

Balanced Nutrition Education in Efforts to Realize a Healthy Canteen at Elementary School Jogorogo 4 Ngawi

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ABSTRACT

During school age, rapid physical, intellectual, mental, and social growth occurs, necessitating increased nutritional intake to support growth and activities. This coincides with the crucial issue of stunting in Indonesia. The food consumed plays a crucial role in determining the nutritional balance of school-aged children. Community Service activities with accompanying outreach are expected to provide the understanding and practical application of healthy food types to teachers and canteen operators. The method employed in this activity involves observing Elementary School Jogorogo 4 regarding data measurement and analysis of student participants, followed by outreach activities on balanced nutrition and the implementation of a healthy canteen. Thus, the nutritional needs of young children can be maintained, reducing the risk of stunting

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INTRODUCTION

Nutritional issues represent a significant health concern in society, stemming from various factors. Various factors that influence nutrition include genetic, demographic, socioeconomic, low levels of knowledge, residential location, lifestyle, and nutrition (Palupi et al., 2018). A healthy lifestyle,

encompassing balanced nutrition, stands as a primary factor in the complex occurrence of nutritional problems in Indonesia. Nutritional issues among Elementary School children represent a gap that requires attention, considering that school-aged children are vital assets to the nation. School-age children are typically between the ages of 6 and 12 years old. School-age children have higher nutritional needs compared to preschool-age children (Pontang et al., 2018). During this crucial period, rapid physical, intellectual, mental, and social growth transpires, necessitating increased nutritional intake to support their growth and activities. Foods containing balanced nutrition are essential as energy sources post-activity, to alleviate hunger, support bodily functions, and enhance the body's resilience against diseases (Yuni Damayanti et al., 2023). Paying attention to the types of food consumed plays a pivotal role in determining the nutritional balance of school-aged children.

Common nutritional problems found in school-aged children include stunting, underweight, obesity, and anemia. According to the National Basic Health Research (Riskesdas) 2018, the nutritional status of children aged 5-12 years is as follows:

- The prevalence of anemia for ages 5-14 years is 26.8%.
- The prevalence of stunting is 20.36%.
- The prevalence of overweight is 10.8%.
- The prevalence of obesity (very overweight) is 9.2%.
- The prevalence of underweight is 9.2%.

Choosing foods according to the body's needs and following a balanced diet can create optimal nutritional status. Excessive food consumption can potentially lead to overweight and increase the risk of diseases caused by nutrient excess. Conversely, insufficient food intake can lead to thinness and make the body more vulnerable to diseases (Ahmad et al., 2023). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), stunting is the failure of growth and development experienced by children due to prolonged inadequate nutritional intake, recurrent infections, and inadequate psychosocial stimulation.

Children in Elementary School age are a crucial group to improve their nutritional status (Kadaryati et al., 2021). This is because of the rapid ongoing development stage of the brain organs during this period, where adequate nutritional intake is highly necessary to prevent disruptions in children's growth and development, especially in school-aged children (Ahmad et al., 2023). Children aged 6 to 12 years are still undergoing growth and development and require sufficient nutrient intake. Insufficient nutrition can also weaken a child's immune system. High activity levels and irregular eating habits in children often result in an imbalance between nutritional intake and adequacy (Hasrul et al., 2020).

Meanwhile, according to Riskesdas 2018, the national prevalence of underweight (according to BMI for age) in children aged 5-12 years is 18.3%, consisting of 4.8% severely underweight and 13.5% underweight. Additionally, the prevalence of underweight in East Java Province is 8%, consisting of 2.2% severely underweight and 5.8% underweight. Therefore, it is essential to understand the relationship between dietary patterns and knowledge of balanced nutrition with the occurrence of imbalanced nutritional disorders.

METHOD

The methods used in implementing the balanced nutrition education program at Elementary School Jogorogo 4 are as follows:

- Observation: Conducted based on observations of data such as students' weight and height, which are then adjusted according to the children's age.
- Analysis: Data analysis is performed to make decisions on suitable strategies and programs to address existing issues.
- Program Planning: Following observation and analysis, discussions are held to determine the appropriate learning media and outreach methods.

- Program Implementation: The program is implemented according to the schedule determined during the planning phase.

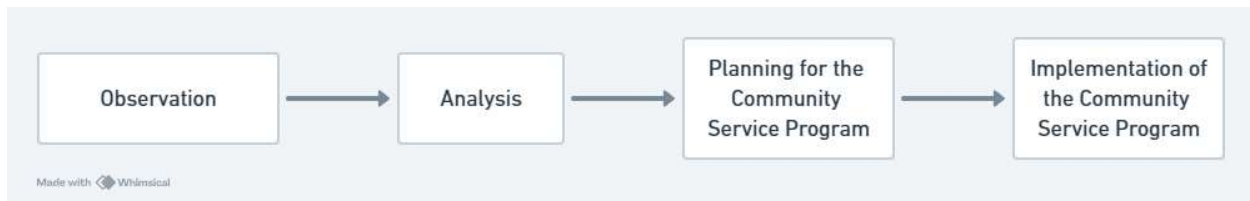


FIGURE 1.The methods employed in implementing the program.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Primary school children still consume unhealthy foods in abundance, therefore, the provision of food in schools is important to be considered (Kadaryati et al., 2021). Highlighting the need for socialization regarding balanced nutrition. Snacks play a significant role in providing energy and nutritional needs for school-age children (Mayasari, 2020). Children's snacking habits influence their energy intake. School snacks contribute 31.1% of the total food intake for school-age children (Indrayana et al., 2021). School-age children are vulnerable to health issues, a fact supported by research conducted by the Indonesian Food and Drug Monitoring Agency (BPOM RI) (Sugiritama et al., 2021). Research on the safety of snacks commonly consumed by school-age children from January to August 2014 found that one-third of snacks sold in primary schools (out of 23,500 primary schools) in Indonesia contained hazardous substances and food additives that did not meet the requirements. Moreover, snack foods contributed to 12.5% of food poisoning outbreaks in 25 provinces in Indonesia (Prasetyaningrum & Kadaryati, 2021).

