Empathy-based Counseling Guidance and Teacher Social Support for Children's Self-Confidence

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the effect of empathy-based counseling and teacher social support on the self-confidence of early childhood children in Palangka Raya City. This study used a quantitative approach with a causal associative method. The study subjects consisted of 150 children aged 5-6 years and 50 early childhood education teachers selected using the proportional method. Cluster Random Sampling. Data collection used a questionnaire for the teacher variable and structured observation for the child's self-confidence variable, which was then analyzed using SmartPLS. The results of the study showed that empathy-based counseling had a positive and significant effect on children's self-confidence (t count 4.512>1.980; p =0.000). Teacher social support has a significant effect on children's self-confidence (t count 3.890>1.980; p =0.002). Simultaneously, both variables contribute a strong influence of 65.4% t count 12.450; R2 = 0.654). This statistical finding is supported by triangulation of observational data, which shows a change in children's behavior from withdrawn to engaged after receiving emotional validation and instrumental support. This study concludes that the integration of counseling guidance carried out by teachers as therapeutic helpers through empathy and social support is an important determinant in shaping children's self-confidence.

Keywords : *Empathy Counseling Guidance, Teacher Social Support, Children's Self-Confidence*

INTRODUCTION

In everyday life, early childhood often exhibits behaviors such as being brave or hesitant to try new things, being able or reluctant to express opinions, and being confident or afraid to interact with their surroundings (Wibawati & Watini, 2022). These behaviors are formed through children's early experiences interacting with parents, teachers, and the social environment, which elicit certain emotional responses (Amanda, 2020). Children who receive positive experiences, such as support, acceptance, and reinforcement, tend to develop a positive self-concept and better self-confidence (Coetzee et al., 2022). Conversely, less supportive experiences can make children feel doubtful and less confident in themselves (Coetzee et al., 2022). Therefore, early childhood is an individual who is at a developmental stage that determines the formation of personality, self-concept, and self-confidence in the future (Catalano dkk., 2023). In the age range of 0–6 years, children are in the early developmental phase characterized by very rapid and significant growth in emotional, social, and cognitive aspects (Al-Harbi, 2024). Emotionally, children begin to learn to

recognize, express, and manage feelings through the responses they receive from their environment (Baker, 2021). Socially, children develop the ability to interact, cooperate, and understand social norms and rules through relationships with adults and peers (Sekowski dkk., 2024).

Meanwhile, cognitive development is evident in the increased ability to think, speak, solve problems, and understand everyday experiences (DeBoer dkk., 2023). This entire developmental process is strongly influenced by the quality of interactions with the immediate environment, especially with adults who play important roles, such as parents and teachers (Yang & Zhang, 2024). Warm, responsive, and consistent interactions provide a sense of security and stimulation appropriate to a child's developmental needs, thus supporting optimal emotional, social, and cognitive development (Djamarah Bahri, 2000). Conversely, less responsive or unsupportive interactions can hinder a child's development in these various aspects (Bardach & Klassen, 2021). Self-confidence in early childhood is an important foundation for children's courage to explore, communicate, and actively participate in learning and social activities (Wibawati & Watini, 2022). Children who are confident tend to demonstrate independence in various activities, dare to express their feelings and opinions naturally, and do not hesitate to participate in social interactions and learning activities (Rifa & Rakimahwati, 2023). Self-confidence also makes children better prepared to face challenges and new learning experiences, enabling them to adapt to the demands of the educational environment at the next level (Aziza dkk., 2025). With strong self-confidence, children have confidence in their abilities, ultimately supporting the success of the learning process and ongoing social-emotional development (Veziroglu-Celik dkk., 2026).

