

A Study on Parents' Perception of School Program (Pemenuhan Gizi dan Kesehatan) in Improving Students' Academic Achievement In Selected Primary Schools

Siti Salmah ^{1*}, Angela Syafriani ¹

¹ Universitas Muhammadiyah Tapanuli Selatan, Indonesia

 indrakete11@gmail.com*

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to examine parents' perceptions of the school program (pemenuhan gizi dan kesehatan) which is a program introduced by the Ministry of Education of Indonesia as part of its effort to enhance students' academic achievement. This phenomenological qualitative study was conducted among six parents of primary school children in the area Northern Sumatra. These parents were divided into three categories; non-working mothers, working mothers and working fathers. Individual interviews were carried out to collect the data in the study. Results revealed that the parents agreed to and lauded the importance of parental support. However, the results indicated that the parents' knowledge of the program differed and their perceptions varied. They faced similar challenges in supporting their children's learning but developed different strategies to overcome them based on their different social backgrounds, genders and occupations.

Keywords: Students' Academic Achievement, Pemenuhan Gizi dan Kesehatan,

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INTRODUCTION

Current researches show that most parents in Indonesia belong to the working people where they seem to be busy with their work. As a result, most of them pay little attention to their children's development and their learning process. Since parents do not have much time to personally engage in their children's learning process, the responsibility of their children's learning has been accorded to school including the foods their children consume daily. At the same time, the level of children's interest in education, their academic performance and achievement are simultaneously determined by the programs that school provided such as the program of *pemenuhan gizi dan Kesehatan*. (perpres, 2024).

According to *peraturan Presiden no 83 tahun 2024*, school Program *pemenuhan gizi dan Kesehatan* is the initiative of the Indonesian government to make sure students get balance nutrition in order to improve children's learning process and academic achievement. Furthermore, the objective of this program is to help parents to support child learning by means of preparing a good nutrition meal for students to consume daily. Lim, (2008) stated that "the role of parents in managing their children's learning experiences whether at home or school has long been considered critical to child academic success. The importance of parental support in schools has been well documented over the years. Research has shown that one of the most effective approaches to enhance student achievement is active parental involvement in the education of their children"

(p.23). Furthermore, according to Abdullah Abdullah, Seedee, Alzaidiyeen, Al-Shabatat, Alzeydeen and Al-Awabdeh (2011), stated that activities including at home and school consist of the part of parental support that plays an important role in child education. Menon, (2013) also provided the indication that parental support plays a significant role in child development. Thus, teachers should be united in shouldering the responsibility of enhancing their students' learning process. They may invite parents to share this role in providing better education for the students and providing a good and balance nutrition food for students the one of the ways that parents and schools can do in collaboration.

As stated by Ahmad and Said, (2013), education requires collaboration and it cannot be viewed in isolation. However, there are several factors that might influence parents' perceptions of their support in child learning. It might be due to the differences in parents' socioeconomic backgrounds such as their level of education, the location of their houses and their income level, (Hsiang-YehHo, 2005). In addition, there are different challenges, problems and barriers that might be faced by parents in supporting their children's learning, (Lee & Bowen, 2006). Specifically, the purpose of this study is to examine in general parents' experiences and perceptions of school program *pemenuhan gizi dan Kesehatan* in improving child learning process. The other purpose is to investigate some of the challenges and barriers faced by parents in supporting their children's learning. Briefly, the research questions of the study are as follows:

1. What are parents' perceptions of their roles in supporting their children's learning?
2. What are parents' perceptions toward school program *pemenuhan gizi dan Kesehatan* in improving child learning process and academic achievement?
3. What are some of the problems and challenges faced by parents in supporting their children's learning?

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design with a specific focus on phenomenological approach. According to Creswell (2007) a phenomenological study is "a study that attempts to understand people's perspectives and understanding of a particular situation or to address meanings and perspectives of research participants (phenomenon)" (p. 15). This approach is recommended for the investigation of a phenomenon. Moustakas (1994) stated that "the focus of phenomenological inquiry is to investigate what people experience in regard to a certain phenomenon faced by others and how they interpret those experiences" (p. 35). The use of the phenomenological approach in this research would provide the researcher in-depth information pertaining to the phenomenon of parents' perceptions of the implementation of *pemenuhan gizi dan Kesehatan* program in improving child learning process and academic achievements in primary schools.

