Chapter One
Introduction

Background

The Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) – one of the social groups experiencing social exclusion in this generation – are living realities which have spanned for decades or even centuries. These children may live and see lives with different perspectives compared to children living a decent life in the family setting (basic needs are fulfilled, living with the presence of their parent/s). Apart from societal involvements and cares, governments are the one who should be responsible for the caring of the OVC\(^1\) (through Social Ministries or alike). Through caring system, OVC are educated, built, guided in centralized institutions (run by either government/privates) called the orphanage/social rehabilitation (Indonesian: Panti Asuhan/Rehabilitasi Sosial\(^2\)).

Children in general, as future generation, play a significant role in nation’s development (World Summit for Children by UNICEF, 1990). Their minds, strengths, and overall capabilities are the milestone for a nation to grow. Supports, accordingly, must be provided to maximize their potential abilities in everything they do. Talents bear much fruits when polished with the right practice and that points out of what some of the world’s orphans had done for this world, namely: Nelson Mandela, Andrew Jackson, Louis Armstrong, Leo Tolstoy, Babe Ruth etc. For that reason, it is pivotal for government to invest much on children.

\(^1\) Referring to Indonesia’s UUD 1945 Pasal 34, concerning the government’s responsibility in taking care of the poor and vulnerable children.

\(^2\) Minor discrepancies are found in regards to detailed explanation on both terms: orphanage and social rehabilitation unit. This will be further explained in Chapter Two. Despite the differences, both function as the institution formed to serve the OVC.
Children’s Perception Towards An Orphanage’s Activities

Children, through education acquired in the orphanage, are expected to have an independent life as best as they can (Kemsos, 2010). Independency, with or without their acknowledgements, will be their main asset to the future. Therefore, fulfillment of all aspects of children’s needs (mental/spiritual, physical, education, skill etc.) must be present and evaluable (Irmansyah et al., 2010). Education – through all forms of activities dedicated to orphans – should at the end benefit OVC at its most potential capability. Children’s ability combined with education, thus, should be at the maximum point by the end of the children’s orphanage period. This is strengthened by what has been said by Rousseau (in Hasbullah, 2005) that education should give us (or them; the OVC) supplies from childhood through adolescence, which will be needed to the time of adulthood. Consequently, children are expected to perform best to prepare for their independent life, by having do-able skills/supporting capabilities when their orphanage period ends.

Activities (in where education is attached to it) are the main steps made by the orphanage. Local terminology (Javanese); ‘asah, asih, asuh’ (eng: to teach, to love, to care for) embodies in the whole body of orphanageship. This local wisdom is the value which strengthens the role of Taman Harapan, noting that ‘asah’ is the transfer of knowledge-related values, ‘asih’ is the giving of affection and ‘asuh’ is the caring of the OVC. The activities are, in essence, the main weapons that orphanage should sharpen. The orphanage’s vision and mission are expected to experience a total transformation to the creation of every activity. The designed activities, as a result, should satisfy children’s performances and needs.

In ‘digesting’ those activities (specific child’s need to specific activity), carers in general must be alert that children are having complex perceptions. The absorption of the essence of the activities must spawn new implementable knowledge and skills for children. Such conditions are closely related to what Coulson (2013) reported that children must deal with challenges and overcome them in order to grow. Through the activities, children should intrinsically feel
Introduction

demanded and challenged to develop their talents/potential ability, which in the future will speak for themselves. The points shown above give us a description on how pivotal it is for an orphanage to control the quality of its activities.

Turning into Indonesia’s facts, in where the average families living in poverty are numbered in tens of millions, children are inevitably faced to the reality of life directly, in most cases. Despite the progress in reducing poverty as much as 9.9% in the last decade (BPS, 2012) and economic growth which is noted at 6.23% (BPS in SETKAB, 2013), the country is facing other dilemmas as equity has to be made to upgrade the life-quality of the poor - recorded at 11.66 % of the total population (BPS, 2013) - . Children, the face of future generation, will speak the truth of what the country is going to transform.