However, in early childhood education practices, children are still found to exhibit low self-confidence, such as reluctance to speak in front of friends, hesitation to try new things, easily feeling afraid or anxious, and excessive dependence on adults (Halilsoy, 2024). These conditions can be influenced by various factors, including less than positive emotional experiences, less responsive interaction patterns, and minimal social support received by children in the learning environment (Oliveira Silva dkk., 2023). Therefore, a guidance and counseling approach is needed that is appropriate to the developmental characteristics of early childhood, namely an approach that prioritizes emotional aspects, the quality of interpersonal relationships, and creating a sense of psychological security (Equatora dkk., 2023). Such an approach allows children to feel accepted, understood, and valued, so they are able to express their emotions and develop their potential optimally (Putri dkk., 2024). With appropriate emotional support and a warm relationship between children and educators, guidance and counseling services can be an effective tool in helping children build self-confidence and readiness to face the next stage of development (Heryuriani dkk., 2025).

One relevant approach in the context of early childhood counseling is empathy-based counseling (Kusnadi dkk., 2026). Empathy is an individual's ability to understand, feel, and put themselves in the emotional state of another person, and to express a warm, caring, and accepting response. In the context of early childhood education and care, empathy is reflected in the attitude of educators or counselors who are able to listen attentively, understand children's feelings without judgment, and provide calming and supportive responses (Dinihari dkk., 2025). This empathetic ability helps children feel understood and valued, thus creating safe and positive relationships (Utama & Tanfidiyah, 2019). When children feel empathy from the adults

around them, they tend to be more open in expressing their feelings, gain self-confidence, and are better able to develop healthy social and emotional skills (Li dkk., 2024). In counseling practice, empathy enables teachers to build safe and trusting relationships with children, so that children feel valued, understood, and accepted for who they are. Empathetic interactions help children recognize and express emotions positively, which in turn contributes to the formation of children's self-concept and self-confidence (Yavuz dkk., 2024).

In addition to empathy, teacher social support also plays an influential role in the development of self-confidence in early childhood. Early childhood education teachers not only act as educators who deliver learning materials, but also as figures who provide emotional and social support for children in the school environment (O'Shea, 2006). Early childhood education teachers function as early helpers who help children recognize, understand, and express feelings appropriately through warm, empathetic, and responsive interactions. This role aligns with the principles of developmental guidance and counseling, which emphasize prevention efforts and the development of children's potential from an early age. As a source of emotional support, early childhood education teachers provide a sense of security, acceptance, and psychological comfort that allows children to feel valued and understood (Warmansyah dkk., 2023). Meanwhile, as a source of social support, teachers help children develop skills in interacting, collaborating, and adjusting to the school environment and peers. Through a guidance and counseling approach integrated into daily learning activities, early childhood education teachers can help children develop self-confidence, independence, and social-emotional skills that are important foundations for successful development and learning in later stages (Lipscomb dkk., 2022). Teacher social support can be realized through attention, positive reinforcement, appreciation for children's efforts, and responsiveness to children's emotional needs. A learning environment characterized by high social support will provide a sense of security and comfort for children, thus encouraging children to dare to try, interact, and express themselves positively (Tao dkk., 2022).

The local context of Palangka Raya, a region with diverse social and cultural backgrounds, presents its own dynamics in early childhood education practices. Diversity in ethnicity, culture, family values, and socioeconomic conditions shape children's parenting patterns and early experiences before entering school. Differences in family circumstances, such as parental communication patterns, education levels, and emotional support at home, also influence children's emotional and social readiness to participate in learning activities. Furthermore, variations in the social environment and access to early childhood education services in Palangka Raya also impact children's experiences at school. Children from environments with adequate social support and educational facilities tend to be more prepared to interact, confident, and adaptable, while children from environments with limited access or support are at risk of experiencing obstacles in emotional and social development. This situation requires educators, particularly early childhood education teachers, to be sensitive and competent in providing educational services, guidance, and counseling that are adaptive, inclusive, and responsive to children's diverse backgrounds, so that every child has an equal opportunity to develop optimally. In this context, the role of teachers as empathetic and supportive support figures becomes increasingly important in helping children build optimal self-confidence. Therefore, a study that integrates an empathy-based guidance and counseling approach and teacher social

support in increasing the self-confidence of early childhood in Palangka Raya is relevant and contextual.