Participant

The participants of this study were parents who had children studying in primary schools in within the area of North Sumatera Province. This research used purposive sampling to select the participants for the study. Powel (1998) justified that purposive sampling is favoured because this sampling focuses on the specific rather than general criteria of participants and usually the sample size based on this method is rather small. Parents' employment status was the criterion of participant selection in this study. In addition, the number of participants selected for this study was limited to only six parents as recommended by Creswell (2007) who urged that the number of participants in a phenomenological research design should be between five and twenty five (5-25) participants. Therefore, in this study the researcher selected six participants to be interviewed two of whom were working mothers, two were working fathers, while the remaining two were non-working mothers. Due attention was paid to the process of

gaining access to the schools, selection of participants, developing and maintaining rapport as well as maintaining ethical protocols.

Data collection procedures

One on one interviews were carried out to collect data in this study. In the process of conducting interviews, prior appointments with the participants were made. This was done in order to inform the participants of the exact and or fixed dates and time slots for the interviews. After obtaining their consent, the researcher began the interview sessions. The interview questions centred around the research questions and the interviews were recorded in a tape-recorder and later transcribed verbatim. The responses were then converted into themes. The interview sessions took approximately 20 to 30 minutes and were conducted at work places and houses of the participants.

Interview Protocol

According to Creswell (2007), other than observation, interview is also another useful method in a qualitative research to collect data. An interview protocol helps an interviewer to organize his or her thoughts related to certain parts of the interviews such as headings, information about the way to start and end the interview, concluding ideas and expression of gratitude to the informants. An interview protocol consists of a set of questions to be answered by informants in a study and it also includes the informed consent form. It is a guideline for a researcher to conduct the interviews in a proper manner (Jacob and Fugerson, 2012). In order to answer the research questions, the right selection of questions during an interview is very important. Leech (2002) highlighted the purpose of conducting an interview as; "What you already know is as important as what you want to know. What you want to know determines which questions you will ask. What you already know will determine how you ask them." (p. 667).

It helped the researcher to become more confident in conducting the interviews with the participants and the researcher also had the chance to exercise effective communication skills and establish a good rapport with the participants.

Data Analysis

The data were analysed using the general analytical procedures underlined by Rahman, (2008). First of all, all the data were transcribed word by word while listening to the recording on the tape-recorder. Secondly, all the transcribed data were read carefully and important words and phrases for each of response were highlighted. Then, the similarities and differences among the participants were identified based on their responses to the interview questions. Finally, the results were analysed carefully. The themes were identified based on the common ideas that emerged on the implementation *pemenuhan gizi dan Kesehatan* program in improving child learning process and academic achievements in primary schools.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research explored the parents' perceptions and experiences toward the implementation of *pemenuhan gizi dan Kesehatan* program in improving child learning process and academic achievements in primary schools. The program designed to enhance the relationship between homes and schools in Indonesia in order to provide good nutrition foods for students. This program is aimed at helping parents to be involved in their children's learning, especially at home. It focuses on several aspects such as providing good daily meal, practising good communication and interaction with children and motivating children to succeed in their learning process. The researcher chose three categories of parents as respondents and they were non-working mothers, working mothers and working fathers.

Table 1.1 Profile of the Participants

No	Parent	Occupation	Number Of
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			Children
1	Ummu Fatih	Housewife	2
2	Ros	Housewife	1
3	Himmy	Professional job (school teacher)	1
4	Yati	Unprofessional job (employee)	2
5	Abu Ramzi	Unprofessional job (self-employed)	2
6	Fauzi	Unprofessional job (self-employed)	2

CODING OF INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTIONS

Individual interviews were conducted in this study as a means of collecting data and the interviews were then transcribed. Among the key codes used in the interview transcription were: DU which represents the discourse units in the interviews and codes I for interviewer and R for respondent.