Many Elementary School children do not yet understand the types of healthy foods, necessitating education (Kadaryati et al., 2021). The presence of a healthy cafeteria in the school environment will support the consumption of safe and healthy food by school community members, especially students. The selection of healthy menu options needs to be aligned with balanced nutrition guidelines that encourage reducing the intake of high-salt, high-sugar, and high-fat foods (Kadaryati et al., 2023). The concept of a healthy school is certainly aimed at improving the quality of human resources (HR), as the quality of HR is greatly influenced by two interconnected and related factors: education and health (Nasiatin & Hadi, 2019). One of the efforts made to promote healthy behaviors is through the implementation of a healthy cafeteria initiative (Supriono et al., 2020).

Community Service activities, coupled with outreach, are expected to provide understanding and practical application of healthy food types to teachers and canteen operators, Because the role of teachers is also crucial in shaping students' healthy lifestyle behaviors (Anisa & Ramadan, 2021). School canteens serve as one of the primary sources of food for children at school (Rahmah et al., 2023). Considering the importance of providing healthy and safe snacks for children, promoting healthy school canteen programs is crucial. The partner for this activity is Elementary School Jogorogo 4. The canteen supervisor has participated in previous activities, such as education on healthy canteen management in schools for the school principal, teachers, and canteen operators at Elementary School 4 Jogorogo, Jogorogo Subdistrict, Ngawi, East Java.

The activity was conducted on Friday, March 22, 2024, from 09:00 to 11:00, targeting 70 students. Subsequently, a healthy canteen socialization session was held with teachers, the school principal, and canteen operators in Jogorogo Ngawi. The information was delivered through educational videos and a question-and-answer session.

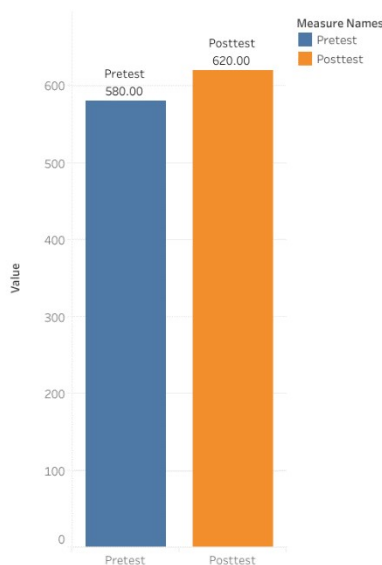


FIGURE2.Graph showing the results of balanced nutrition education on the knowledge of teachers.

Before the outreach session, a pretest on balanced nutrition was conducted. As shown in Figure 2, it is evident that the knowledge of teachers and the school principal regarding balanced nutrition was still low before the outreach. Generally, the teachers and the school principal of Elementary School Jogorogo 4 in Ngawi still have an insufficient understanding of balanced nutrition.

Furthermore, after the outreach session, there was an increase in the understanding of balanced nutrition among the teachers and the school principal of Elementary School Jogorogo 4 in Ngawi, as indicated by the percentage increase in Figure 1. However, continuous and sustainable outreach is necessary to ensure that teachers and the school principal understand and are aware of the standards of good food for children and can provide balanced nutrition.



FIGURE 3.The process of providing education to teachers about balanced nutrition.

The purpose of conducting this community service is to provide education to teachers and students of Elementary School Jogorogo 4 regarding balanced nutrition through educational videos. Childhood is a crucial period for the rapid process of growth and development, encompassing physical and psychomotor, mental, and social growth. "Nutrition for Achievement" is designed to produce active participants, who have normal nutritional status, and are intelligent enough to achieve superior human

resources in Indonesia. To support children's physical growth, practical guidance on balanced nutrition is necessary, one of which is through consuming a variety of foods that meet nutritional needs. Children's nutritional needs include energy, protein, fat, carbohydrates, water, vitamins, and minerals.

Food with balanced nutrition ensures the fulfillment of the body's needs along with its activities. School-aged children undergo rapid physical, intellectual, mental, and emotional growth. Foods containing essential nutrients are crucial for their growth and development processes. By consuming nutritionally adequate foods regularly, children will grow up healthy, enabling them to achieve high academic achievements and fitness to participate in all activities, thus becoming quality human resources.

CONCLUSION

Community Service activities at Elementary School Jogorogo 4 proceeded smoothly according to the schedule, and they were met with enthusiasm by the teachers of Elementary School Jogorogo 4. Before the outreach session, it was noted that the teachers' knowledge of balanced nutrition was lacking. Generally, the understanding of balanced nutrition at Elementary School Jogorogo 4 still needs improvement. However, after the outreach session, there was an increase in the teachers' understanding, with a percentage increase of 6.89%. With the implementation of this Real-Life Lecture-Community Service activity, the school plans to introduce a healthy canteen with balanced food menus as an effort to address the abundance of unhealthy snacks in the school environment.

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