Recent research over the past five years has consistently confirmed that the quality of the relationship between teacher and child is a fundamental factor in the formation of positive self-concept in the preschool period (Longobardi dkk., 2021). The application of guidance strategies based on teacher empathy has been empirically proven to reduce emotional barriers and anxiety in children, which in turn triggers increased courage to explore and actively participate in the classroom environment (Siddiqui, 2022). Social support provided by teachers at school plays a crucial role in strengthening children's self-esteem, thus building a stable foundation of self-confidence to face various learning challenges (Li dkk., 2021). More specifically, the quality of empathetic interactions helps children develop better emotional regulation skills, which directly contributes to improving their social competence when interacting with peers (Ornaghi dkk., 2020). In the context of an inclusive educational environment, individual support that is responsive to children's emotional needs is the main key in creating a sense of psychological safety, which allows every child from various social backgrounds to express their potential with confidence (Acar dkk., 2021).

This study has a theoretical foundation that aligns with the global trend of placing teacher empathy and support as the primary determinants of children's social-emotional development, but there are differences that constitute its novelty. The similarities lie in the focus of the subjects, namely early childhood, and variables that center on strengthening psychological aspects, such as self-confidence and self-concept, which are internationally recognized as the foundation of successful learning and mental well-being. However, unlike previous studies that are generally generalist or based on Western culture, this study offers a unique model of guidance and counseling intervention that is structured and adaptive to the socio-cultural dynamics and diverse backgrounds of the community in Palangka Raya. Furthermore, while global studies often view empathy only as part of the quality of teacher instruction, this study positions teachers more specifically as early helpers who integrate the principles of developmental guidance and counseling into daily activities in early childhood education (PAUD), thus filling a gap in the literature regarding the application of locality-based guidance services to optimize children's self-confidence in Indonesia.

Based on the above description, this study aims to examine the influence of empathy-based guidance and counseling and teacher social support on the self-confidence of early childhood children in Palangka Raya. The results of this study are expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of early childhood guidance and counseling services, as well as provide practical implications for early childhood education teachers and educational stakeholders in designing empathetic, supportive learning environments that are oriented toward strengthening children's self-confidence.

METHODOLOGY
Research Design
This study uses a quantitative approach with a causal associative method. This design was chosen to explain the cause-effect relationship and how much influence the independent variables, namely Empathy-Based Counseling Guidance (X^1) and Teacher Social Support (X^2), have on the dependent variable, namely Children's Self-

Confidence (*Y*). To ensure objectivity and accuracy, all data were collected in numerical format and then analyzed using systematic statistical procedures to empirically prove the research hypothesis. Data were collected numerically and processed using statistical analysis to test the established hypothesis (Schutt, 2019).

Population and Sample

The population in this study included all early childhood children aged 5–6 years and early childhood education (PAUD) teachers in Palangka Raya City. Children aged 5–6 years were selected because they are in the final stage of early childhood education, where the development of self-confidence, social skills, and emotional readiness begins to become more apparent and can be observed through daily behavior in the school environment. Children also have basic abilities to express feelings, interact with peers, and respond to guidance provided by teachers. In addition, the PAUD teachers who are part of the study population are those directly involved in the education process, coaching, and providing guidance and social support to children in the school environment. PAUD teachers have a strategic role as facilitators of children's social-emotional development, including fostering self-confidence through empathetic and supportive interactions. By involving 150 children aged 5–6 years and 50 PAUD teachers in Palangka Raya City as the population, this study is expected to be able to describe comprehensive and contextual conditions regarding guidance and counseling practices, teacher social support, and their influence on the self-confidence of early childhood children in the region. Sampling was carried out using the Proportional technique. Cluster Random Sampling. Given that the research subjects are young children, self-confidence data will be collected through structured observation, while empathy and social support data will be collected through questionnaires completed by teachers. The sample size was determined based on the Isaac and Michael table or the Slovin formula with a 5% error rate.

