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## **DEVELOPING THE CHILD'S EMPATHY THROUGH SPIRITUAL COUNSELING WITH SYMBOLIC MODEL TECHNIQUE BASED ON AL-MAUN THEOLOGY**

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### **Abstract**

Disruption era demands human to be able to compete and to innovate. Demands in being competitive stimulate the ambitious, aggressive, and less empathy attitude if it is not based on the good moral and spiritual. Developing children' empathy by spiritual values can be done through education since it is as the transformation that the function is to create noble, knowledgeable, and modern individuals. School teachers and counselor can take parts in developing the service strategy to develop empathy in children as the social and religious creature. This was a literature study aimed at reviews the spiritual counseling with Al-Maun theological based symbolic model technique. The data of this study were collected through documentation study from relevant journals, book, and proceedings which analyzed by using descriptive qualitative. The result of the study showed that Al-Maun theological-based symbolic model technique of spiritual counseling is assumed to be a strategy for developing children' empathy. The result of the study can be a suggestion for elementary school counselors in developing children empathy based on the spiritual values.

**Key words:** empathy, spiritual counseling, simbolic model technique, al-mau'un theological.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Disruption era demands human to be able to compete and to innovate. Demands in being competitive stimulate the ambitious, aggressive, and less empathy attitude if it is not based on the good moral and spiritual. In one hand, globalization era brings both positive and negative effect on Indonesian society. The positive effect of globalization was the openness in various fields that ease anyone is obtaining any information including technology, social, economy, or culture. In the other hand, the negative effect was the problems brought by its openness such as crime, teenagers' mischief, capitalism, lack of social sense, and other social diseases.

Education is closely related to globalization. Since globalization develops, education shall improve its quality to produce excellent nation' successor who can resist the globalization' exposure. Thus, individuals' quality improvement become the primary problem in education. Individuals' quality improvement can be made by the focus on the aims of the education to develop human resource potential through the learning process. The Act of National Education System no.20 of 2003 states that the function of national education is to develop skills and form noble character to educate the nations, and is aimed to develop the learner to be a faithful, noble, healthy, educated, creative, independent, democratic, and responsible citizen. Therefore, it can be said that

the practice of education in Indonesia is directed not only to develop the children' intelligence, but also to develop their personality and skill, so they become a whole human.

The purpose of national education is in line with K.H Ahmad Dahlan (in Mustapa,2014: 131) that the perfect education aimed to create individuals who completely master religious knowledge and general knowledge, material and spiritual, world and afterlife. To, Muhammadiyah Education aims to form a noble, capable, confident, and benevolent Muslim human, Thus, to reach the goal, role of many parties to work together is needed in optimizing the Muhammadiyah education purpose in Indonesia

In fact, that ideal purpose is still difficult to find or to form. Often we hear about children aggressive behavior. For example, Faska (2016) informed that on Friday, 11 November 2016, two elementary students in Kapuas Regency, Central Kalimantan involved in a fight and one of them died. They were NE (13) and AH (9) They were in the sixth grade of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Swasta (MIS) Miftahudin, Handiwung village, Kapuas regency. The fight happens in school, in front of school toilet and it killed AH. NE hit AH' head and push him to a trench in face down. NE left AH offhand. While the family was panic because AH had not gone home. (Pojoksatu, Minggu 13 November 2016)

Another case of students' aggressive behavior is also summed in [kompas.com](http://kompas.com); it was about the

students' fight that leads to the death of a second-grade student of SDN 07 Kebayoran Lama Utara. At first, there was a drawing competition held by a snack company in that school on Friday (18/9/2015) at 09.00. Then, there was a fight between NA and R. At 10.00, NA fell and was taken to Puskesmas Kebayoran Lama (Community medical center of Kebayoran Lama) But, NA was referenced to Fatmawati Hospital. At 18.45, NA' death was declared. (Kompas.com, Saptu 19 September 2015)

The violence cases done by the children happen many times in Indonesia. Nowadays, it is easy to find children who speak impolite, unemphatic, and do not understand others' difficulties. Besides, the social structure that becomes more capitalist and inattentive begin to fade the value of cooperation of Indonesia. It triggers the children to develop as an individualist person. Those phenomena show that children' empathy needs to be developed since early as possible.

Empathy is someone' ability to understand and feel the condition experienced by others without being involved by that feeling. Through empathy, the interpersonal relationships will be more harmonic and are based on mutual understanding, respect, and appreciation. According to Taufik (2012: 89) the natures of empathy are being and becoming, because of that, empathy can be taught and need to be taught since early as possible, so the emphatic ability sinks in the children. Therefore, the empathy crisis that struck Indonesia is a big problem that needs solution both in the context of society or educational attempts.

