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GRADE DIFFERENCES IN EXPLORATION AND COMMITMENT RELATED TO EDUCATION, OCCUPATION, AND FAMILY: A STUDY ON PRIMARY-SCHOOL STUDENTS IN PANGALENGAN

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ABSTRACT

This study was intended to describe the exploration and the commitment of the primary-school students in Pangalengan two years after the earthquake, related to the future domains of life i.e. education, occupation, and family. The primary-school students of grade 1-6 in Pangalengan who experienced the 2009's earth quake (male: 126 students, female: 222 students) participated in this study. They were individually assisted to complete the adapted exploration and commitment questionnaire (Nurmi et al., 1990), included items related to their three domains of future life. The results revealed that grade differences gave less influence on the level of exploration and commitment of the students. In general the results were neither in accordance with the maturation hypothesis nor with the transition hypothesis. Only the exploration related to education was in line with the maturation hypothesis. The students generally acted more than thought about the future, in the three domains of future life. The exploration's level related to occupation was the highest ($M = 3.42$), whereas related to family was the lowest ($M = 1.97$). The commitment's level related to education was the highest ($M = 4.25$), wherever related to family was the lowest score ($M = 3.82$). Among the three domains of future life, the commitment's and the exploration's level related to family were the lowest. Further studies were recommended to explain whether the results were due to the students' experiences related to the 2009's earth quake or not, based on which suitable intervention programs could be developed, to help the teachers preparing the students for their future life.

Keywords : future orientation, exploration and commitment, primary-school students, natural disaster, earthquake

Introduction

Kecamatan Pangalengan was an area in West Java hit on 2 September 2009 by an earthquake. Yakub Malik (2011) wrote that this natural disaster caused severe destructions in the environment. Public buildings, in particular school buildings, were among those that were severely destroyed. The primary-school buildings were included in the buildings that need to be renovated or even rebuilt. Psychological stress due to the traumatic experiences was reported by students, teachers, parents, as well as people in the community. Two years after the earthquake i.e. 2011, some of the primary-school buildings were rebuilt with proper and clean classrooms, furnished with the new teaching facilities such as computer laboratory and library. The school activities were considered back to normal. It was also reported that a kind of trauma healing was induced to those with traumatic experiences, by which the psychological

conditions of the students, teachers, parents, and people in the community were gradually enhanced (interview to the important persons of the community and teachers, 2011). With this ameliorated condition the current focus of the primary-school activities was the students' future life. However, the interview to the primary-school teachers in 2011 also revealed that they were not yet prepared for making the students got ready to face the future life.