Table 1.2 Codes Used in the Interview Transcription

Code	Explanation
DU 1-45	Interview with Ummu Fatih the non-working mother
DU 46- 97	Interview with Ros the non-working mother
DU 98 -179	Interview with Himmi the working mother
DU 180 – 212	Interview with Yati the working mother
DU 213 -235	Interview with Abu Ramzi the working father
& DU 236 – 270	Interview with Fauzy the working father
I	Interviewer
R	Respondent

Parent Interviews

This section discusses the findings obtained from the interviews conducted with the six parents. Several interview questions were posed to help answer the research questions. This section focuses on the themes that emerged from the interviews. The themes identified in this study are presented in table 1.3:

Table 4.3 Themes and Sub-Themes Generated from the Interviews

Themes	Sub-Themes
The importance of Parental Support	• Parents role models • Parents' responsibilities for their children's learning
Parents' experiences of the implementation of <i>pemenuhan gizi dan Kesehatan program</i> in school	• Understanding parents' responses regarding the program • Providing learning facilities • Rendering motivation and encouragement • Providing a good nutrition food • Take care children's health condition

THE IMPORTANCE OF PARENTAL SUPPORT

All the participants irrespective of social background believed that parental support in child learning was compulsory especially for primary school children because they were still young and needed the guidance of adults, particularly parents. The participants differed in their reasons for parental support as some justified that parents were role models who were responsible for their children's learning while others perceived parents as the person who responsible toward students' welfare and they agreed that the *pemenuhan gizi dan Kesehatan* program had really help parents in proving good nutrition food and healthy body.

PARENTS' EXPERIENCES OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM

Parents' Understanding and Responses to the Program

Based on the findings from the parents' interviews, the understanding of parents and their responses to the program can be divided into two:

1. Parents' good knowledge about the *pemenuhan gizi dan Kesehatan* program
Parents differed in their level of understanding about the program. Some of them understood the program very well while some of them did not understand it clearly. Fortunately, parents who had good knowledge about the program responded and supported the program well. Among the parents who knew about and responded positively to the program were Ummu Fatih and Ros, the non-working mothers and Himmy one of the working mothers.

"Yes I know, school ask the parents to come to school for briefing about this *pemenuhan gizi dan Kesehatan* program,..". (DU 14)

"For me, this program is good and I support it because it reminds us that we have responsibility as parents in supporting our children's learning, and me as parents to provide good nutrition food for my children" (DU 15)

"I think in my mind this activity is about how the school ask the parents to join together work together with the school to be partner as community that around the kids to get the good condition may be to improve the result of kids as well as it is can be discussing and if have time," (DU 67)

"Yes..for me this is a very-very good program.."(DU122)

Based on the parents' interviews, only half of the parents knew what the program was about and were able to give some responses even though they did not have in-depth understanding of the program.

1. Parents' lack of knowledge about the *pemenuhan gizi dan Kesehatan* program

Unfortunately, the rest of the participants did not know about the program. Yati the working mother was one of those who heard about the program but did not have a clear idea about it while the two working fathers, Abu Ramzi and Fauzi, did not have any idea about the program at all.

"Yes I have heard about it, school asks parents to come to school. But I don't understand this program is about what specifically. Since I am busy with my work, I pass this responsibility to my husband."(DU 197)

"Oh.. I never heard about it..." (DU 222)

"Oh.. I never heard about it, and I don't know what it is about actually..."(DU 250)

Here, we can see how the participants of different social backgrounds differed in terms of their understanding about the program. The different understanding among the parents could be analysed based on factors such as occupation and gender. Among the parents who knew about the program were all the non-working parents but Himmi knew about the program right from the beginning since she had been working as a school teacher.

Providing Learning Facilities

The program stressed that parents should be involved in their children's learning by means of having good interaction and communication at home with children. However, based on the findings from parents' interviews, the efforts of the participants to support their children's learning included providing learning facilities, giving motivation and encouragement and guiding their children.