Borba (2008: 5) stated that seven primary virtues that will maintain the children good attitude namely empathy, conscience, respect, kindness, tolerance, and justice. Borba' statement showed that empathy takes an essential role to maintain children good behavior. Empathy is an activity to understand the others thoughts and feelings, without losing self-control. Therefore, empathy can be described as a pivotal role in maintaining the social relations in society. Moreover, it can be a part of characters the children shall possess. The character cultivation is not only the responsibility of the parents but also the responsibility of many parties of society, including teacher as the educator in school.

The children behavior is affected by their surroundings. They tend to have modeling behavior because they learn from what they see. Still, they do not have enough ability to filter the good or bad. Mocking and hitting their friends are behavior they get from watching, or even from their daily activities at home. Therefore, environment shall be able to give a good model to the children' moral development.

A study conducted by Drabman, R. &

Thomas, M. 2006. Children's imitation of aggressive and prosocial behavior when viewing alone and in pairs. *Journal of personality and social behavior*. This study found that people, including children who have seen the humble model ( other people), will be a humble person compared to those who have not seen the model. That study showed that children could be taught empathy through modeling.

One of the teachers' role is giving the model of empathy behavior to the students/ Modelling can be done through storytelling of the prophets' saga, and concrete modeling though video so the elementary students understand and can imitate the empathy behavior. The use of various techniques of behavioral changes to improve children' empathy can be done through prophets' storytelling and modeling that is wrapped into a technique of child spiritual counseling service. In Q.S Al Ma'un, Muslim is commanded to help the poor and the orphans. This surah becomes the basis to teach empathy to the early childhood. The Al-Ma'un theological can be developed as the basis of classical guidance to cultivate empathy on elementary school children. Based on the phenomena mentioned above, this study intends to develop Al-Maun theological-based symbolic model technique of spiritual counseling model. This paper focuses on literature reviews on the attempts in developing Child' empathy through spiritual counseling with Al-Maun Theological-based Symbolic model Technique. This study aims to find out how to develop Child' empathy through spiritual counseling with Al-Maun Theological-based Symbolic model Technique.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This paper aimed to review literature related to the attempts in developing child' empathy through spiritual counseling with Al-Maun theological-based Symbolic model technique. This was a literature study. The data were collected through documentation study from the relevant books and journals. The data were analyzed by using data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion by Miles Huberman (in Sugiyono, 2014: 91).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result of this study describes relevant theories about developing Child' empathy through spiritual counseling with Al-Maun theological-based Symbolic model Technique which was taken from various relevant journals and books.

### Empathy

Empathy is the basis of moral intelligence. The first moral virtue polish an individual' sensitivity towards the different views and others' opinion.

Empathy plays its role in improving humane attitude, civilization, and morality. Empathy is an emotion that bothers students' conscience when seeing someone's difficulties. It makes students show tolerance and affection, understanding of others' need, and willing to help others. Students who learn empathy will be more understanding and full of concerns, and they also can control their anger.

Rogers in (Paderson, 2008: 18) stated that empathy is an ability to accurately understand others' thought and feelings without losing the real condition. An emphatic individual is described as a person who is tolerant, able to do self-control, friendly, effective and humanistic. Empathy is to feel particular forms or feelings like other people feel or experience. It differs from sympathy that shows interest without action or emotional interest. Ability to sense others feeling before they state it is the essence of empathy. Without this ability, an individual will be alienated, wrong in interpreting someone feelings which leads to a broken relationship. One of the forms of empathy is when someone tends to compare other people with him/herself.

Furthermore, according to Goleman (2007: 114) Empathy is an essential part of the social skill. Empathy is one of the social intelligence components. It closely relates to other components such as basic empathy, harmonization, emphatic sensibility and social understanding. Basic empathy is to possess others feeling or to feel non-verbal emotional signs. Harmonization is to listen with full of receptiveness, harmonize with others. Emphatic sensibility is to understand others' meaning, thought, and feelings by social understanding.

Based on those definitions, it can be concluded that empathy is an ability to understand others' thought and feeling, which is communicable verbally or nonverbally without losing self-control, so the emphatic individual will not be drowned by others' atmosphere. Emphatic students can socialize and associate with others. They can adapt to the surrounding environment and are acceptable by the society.