Variable Identification and Operational Definition

1. Independent Variable (X^1): Empathy-Based Guidance and Counseling, a service that emphasizes a deep understanding of children's feelings, warm communication, and unconditional acceptance. Indicators: Active listening, calming responses, validation of children's emotions, and interpersonal openness.
2. Independent Variable (X^2): Teacher Social Support, Availability of emotional and practical resources from teachers perceived by children in the school environment. Indicators: Emotional support (praise/comfort), instrumental support (assistance with assignments), informational support (advice), and assessment support (positive feedback).
3. Dependent Variable (*Y*): Child's Self-Confidence, Child's belief in his/her ability to carry out activities, interact, and face challenges. Indicators: Independence in tasks, courage to ask/answer, initiative in social interactions, and resilience when experiencing failure.

Research Instruments

The instruments used consist of two types:

1. Questionnaire: Using a Likert scale (1–4) to measure the level of empathy in BK services and teacher social support.

2. Structured Observation Sheet: Used to measure children's self-confidence. Observations are conducted by researchers or accompanying teachers using a validated assessment rubric.

Validity and Reliability Test

Instrument validity in this study was conducted to ensure that the measuring instrument actually measures the intended construct. Validity testing begins with content validity. Validity through expert Judgment, namely an assessment by experts who have competence in the fields of guidance and counseling, developmental psychology, or early childhood education. Through this assessment, each instrument item is evaluated in terms of its suitability to the variable indicators, clarity of language, and relevance to the respondent's characteristics. Expert results Judgment is used as a basis for revising or refining statement items before the instrument is used in data collection. Next, the instrument is tested for construct validity using the Product Correlation technique. Pearson Moment. This test aims to determine the extent to which each statement item has a significant relationship with the total score of the measured variable. An instrument item is declared valid if the correlation coefficient (r count) is greater than r table at the specified significance level, thus concluding that the item is capable of representing the construct being measured empirically. Reliability in this study was measured using the Cronbach's formula. Alpha indicates the extent to which the items in an instrument have internal consistency. An instrument is declared reliable if the Cronbach's α value is Alpha is greater than 0.60, which indicates that the instrument has a fairly good level of reliability and can be used consistently to measure research variables.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data in this study were analyzed using SmartPLS to ensure accuracy and precision in data processing. The initial stage of the analysis was carried out through descriptive statistical analysis aimed at describing the characteristics of the data for each research variable. This analysis included calculating the average score (mean), median, mode, and percentage of achievement, so as to obtain a general picture of the level of empathy-based counseling guidance, teacher social support, and self-confidence in early childhood. Furthermore, before conducting inferential analysis, this study conducted a classical assumption test as a prerequisite for regression analysis. The classical assumption test includes a normality test to determine whether the data is normally distributed, a linearity test to ensure a linear relationship between variables, a multicollinearity test to see whether there is a high correlation between independent variables, and a heteroscedasticity test to ensure equality of residual variances. Fulfillment of these assumptions is important so that the results of the regression analysis can be interpreted validly and accurately (Stockemer, 2018). The main hypothesis testing was carried out using multiple linear regression analysis which was used to determine the effect of empathy-based counseling guidance (X_1) and teacher social support (X^2) simultaneously on children's self-confidence (Y). To determine the effect of each independent variable separately, a partial t-test was used, while a simultaneous F_{test} was used to test the effect of both independent variables simultaneously on the dependent variable. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to determine the percentage contribution of empathy-based counseling and teacher social support in explaining variations in early childhood self-confidence. The results of this analysis are expected to provide a

comprehensive empirical picture of the relationships and influences between variables in the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on statistical testing and triangulation with field observation data, this study successfully demonstrated that teachers' psychological approaches, through empathy and social support, play a vital role in developing self-confidence in early childhood in Palangka Raya City. The following is an in-depth discussion of each variable:
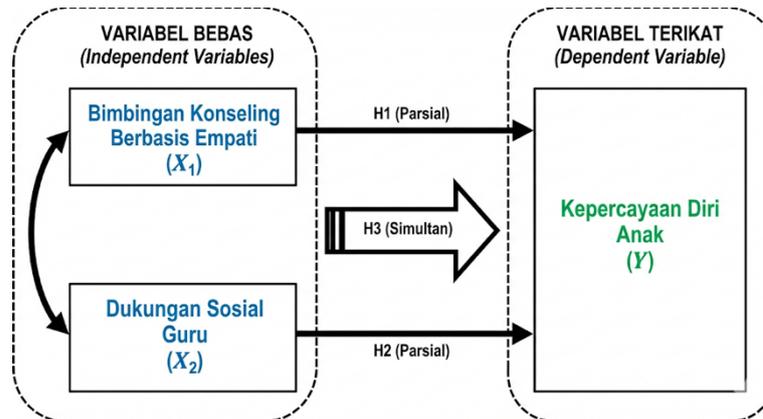

