Good mental health means that the person can perform all activities regularly. According to Yuliandari, mental health is “a condition where an individual has well-being and

can cope with normal life pressures in various situations, work productively and produce results, and contribute to their community” (2018). Nowadays, children are influenced by many factors that disturb their mental health. This continues to increase globally and affects them into adulthood. Especially during adolescence, when children start facing new problems, experimenting, and needing others' opinions, especially those of parents, because parents play a crucial role as psychologists for their children (Safitri, 2021).

Children are the future of the nation, so their development needs attention. Mental health issues affect not only teenagers but also elementary school children. According to Prihatiningsih & Wijayanti, “Data shows that emotional mental disorders in elementary school students in Salatiga City in 2016 increased from previous years, from 11.5% in 2015 to 20.4% in 2016” (2019). Therefore, mental health issues in children can happen to anyone at any age. It is important for parents to educate and support their children to always feel loved. When parents focus on their children's development, they can avoid negative factors that may affect their mental health.

Mental health should not be taken lightly. It must be maintained and cared for so that children feel safe and can adapt to their surroundings. Therefore, parental encouragement and support are needed in developing children's mental health. Parents need a strong sense of responsibility and wisdom to guide their children's development. As children grow older, they will face new things and have many questions. There are also many reasons why children's mental health might be disturbed. Thus, it is the parents' duty to answer and provide solutions and encouragement for their children. The aim of this writing is to raise awareness of the importance of the role of parents in supporting children's mental health.

Method

This research was conducted using a descriptive-qualitative approach. The qualitative research method aims to deeply explain a phenomenon by collecting extensive data.

Qualitative methods prioritize observing the phenomenon and examining the substance of its meaning. The emphasis is explained comprehensively in terms of form, function, and meaning. According to Bogdan and Taylor (1975), qualitative methodology is a method that produces descriptive research data in the form of written or spoken words that can be observed. For data collection, the researcher used the library research method, which involves gathering data through readings and literature related to the research topic.

Result and Discussion

The Role of Parents

The family is very important for individuals and is also the first social group where children become a part of it. The family is the first place where children learn about life. Therefore, parents need to understand and fulfill their roles and responsibilities towards their children and family. Here, parents refer to both the father and mother. The father acts as the head of the family and leader, while the mother is a partner to her husband in guiding the children. Parents should be good examples for their children because the family is the first and main place where education begins. The role of parents is crucial in directing the growth and development of their children. Effective parenting not only creates a comfortable and supportive environment for the children but also helps them develop their abilities, emotions, learning, examples, moral values, and mental and physical health (Busra, 2019). Here are some roles that parents can play for their children:

1. Emotional Support

Parents provide stable and consistent emotional support to their children, helping them overcome difficulties, anxieties, and fears. Parents are the closest people to their children. They have the responsibility to nurture and guide their children by setting a good example in daily life (Wijayanto, 2020). For instance, by giving

hugs, listening attentively, and offering encouraging words.

2. Learning

Parents act as educators because their responsibility is to train the child's skills, especially in mental training (Umar, 2015). The goal is to support their children's education, both at school and at home. They help children learn to read, write, and understand important concepts, and encourage them to explore their interests and talents.

3. Role Models

Parents serve as role models for the desired behaviors and values for their children. They strive to show positive attitudes, such as sympathy and empathy, so that children can learn from their example. For children to imitate positive things from their parents, it is important for parents to present themselves as good examples by displaying appropriate behavior and noble attitudes (Arifin and Tjahjono, 2020).

4. Moral Values

Parents teach their children the importance of morality, ethics, and good values. The aim of character education is to strengthen the child's moral foundation as preparation for life, so they can adapt to their environment (Widianto, 2015). They guide their children in understanding the difference between right and wrong and developing respect for themselves and others.

5. Mental and Physical Health

Parents ensure that their children receive the necessary health care, both mental and physical. They should know when to have regular doctor visits, vaccinations, and maintain a healthy diet. For mental health, parents need to get close to their children so they do not feel alone. When children experience stress or something troubling their mind from their environment or friends, parents can talk with them and listen to their perspectives. Parents can also support physical activities and activities that enhance physical well-being. Health education includes all efforts

aimed at providing and enhancing good knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors in individuals, groups, and society as a whole (Hartati et al., 2022).

Parenting Techniques

Parenting refers to the methods used by parents to guide and nurture their children, influenced by various factors such as communication, support, and rules (Shaleh, 2023). Here are some techniques that parents apply to their children:

1. Communication

Parents need to create an environment that allows children to speak openly about their feelings, problems, and concerns. Listening attentively, acknowledging their feelings, and providing good feedback will strengthen the parent-child relationship. Communication is crucial, especially regarding school, social life, hobbies, and aspirations (Hartati et al., 2022).

2. Support

Recognizing and praising desired behaviors will reinforce them. When children receive positive reinforcement for good behavior, they are likely to repeat it. This creates a positive environment where children feel valued and motivated to do better. The role of parents as motivators is a process where they encourage and drive their children to perform certain actions according to the desired goals. Therefore, parents are directed to be sources of motivation for their children (Arifin and Tjahjono, 2020).