The country of more than 240 million of population must now facilitate almost one third of its citizens, i.e. more than 76 million children (Savethechildren, 2013). As the population grows with approximate numbers of three million people per year (Unicef, 2013), the challenges could not even be more vivid. The country has now to tackle the emerging issues, such as the number of vulnerable children spread all over the country which is as high as 4.5 million children (Tempo, 2012). As additional reference, in 2006 alone, the number of children approaching the limits of vulnerability showed a staggering digit of 17.6 million children, which is 22.14% of the total children population (Hamid in Kemsos, 2013).

In facing the reality, government has been implementing actions, namely the establishment of orphanages/social rehabilitation unit. The institution should virtually be capable of facilitating the children regardless of geographical issues, economic capabilities, and other multidimensional matters. The Social Ministry (Kementerian Sosial) is authorized to implement such actions. Being the government’s body, there are currently 5000 – 8000 orphanages (Rehabilitasi Sosial) spread all over the country. Among the number, a
massive 99% (and over) are the orphanages formed by privates (Sudrajat in Kemsos, 2013). The remaining 1% (or less) is the number which represents the government’s involvement to this matter. To be more precise, the Indonesian Social Ministry (2013) stated in its website that there are 6570 social rehabilitation centers in the country which must facilitate half a million children nationwide. We can conclude from the data that each center accommodate 83 children, the quota that certain discrepancy may be found on the field.

The government, through orphanages, has not performed at maximum level this far as the deeper concerns are found in its institutions (Sudrajat in Kemsos, 2013). Through his research, Sudrajat also stated that the cooperation (in order to simplify the activities’ implementation) between departments/ministries has not spawned a solid establishment. Better arrangements of orpananages – and all the details attached to them; standards and qualities – are highly recommended for a better implementation. These facts have given us a glimpse of description on how the OVC will receive its rights from the government. That also deepens our concern for our children.

Government, in this case, should be the one that is fully responsible for the OVC (with the legal base of UUD 1945 pasal 34) and should investigate any possible threat and opportunity to guarantee the children’s smoothness in getting their rights. In reality, the government’s attention to this matter shows a minimum amount of dedication as it has not taken a serious action to tackle the issue. The issue should not blame the children and should stimulate the government to have a pure control and awareness towards the OVC. It is government’s responsibility to spot/track the children through its local entities. Information derived from them should be able to give implementable policies/steps through healthy national/regional systems, not merely conducted through individuals – referring to Tasripin case, the 12 year-old boy who has to take care of his three siblings (Tempo, 2013) –.

The comparison between the number of centers available – ±6500 centers, with only 1% are formed by the government
(Kemsos, 2013) – and OVC – 4.5 million children (Tempo, 2013) – are definitely unbalanced. These data speak grievous realities on the field. These major issues, peaking at government’s responsibility in taking care of nation’s valuable asset – the children –, have been confronted by some parts of national/international societies but will it be possible for children in doing all of the things without any interference from the government? This real happening is urgent and their voice must be heard.

Educators, orphanage personnel, children, and activities should be printed in one synchronous mold, so that orphanage may perform as best as it could. These facts had made many researchable spots as many researchers are attracted into it. One of its elements, i.e the children’s perception to receive the qualified activities, will be used as the main idea in this writing.

Literature Review

- Other Researches

International and national researches strongly indicated the significance of children and orphanage as a part of society in our lives. Children, the main priority of the existence of the orphanage, could be set aside as a result of the domination of the orphanage (Freidus, 2010). They are experiencing a complex situation in which children in a family setting will probably never experience (Kirkpatrick et al., 2012). One of the problems, i.e. the parenting matter, has an excessive contribution to the children as unsuited parenting system which occurred in orphanages may defect the children (Shibuya & Taylor, 2008). Orphanage care nowadays opens a wider window for everybody, particularly in matters related to caring patterns as what Muhamad Tutur (2007) said.