Emphatic people are those who like to interact with others, care with others' reaction and feelings, understand the human situation, can read others' emotion, understand others' difficulties by placing themselves in that situation, like to help others, and know other people well. Rosenthal (Goleman, 2007: 136) in his study showed that people who can read feelings and nonverbal sign possess better emotional adaptation, are more popular, are easier to associate, and more sensitive. Nowicky, a psychologist, explains that it is frustrating for children if they cannot read or express emotion well. Someone who

can read others' emotion also possesses high self-awareness. Someone who possesses the ability to read others' feeling is more open to his/her emotion, can recognize and admit his/her emotion.

Components of empathy used to observe elementary school age children are Perspective taking, emotional concerns, responsive joy, and distress responsive. According to Davis (1983: 4), there are two components of empathy, namely affective component consisting of two aspects namely perspective taking and fantasy, while the affective component covers emphatic concern and personal distress. According to William et al. (2005), empathy possesses some aspects namely Responsive Joy and Distress responsive, it is a feeling of being uncomfortable and bothered when finding others' problems.

According to Pickett, Gardner, & Knowles (2004) the behavior of empathy that is done can accurately maintain social relationships. According to Kraus et al (2010) in their research on the relationship between social class with the accuracy of empathy. The results show that people with low socioeconomic status are more effective at translating emotions that are being felt by others, compared to those with socioeconomic units. Furthermore Davis (2004) tendency to pay attention to others can generate emotional empathy. Empathy is considered a series of constructions that include emotional and cognitive components (Janson, 2007).

Some studies conducted by Nanci Eisenberg (in Taufik, 2012: 176) empathy can be developed through induction, moral advice and developing Empathy modeling. The ability of empathy is essential for human both children, adolescents, or adults. Empathy shall be trained since the early stage. Even when someone has turned into an adult, he/she shall keep train empathy. To form an emphatic society, developing empathy become the parents, teachers, and society' responsibility.

### **Modeling Technique**

Modeling is a technique to teach the observer the ability and behavioral rules. Modeling can reduce or omit the behavioral obstacle within the repertoire, in Modeling, the model behavior becomes the reminder or sign for the observer, Jones, 2011: 434).

Furthermore, Komalasari et al. (2011: 176) state that modeling is learning through observation by adding or reducing the observed behavior, generalize various observation at the same time and involve the cognitive process.

According to Corey (2005: 426), the term Modeling can be defined as learning through observing, imitating, socialization learning and

vicarious learning is used interchangeably. It means all processes made by someone' or group (model) behavior stimulates the same thought, attitude, and behavior on the observer. Through observational learning, clients can show the wanted behavior without trial and error learning. Bandura 1986 (in Corey 2005: 426) Emphasize the role of modeling in human development and behavioral modification.

Based on the experts' views above, it can be concluded that modeling is to learn by observing, imitating, by adding or reducing the observed behavior. Modeling done by someone' or group (model) behavior stimulates similar thought, attitude, and behavior of the observer.

According to Corey (2005: 427), there are some models can be used in a therapeutic situation. A living model can teach the client appropriate behavior, affect values and attitude, teach the social skill. For instance, the therapist gives a model of the most expected behavior to possess by the client. A behavioral therapist can also use symbolic model. The behavioral model is displayed in the film, video, and other recorders. Bandura 1969 (in Corey 2005: 427) state that symbolic model succeeds in various situations.

Moreover, multiple models are relevant for group therapy. The observer can change behavior and learn from a new skill through the observation on the succeeded peers. The advantages of multiple models are, from some existing alternatives, the observer learns how to behave since they see various types of succeeded and appropriate behavior.

Model type proposed by Corey above is in line with the various types proposed by Komalasari et al. (2011: 179) that there are various modeling, a live model such as the therapist, teacher, family member, or admired character became the model for the counselee. The symbolic model such as a character seen in a movie, video, or other media. Multiple models such as: occur in a group, a group member changes the attitude and learn new attitude after observing other members' attitude.

Bandura (hergenhan, 2010: 361) state that model is anything that delivers information. Like people, movie, television, picture, or instruction. Thus, modeling is learning done when someone observes and imitate others' behavior.

Based on some experts' idea above, there are various models in the use modeling technique. Models can be used for behavioral learning is live model consisting of mastery model and coping model, symbolic mode, and multiple models In developing elementary school students' empathy, the symbolic model can be taken as the technique during spiritual counseling in a group setting.

### **The Needs of Developing Children' Empathy' Through Spiritual Counseling**

Empathy is important to be possessed and cultivated by every individual in every developmental phase. Santrock (2010: 250) added " empathy is one important positive feeling to the child's development, which is responding to another person's feeling with an emotion that echoes the other feeling.