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Relationship between Variables

Empathy-Based Counseling Guidance for Children's Self-Confidence

The positive influence of empathy-based counseling guidance on children's self-confidence has been proven significantly.

Table 1. Empathy-Based Counseling Guidance ($X1$) on Children's Self-Confidence (Y)

Variable Relationship	Regression Coefficient (β)	T-count value	Ttable value	Sig. Value. (p)	Information
Empathy-Based Guidance and Counseling (X^1) $\downarrow$ Self Confidence (Y)	0.458*	4,512	1.98	0	Significant Influence

The result is clearly evident, as evidenced by the partial test results, which show a t-value of 4.512 > t-table of 1.980, with a significant p-value of 0.000 < 0.05. This statistic indicates that the more intensive and high-quality the empathy shown by teachers in responding to children's emotions, the higher the children's self-confidence scores.

These statistical findings are supported by field observations discovered by researchers during observations at a sample of early childhood education (PAUD) schools. An interesting finding was made in one child (let's call him Ananda A) who was very withdrawn at the beginning of the semester and often cried when his parents

left him. The class teacher implemented active learning techniques. Listening and validating emotions without forcing the child to remain silent. The teacher said:

"... I know you're sad to be separated from Mama, it's okay to cry for a while, I'll stay here with you, okay..."

Observation Case: The impact of the teacher's empathetic approach was clearly visible within two weeks. Initially, Ananda A exhibited fearful behavior and tended to avoid social contact with peers and the teacher. However, as the teacher consistently provided warm, accepting, and non-judgmental responses, the child began to show positive behavioral changes. One early indicator of this change was Ananda A's courage to make eye contact when invited to communicate, reflecting an increased sense of security and confidence in interactions.

More significant developments were seen during circle activities. time. In a supportive and pressure-free classroom environment, Ananda A voluntarily raised his hand to share a story about his favorite toy with his classmates. This active participation indicates that the child has experienced increased self-confidence, both in expressing himself and in dealing with social situations in the group. This change confirms that the teacher's empathetic approach plays a crucial role in creating a sense of acceptance and appreciation, which in turn encourages children to be more involved and demonstrate their potential in the learning environment. The behavioral change from withdrawn to engaged demonstrates that feelings of "acceptance" and "understanding" (empathy) are key nutrients for the growth of courage (self-confidence). This finding aligns with Attachment theory, which states that emotional security is a prerequisite for exploration. When teachers are able to provide a safe "container" for children's emotions, children are no longer preoccupied with their fears, but instead focus their energy on trying new things (Siddiqui, 2022).

Teachers' Social Support for Children's Self-Confidence

The second hypothesis which states that there is an influence of teacher social support on children's self-confidence is also accepted.

Table 2. Partial Test (t-Test) of the Effect of Teacher Social Support (X2) on Children's Self-Confidence (Y)

Variable Relationship	Regression Coefficient (β)	T - value	Table t value	Sig. Value. (p)	Decision
Teacher Social Support (X^2) ↓ Self-Confidence (Y)	0.395*	3.89	1.98	0.002	Hypothesis Accepted (Significant)

This is confirmed through the analysis of the data above which produces a value (t-count of 3.890 > t-table 1.980) and a value (p- value 0.002 < 0.05). The results of this study confirm that teacher support, whether in the form of instrumental assistance, information provision, or verbal rewards, serves as a psychological foundation that makes children feel capable and brave in facing challenging tasks. Social support from teachers helps children build confidence that they are not facing difficulties alone, so that self-confidence to try and survive in difficult situations increases. This support is not always manifested through large assistance or direct intervention, but often comes

in the form of small, consistent gestures, such as verbal encouragement, calming nonverbal cues, or the presence of teachers who are ready to help when needed.