The problems in the orphanage seem to be endless when funding matter comes aboard. The lack of funding will obstruct the running of the orphanage. It is essential for the institution as it also
Children’s Perception Towards An Orphanage’s Activities

has to deal with all the employees and expenses. Less funding could mean less ability to fulfill orphanage's basic needs, less in standards, which finally creates the organizational problems whether we want it or not. That matter will give a direct influence mainly to children, and also to the institution’s personnel (Castillo, Jason T. et al., 2012). Um-E-Kalsoom (2010) wrote that mental health could also emerge in the midst of orphanageship, supporting the fact that other diseases (such as HIV/AIDS) could be another complication in the orphanage (Kurzinger, 2008). Orphanage itself is currently faced to another dilemma as orphanage tourism spread all over the world marking the defect of the orphanage existence (Guiney, T., 2012). The children are at stake as they are the ones who should be well taken care of but are plunged into a deep hole as what we can see the in the violation related to child labor (Whetten et al., 2011).

As mentioned earlier, orphanage implements its various activities which should be oriented to the children’s main needs. I would like to emphasize that activities with its complexity must be done single mindedly for the benefits of the children. Orphanage as the organizer of the activities (comprising mental/spiritual, physical and health, education and skills) – also referring the ‘asah-asih-asuh’ values as the local wisdom embodied in the OVC caring in Taman Harapan – carries a holistic mission that should be ready for an evaluation (Irmansyah et al., 2010), which should also be supported by positive influences by governments, economic, and financial mechanism among others (BMC Health Service Research, 2012).

Following the steps, good activities designed by orphanage should be able to stimulate children in reaching a good progress. Despite the population difficulties in doing so, (resulted from the children’s multilevel ability and individuality) the perfection to the activities’ betterment should be taken into account and evaluate-able, as it will be able to give high accessibility to children with their needs.

Education, through this explanation, becomes OVC’s primary need which inevitably must be able to recruit children’s interests at
Introduction

any stage with full commitment. The researches contributed by Indonesian nationals; Nur habib (2010), Muhamad Tutur (2007) and Pasaribu (2007) consolidated the importance of formal education presence in the midst of children’s complex reality.

When we view the life of children in orphanage, we can derive some values that they received (specific pressures), which are resulted from their social setting (Kirkpatrick et al., 2012). That finding implicitly states that their perception and reaction are affected through a chain of historic experience and hence, specific approach is needed in the specific case. One thing that is seemingly hard to achieve at the equal level is the affection that they get in the orphanage (when compared to children receiving affection in the family setting).

The practices of children-caring actions, in which professionalism is an absolute demand, print the children’s character in a gradual motion. The way orphanage brings the activities to children (with its details: procedures, implementation etc) will affect children’s character, both in a direct way or through intrinsic values.

Orphanage’s children and institutions disembogue in one terminal point, i.e. the activities. It is essential for both parties to realize the essence of the implemented activity in every single point of progressing line. Children, at this matter, is the ultimate asset where orphanage should be in its best dedication for one day they will face the real world with their best ability received from activities. To sum up this explanation, this book will elaborate the perception of children towards the activities received from the orphanage.

- **Theoretical Review**

Children’s perception assess orphanage as office/organization providing the real menu to OVC through activities. According to Schacter (2011), perception is the organization, identification, and
interpretation of sensory information in order to represent and understand the environment. The environment, as what OVC experience, shifts from the OVC’s origins to their new environment of orphanage, i.e. Taman Harapan. Being the new environment, Taman Harapan brings along the new atmosphere which is completely different from OVC’s origins. OVC need to perceive, understand, or ‘digest’ that environment into their understanding. The organization, identification, and interpretation is elements which they will acquire after the establishment made by the sensory information, which is called ‘sensation’.