Based on that statement, it can be concluded that empathy is an essential part of moral that the children need to develop. Children need moral development to sharpen their thinking skills, feeling, and behavioral rules in interacting with other people.

According to Gerard (2008: 5), Counseling possesses fundamental purpose which can be applied globally. The purposes are as follow:

1. Empowering children to face hurting emotional problems.
2. Empowering children to reach some congruent stages related to thinking, emotion, and behavior.
3. Empowering children to feel comfortable with themselves
4. Empowering children to accept their limitedness and advantages
5. Empowering children to change their negative behavior
6. Empowering children to be comfortable and adaptive in the external environment.
7. Maximize the children' opportunities to reach the target.

Based on the experts' opinions, it can be concluded that guidance and counseling on children are needed to assist them to develop moral such as empathy. It will be beneficial for interaction with people in the surroundings and optimize the children' potential. Children are a spiritual creature at first who then acculturates (or not) into a religious tradition that distributes children intuitive' spirituality. It is suggested to create a relationship between children and the god before "religious socialization, Boyatzis (2012).

### **Al-Maun Theological Based Symbolic Model Technique of Spiritual Counseling to Develop Children' Empathy**

Empathy is the part of good virtues that shall be cultivated on children. Al-Maun theological-based symbolic model technique of Spiritual Counseling is assumed to be able to develop Children' Empathy A study conducted by Ayuni et.al (2013) that involve 35 elementary students to see the effect of storytelling on the empathy behavior showed that there was an improvement on the fantasy aspects on

the experimental group after they were treated by using storytelling.

A study conducted by Drabman, R. & Thomas, M. (2006). Children's imitation of aggressive and prosocial behavior when viewing alone and in pairs. *Journal of personality and social behavior*. This study found that people, including children who have seen the humble model ( other people), will be a humble person compared to those who have not seen the model. That study showed that children could be taught empathy through modeling. Based on two studies above, it can be concluded that modeling and storytelling are the technique that can be used to develop children' empathy.

According to Huda (2011), Al-Maun theology in the Islamic theology proposed and developed by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan succeed in encouraging the Muhammadiyah community to liberate the tyrannized people. The content of Q.S Al Maun teaches Islam community to help the poor and the orphans. Empathy is an attitude that leads to the emergence of helpful behavior within an individual.

Q.S Al Maun also teaches empathy. So, ideally, Islam community develop empathy in their daily life.

أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالدِّينِ ﴿١﴾ فَذَلِكَ  
الَّذِي يَدْعُ الْيَتِيمَ ﴿٢﴾ وَلَا يَحْضُ عَلَىٰ طَعَامِ  
الْمَسْكِينِ ﴿٣﴾ فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ ﴿٤﴾ الَّذِينَ  
هُمْ عَن صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ ﴿٥﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ  
يُرَاءُونَ ﴿٦﴾ وَيَمْنَعُونَ الْمَاعُونَ ﴿٧﴾

(1) Have you seen the one who denies the Recompense  
(2) For that is the one who drives away the orphan  
(3) and does not encourage the feeding of the poor  
(4) So woe to those who pray, (5) (But) who are heedless of their prayer, (6) those who make show (of their deeds), (7)and withhold (simple) assistance. (Q.S Al-Ma'un )

In the 2nd and 3rd verse of Al-Maun, it explains that scolding the orphans and does not feed the poor are assumed as the denial of religion This verse become a lesson for Islam community about the importance of empathy in daily life. Spiritual counseling is an assisting process on individuals so that they possess the ability to develop their gifts as homo religious, behave under the religious values, and solve life problems through an understanding, belief, and religious ritual of worship they embrace,

Yusuf (2009: 9).

Kapas et al. (2007) in Plumb (2011) emphasize the importance of spiritual values before the professional or counselor' assistance. The FICA concept is used, F (faith): What is your faith tradition? I: How important is your faith? C (Church/ worship place): What is your worship place or faith community? A (address): How do you want to solve your problem?.

Furthermore, Richards and Bergin (2007) in Yusuf (2009: 31) explained spiritual counseling intervention can be done through prayer, teach the spiritual concept, refer on the holy book, spiritual confrontation, pray together between the client and the counselor, forgiveness suggestion, religious bibliotherapy, clients' pray, the use of religious community or group.

Based on the opinions, Al Maun theological-based modeling technique of spiritual counseling can be given in the form of group counseling service. Group counseling service possesses advantages where the group member has the chance to solve their problems through interaction with other members and is assisted by a counselor.

According to Corey (2012: 28), “ group counseling has preventive as well as remedial aims. The counseling group has specific focus which may be educational, career social and personal. Group works emphasize interpersonal communication of conscious thought, feelings, and behavior within here and now time frame. Counseling group is often problem-oriented, and the members largely determine their content and aims.”