Ros was one of the non-working mothers who thought that she could be more involved in her children's learning by providing conditions that could support it such as

preparing a good learning environment at home. Similarly, Himmi was yet another working mother who considered providing great conditions to support child learning, as her main priority.

“Actually, as parent we must prepared a positive condition at home to support them to get the best things to support their ability.” (DU 55)

“I tried my best to provide the facilities that can help children to have good academic performance in school including the food I cook for them. ...”(DU 114)

In addition, the male parents also believed that they had to be more engaged in their children's learning process even if they were busy with their work. Fauzi, mentioned that providing learning facilities for children was one of the strategies he used to show his support for his children's learning.

“I ask them first if they really want to study, when they say yes, I try to provide the facilities they need to support their learning process, like books and everything they need to support their study.” (DU 248)

Family Commitment

In addition, Abu Ramzi viewed family commitments as a challenge. He was forced to juggle between his family commitments and his children especially when school and exam timings interfered with his plans to make trips to his hometown. Fauzi also explained that he had tried his best so far to cope with the challenge in order to support his children's learning. He explained that he did not face any big problem in educating his children.

“I faced such problems like when I plan to go back to my home town at the same time my children have exam in school. But sometimes, I have to go and my children will miss their exam. Then I tried to see the school's principal to clarify the situation, I said it will affect their academic achievement in terms of grade, but they still can continue their next classes. For me grade doesn't matter, because the most important this is my children can socialize with their peers in school.” (DU 230)

“Ooh no I did not have any problem in educating them, may be just some time but I able to handle it...” (DU 340)

It can be clearly seen that that there were several problems or challenges that the parents faced when supporting their children's learning. Besides, the parents' social backgrounds were related to the kinds of problems or challenges they faced. In addition, findings indicated that occupation and gender explained the different challenges faced by the parents. For example, disciplining children at home was a challenge faced by the non-working mothers perhaps because they spent more time at home with their children and were more concerned about this matter. In contrast, the working mothers did not have much problem disciplining their children at home. However, they faced the challenge of time constraints as they could not spend much time with their children. Other than that, the fathers faced different challenges and they also used different strategies to manage them. Briefly, regardless of parents' social backgrounds, parents have to be creative and knowledgeable in order to educate their children.

PARENTS' SUGGESTIONS

The parents gave some suggestions with regard to the *pemenuhan gizi dan Kesehatan* to improve the programs or activities that could help them to support their children. Based on the findings, some parents suggested that the implementation of the program should be involved parents as partners in this program. Thus, only focus on the improvement of student academic achievement but students' health as well.

Suggestions for the Implementation of the *pemenuhan gizi dan Kesehatan* program

With reference to the parents' interviews, some improvements were needed in regard to the implementation of the *pemenuhan gizi dan Kesehatan* program. They suggested that information pertaining to the program should be disseminated among parents by explaining to them further about the program, having good communication with them and inviting them to be more involved in school activities.

"Yes again this is a good program but the implementation may be need to be improve." (DU18)

"Maybe school need to give more information and have communications." (DU77)

"....my primary school daughter, in her school I don't seem invited to contribute in school, yes... perhaps I can suggest them to be more inviting for parent to be involved." (DU 174)

the success of the implementation of this program depended on how schools delivered the information to the parents. Some schools succeeded in practising the program whilst some schools did not. It can be seen from the responses of the parents that the lack of information prevented them from contributing properly to the program. Therefore, the parents suggested that more information should be given to them and the communication between the school and homes should be enhanced in order to execute this program effectively.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the responses from the three categories of parents clearly showed how a parent's social background plays a role in shaping his experiences of providing parental support. It can also be noted that there were methods and strategies that the parents practised to support their children's learning. Besides that, the challenges faced by the parents differed from one parent to another and the differences could also be observed in the way they addressed those problems. In addition, parents differed in their understanding and responses to the *pemenuhan gizi dan Kesehatan*. It was also perceived that the differences in parents' social backgrounds might contribute to shaping their experiences of the program.

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