Researchers noted a key moment illustrating this during a gross motor activity, climbing a spider web in the schoolyard. At the beginning of the activity, some children appeared hesitant and afraid to try. The teacher then provided gradual support, starting with explaining how to climb in simple language, providing examples, and praising each small effort the children made. The teacher's presence near the children, accompanied by encouraging phrases such as "You can go slowly" or "Mommy is here," provided a sense of security that encouraged the children to try. This situation demonstrates that consistent and responsive teacher social support can increase children's courage, help them overcome fear, and foster confidence in completing challenging tasks.

Observation Case: A child appears hesitant and stands frozen in front of a play device, afraid of falling. Instead of forbidding "Don't climb on it, you'll fall" or forcing the child, the teacher provides social support in the form of verbal affirmation and physical presence:

"Your legs are strong, Mommy will stay behind you, let's try one step first."
Thanks to the support, the child dared to climb.
Arriving downstairs, the child's facial expression brightened and he shouted:
"Mom, I can!"

Successful experience (mastery) This experience facilitated by teacher support is what cumulatively builds children's self-efficacy and self-confidence. This reinforces Guess & McCane-Bowling's (2016) view that supportive teachers do not take over children's difficulties, but provide sufficient support so that children can overcome their own difficulties, which ultimately gives rise to a sense of pride and self-confidence.

Empathy-Based Counseling Guidance and Teacher Social Support for Children's Self-Confidence

Together, empathy-based counseling and teacher social support make a very strong contribution.

Table 3. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Hypothesis Statement	Statistical Value	Sig.	Decision
H_1	Empathy -Based Counseling Guidance (X^1) on Children's Self-Confidence (Y)	$t_{count} = 4.512$	0.000	Accepted
H_2	There is an influence of Teacher Social Support (X^2) on Children's Self-Confidence (Y)	$t_{count} = 3.890$	0.002	Accepted
H_3	simultaneous influence of Empathy-Based Guidance and Counseling (X^1) and Teacher Social Support (X^2) on Children's Self - Confidence (Y).	$F_{count} = 12,450$	0.000	Accepted

This is proven by the results of the simultaneous test (F Test) which shows a value (F-count of 12,450 > F-table 3,150) with significance (0.000 < 0.05). In addition, the value of the Determination Coefficient (R Square of 0.654) shows that 65.4% of the variation in children's self-confidence in PAUD Palangka Raya City is influenced by these two variables, while the rest is influenced by other factors such as parenting patterns. The synergy between empathy (touching the feeling aspect) and social support (touching the action/assistance aspect) creates an inclusive and empowering classroom climate. In the context of cultural diversity in Palangka Raya, the combination of empathy-based counseling guidance and social support is very effective in bridging differences in children's backgrounds. This behavioral transformation confirms that early childhood self-confidence is not merely an innate talent, but rather the result of social construction built through quality interactions with teachers. Teachers in Palangka Raya who are able to act as counselors (empathetic) and facilitators (supportive) have proven to be able to produce students who are more resilient and confident in facing the next educational transition.