Some benefits that can also become the goals contained in the group counseling. Menurut Jacob (2006: 19) For some people, group counseling, is better than individual counseling because the group member needs other members' suggestion, they also learn to listen and respect rather than only speaking. In the adolescents' environment, group counseling is better than the individual counseling since they like to talk to the other adolescents rather than talk to the adults.

Group counseling assists individuals to learn to listen, respect, exchange ideas, feel others problem, learn to express the idea, train self-awareness, learn self-confidence, develop social skill, responsible, learn to change negative behavior, learn to find a wise solution of their problems or others'.

Group counseling service possesses some stages that shall be implemented to gain the purpose optimally and effectively. Menurut Jacob (2006: 29), “Group counseling consists of three stages, beginning stage, working stage, and terminating stage. Menurut Natawidjaya,2009: 117) there are

three stages of group counseling, beginning stage, working stage and terminating stage. These stages shall be applied in conducting group counseling so that group counseling will run seamlessly

Based on the review of the experts' opinions above, The Al-Maun theological-based symbolic model technique of Spiritual Counseling can be conducted through the following stages:

#### 1. Beginning Stage

This stage is used to make an introduction and discuss the expected goal of a group, the possibilities, fears, group rules, level of comforts, and material in the group. The beginning stage can be done in the first session, or whole in the first session or several early meetings. It may be unusual for a group does more than two meeting session when they have already possessed adequate trust, and coziness to share.

In Spiritual counseling with Al-Maun theological-based symbolic model technique, the counselor asks the group member to pray together and read Q.S Al Ma'un. The purpose of praying together is to get *Ridha* of God. Reading together of Al Maun along with its meaning aims to make the children understand the command in the Al Maun. Counselor facilitates the children to learn to respect each other. Group members are also taught the principle of empathy, placing self in others' situation so they will be careful and respect other group members. If each group member has understood this, it will show mutual trust, mutual respect, mutual understanding, and grow togetherness within the group. Moreover, the counselor shall explain the purpose of the counseling, and make activities agreement along with the group members. In this stage, Counselor shall show emphatic behavior since his/her role is as the role model for the children. In this beginning stage, the counselor tells a story of empathy taken from Islamic stories, such as empathy story done by the prophets. That story of empathy is used to create comfort within the group and to make the group member imitate the behavior shown in the story.

#### 2. Working Stage

In this stage, the group members focus on the expected goal, a new effective behavior. In this stage, the group members learn new material through discussion of various topics, doing an assignment, and the sense of being the part of the group. This stage is the core of the activities, where the group members gain many benefits during the process.

In spiritual counseling with Al-Maun theological-based symbolic model technique, the counselor asks the group member to pray together and read Q.S Al Ma'un. The purpose of praying together is to get *Ridha* of God. Reading together of

Al Maun along with its meaning aims to make the children understand the command in the Al Maun. This activity discusses the children' problem and develops children' empathy. It can be done through giving the example of empathic behavior based on Al Maun theology, advice to help others, the poor and the orphans. The giving of empathic behavior can be done in the form of interesting video and child storybook. In this stage, the counselor needs to invite the students to pray together. Spiritual counseling can be done in the praying room or mosque near to the school.

#### 3. Closing Stage

In this stage, the counselor facilitates the group members to share what they have got. Counselor do evaluation about how the changes students have experienced, and their plan in applying their experience in daily life. In this stage, the counselor maintains to observe the children behavioral changes.

Based on several experts' opinion above, spiritual counseling by Al-Maun theological-based symbolic model technique is assumed effective in improving children' empathy. Through an understanding of Al Maun that is taught through live behavioral example presented by using symbolic technique model through video and storybook of empathic behavior, children directly get model in developing empathy in daily life.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Spiritual counseling with al-Maun theological-based symbolic model technique can be an alternative to counseling service for developing children' empathy. This counseling displays empathic behavior following the advice of Al Maun, which are advice to help the poor and the orphans. Symbolic technique model presented in video or storybook about empathy can be a concrete model for children in their daily life. Spiritual counseling in the group setting can teach empathy to children in the form of learning to listen to others' opinion, respect the different opinion, and help others who are in difficulties during the group discussion process. This study can be a reference for the elementary school teachers and counselors in developing children' empathy. Spiritual counseling with al-Maun theological-based symbolic model technique also assist the children in developing their faith in God. They will learn to empathize with others based on their awareness as a religious creature who asked by the religion to help in goodness.

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