3. Rules

It is important for parents to set consistent rules and boundaries and enforce appropriate consequences when rules are broken. The enforcement of rules in the family aims to instill awareness in children about the importance of goodness (Arifin and Tjahjono, 2020). Consistency helps children understand the expectations and boundaries set, creating security and structure in their lives.

Mental Health

Health needs to be considered both physically and mentally. Health must be maintained and protected by its owner, especially

the health of children who need to experience healthy growth, both physically, emotionally, and mentally. Unfortunately, many children start to experience problems with their mental health. Children aged 15-24 years show symptoms of depression (Aisyaroh, Hudaya, & Supradwei, 2022). Changes in children do not only occur physically but also mentally. According to Hartati et al. (2022), mental changes include the emotions and intelligence of children, which can cause mental problems (2022). Children with good mental health can carry out daily activities regularly and happily. "Mentally healthy people will feel a lifetime of satisfaction" (Hassan & Mud'is, 2022).

Mental health is a person's condition in a stable phase to do something without feeling pressured or anxious. According to Rozali et al. (2021), mental health is the realization of a true balance between psychological functions and the ability to adapt to oneself, others, and the environment. As stated by Siby & Kasingku (2024), optimal mental health is when someone can cope with pressure, manage their emotions, and relate positively to others. The goal of mental health is to ensure the well-being of every individual in carrying out daily activities and to be able to face all obstacles and achieve their goals in a good state. Mentally healthy people tend to feel happier, and more joyful, and behave normally.

Types and Symptoms of Mental Health

1. Mood Disorders

The first type is mood disorders in children. A child's mood can be defined as feelings that may be less intense and arise in certain situations or conditions (Azfa et al., 2024). With the growth and development of children, they begin to feel something different, which brings about mood traits, whether happy or sad. In this case, symptoms of mood disorders in children can include prolonged sadness, excessive anxiety, or feelings of worthlessness.

2. Behavioral Disorders

The second type is behavioral disorders. Behavioral disorders refer to behaviors that violate norms and rules (Anisah, 2015). When children are affected mentally, they will express

it through their behavior. Symptoms of behavioral disorders in children can include withdrawing from social activities, avoiding friends and family, or having difficulty maintaining interpersonal relationships.

3. Depression

The last type is depression. Depression is a condition that affects a person's perception and thoughts. It also causes sustained feelings of sadness and a loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities (Arsini et al., 2023). Depression significantly affects children's mental health as it involves medical concerns. Continuous sadness can negatively impact a child's activities and future. Symptoms can include staying alone in their room and constantly thinking about what makes them sad.

Factors Influencing Mental Health

Children in their growth phase and trying to understand themselves will not experience mental health problems if not influenced by several factors. These factors are always around the children. Here are some factors that affect children's mental health:

1. Environment

A clean and good environment greatly affects the growth and health of every individual, including children. The environment includes family, school, and community. Social environment cannot be separated because, without the support of people around, individuals cannot develop and learn many things (Reza et al., 2022). Many things are gained from the surrounding environment, such as good behavior and significant pressure. Especially in the family environment, where many children do not feel warmth, making them feel unsafe and uncomfortable. This can be due to a lack of communication and support among each other. Research by Nuramanah et. al (2023) shows that 57.7% of teenagers feel more comfortable outside the home because no one waits for their return. Children start to feel comfort in the company of

friends and at school because they feel understood and get emotional support from each other. Hence, there needs to be parenting and a relationship between children and parents. Friendly actions, providing warmth to the children, and showing pride in their achievements can make children feel comfortable, happy, and trust their family, strengthening their mental health. When the environment around children is chaotic, their mental health will be disturbed, making their lives less comfortable, more stressed, tired, and bored (Putri et al., 2024).

Technology and Social Media

With the advancement of technology, it has become an integral part of daily life, making tasks and work easier and faster. Not only adults, but children are also becoming familiar with technology and even using social media (Triyono, et al., 2017). According to Kasingku & Sanger (2023), gadgets can significantly facilitate communication, but they can also have negative effects if not used wisely. Social media is an internet technology that successfully fosters interactivity, forming social networks for communication. Sometimes, parents are too busy with their work to monitor what their children are accessing. Children who spend too much time on technology or social media can become more anxious and have difficulty controlling their emotions due to being too comfortable in the world of technology and social media. Anxiety related to social media is the desire to express oneself unrealistically and seek unattainable perfection (Rosmalina and Khaerunnisa, 2021). Without proper control over children's use of technology and social media, they may experience mental health issues and reduced social interaction. Therefore, according to Welan (2023), to achieve balanced mental health, it is necessary to balance modern knowledge, including technology and social media, and to study God's Word daily, so that one's mind can be controlled to choose what is good for maintaining mental health.

Conclusion

The importance of parents' roles in supporting child development, especially in terms of mental health. Parents have a big responsibility in raising, educating, and preparing children for social life. They act not only as educators but also as role models, guides, and providers of emotional support. Character education at home is also crucial in shaping a child's self-perception and mental health. Children's mental health is a key focus because mental health issues can occur

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