The novelty of this study lies in the integration of the developmental Guidance and Counseling (BK) intervention model into the daily role of PAUD teachers, where teachers are positioned not only as instructors, but also as therapeutic ' helpers ' who systematically apply empathy and social support. Unlike previous studies, which were mostly based on Western and partial cultures, this study fills the literature gap by testing the simultaneous synergy of these two variables in the specific socio-cultural context of Palangka Raya. This study offers empirical evidence that the combination of emotional validation (empathy aspect) and action scaffolding (social support aspect) is able to explain 65.4% of the variance in the formation of children's self-confidence, providing a new perspective on the importance of the psychological climate of the classroom beyond just teaching methods. Early childhood guidance and counseling that integrates teacher empathy and social support as the main determinants of children's self-confidence in the context of PAUD education. In contrast to previous studies that generally position empathy and social support as general psychosocial variables or part of the quality of teaching, this study specifically places both as core components of developmental guidance and counseling services that are implemented concretely in daily learning activities. Furthermore, this study presents a novelty in repositioning the role of early childhood education teachers as early helpers and developmental counselors, rather than solely as academic instructors. Teacher empathy in this study is not understood as a personal trait, but rather operationalized as a structured guidance and counseling strategy, including active listening, emotional validation, and non- judgmental responses have been shown to have a direct impact on behavioral change and increased self-confidence in children.

From a methodological perspective, the novelty of this study lies in the strengthening of quantitative results through triangulation with contextual case-based observational data on children's behavior, thus explaining not only whether the influence occurs, but also how empathy and social support work in shaping children's self-confidence. This approach enriches the literature, which has been dominated by survey studies without strengthening contextual evidence. Furthermore, this study has contextual novelty because it was conducted in the socially and culturally diverse city of Palangka Raya, a region that has been relatively unstudied in early childhood guidance and counseling research. The research findings indicate that the integration of teacher empathy and social support effectively bridges differences in children's backgrounds, thereby expanding the relevance of developmental guidance and

counseling theory in the context of early childhood education in Indonesia. Thus, this study not only contributes to strengthening the theoretical framework of early childhood guidance and counseling but also offers a practical model based on teacher empathy and social support that is applicable, contextual, and has the potential to be replicated in the development of guidance and counseling services in early childhood education (PAUD), especially in areas with diverse socio-cultural characteristics.

Research Implications

The results of this study have important theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, this study strengthens the Attachment and Social Theory. Support in the context of early childhood education by emphasizing that a safe emotional relationship between teacher and child is a primary prerequisite for exploration, courage, and the development of self-confidence. These findings also fill a gap in the literature by demonstrating that developmental guidance and counseling approaches can be effectively integrated into daily learning practices in early childhood education (PAUD), not merely as incidental or supplementary services. Practically, the results of this study require a paradigm shift in the role of PAUD teachers, from mere conveyors of learning materials to therapeutic counselors in the classroom. Teachers need to recognize that small, empathetic and supportive responses have long-term impacts on children's personality development and mental health. Furthermore, these research findings also imply the importance for schools to include indicators of children's emotional and mental health well-being as part of learning evaluations, not solely focusing on cognitive achievement

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of statistical data analysis and triangulation with field observation findings regarding the influence of empathy-based counseling guidance and teacher social support on the self-confidence of early childhood in Palangka Raya City, it can be concluded that both variables have a significant role and are mutually reinforcing. The implementation of empathy-based counseling guidance has been empirically proven to have a positive and significant effect on increasing children's self-confidence, as indicated by the partial test value (t_{count} = 4.512 > t_{table} : sig < 0.05). This finding indicates that the teacher's ability to carry out active Listening, validating children's emotions, and providing warm, non-judgmental responses can create a sense of psychological safety for children. When children feel their feelings are understood and accepted, anxiety levels decrease, increasing their courage to express themselves and interact socially. Furthermore, teacher social support has also been shown to have a positive and significant influence on children's self-confidence ($t_{test.}$ = 3.890 > t_{table} : sig < 0.05). The support provided by teachers, whether in the form of emotional, instrumental, informational, or appreciation, functions as scaffolding that strengthens children's self-confidence to try new challenges and not give up easily when facing difficulties. Simultaneously, empathy-based counseling guidance and teacher social support contribute a very strong influence on children's self-confidence (F_{count} = 12.450 > F_{table} ; R^2 = 0.654) which means that 65.4% of the variation in children's self-confidence in the PAUD environment in Palangka Raya City is influenced by the psychological climate built by teachers. The synergy between the affective aspect in the form of empathy and the conative aspect in the form of real support is the main key in forming resilient, brave, and confident early childhood children.

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