According to Vroom (2000), motivation is affected by 3 key elements, i.e: expectancy, valence, and instrumentality. Children’s expectancy to an activity is a precondition of the creation of motivation. Children’s hope could either be a positive or negative element, resulted from the stimuli which they receive from the activity. Second factor, valence represents something innate that clings to anyone, respecting his/her individualism. Valence is an individual value based on its purpose/motive, needs, and choices of desired goal. The last factor, instrumentality, is the one’s belief that one will get a reward when action is completed.

Children’s perception is closely related to hope and valence of the goal. The expectancy to an activity will spawn child’s perception to the mentioned activity. When children find out that their expectancy is in line with the activity presented to them, their perception will somehow turn into a positive atmosphere and vice versa. Such thing will give a deeper impact to kids as they will attain a strong motivation as a result of transformed positive perception. The degree of perception is depending on the level of the offered stimuli, the same thing occurs to valence and perception relation. The glutinous value that is attached to children will determine children’s perception to a activity. The degree of perception is in the close relationships children’s motivational level in the activity implemented to them.
Through the explanation, we may conclude that perception is an intervening variable in the motivational context. It bridges motivation and its factors and the three are in the influencing interaction. Children automatically will digest stimuli (which is the factor of motivation: expectancy, valence, and instrumentality) before they themselves come out with perception. Perception will assess the institutions’ benefits based on the expectancy and valence of individual, which subsequently transforms into motivation.

Repetition of perception may potentially alter individual’s valence/expectancy to a different level. Thus, children should, at the best point, receive an understanding so that they might be in the state of full capacity to respond positively when perceiving stimuli (activities). The three motivational factors play a significant role to the kids on their motivation on mastering the skills through activities, which leads them to the mastery of applied skills that can be used later after the orphanage period. Correction will be the main weapons for educators when children are trapped in their laziness, the opposite spot of the willingness to exceed. Repetition, as real partner of motivation, will be a great company to children’s overall performance.

Research Problem and Question

- Research Problem

The activities conducted by the orphanage are implemented in accordance to child’s potential ability, which normally is divided into several service sectors, such as: spiritual/mental, physical/health, education, and skills. In a number of ways, the other supports may enter the orphanage. Through this, orphanage’s complexity and the difficulty of vision-mission synchronization could be the main challenges for each orphanage, to lead the institution astray from its main course, as what we can see in the recent publications on orphanage tourism. This kind of threat may obscure the activities centeredness with its mission and vision oneness, i.e. for the children.
The activities refer to activities which had been previously designed in such a way to single mindedly fulfill the needs of children and to be more specific, to fulfill their readiness for the real life. That activities comprise numerous activities created to one goal; children’s ability of skills acquirement (both academic/non-academic), which will hopefully able to support them in their after-orphanage life. These designed activities (as a result of many kinds of donations, through government/private) should ideally fulfill children’s needs. Referring to that, Drah (2012) wrote that all materials aid given to the children have not fully satisfied children’s needs.

Children’s readiness to absorb new knowledge and to deepen their potency should be the foundation of the offered activities. The readiness was derived from the wellness of their multi conditions, in where barriers are found to be insignificant issues as to delay or block to their minds toward the knowledge offered in activities. Failures in grasping the readiness result in the delay of children’s readiness to absorb the main idea of the learning process which has been held and managed in such a way by the orphanage.

- **Research Questions**

Referring the previous discussions, orphanage children need motivational-breaking actions which will help them to attain maximum achievements/performances. Their inability to implement such thing will subsequently be their nemesis in pursuing their dreams or reality in the short future (the after-orphanage period).

The designed activities managed by orphanage meet its biggest challenge in the field; i.e children’s perception, which finally cause major questions to arise, namely:

1. **What is the perception of the children towards the activities designed for them?**

   Through this question, children’s perception will be thoroughly investigated. Perception, existed as a result and factors of motivation, is one of the most influential factors of
children’s success in the activities. Positive perception on stimuli (of the activities) will provide children more accessibility in acquiring broader skills/science/knowledge given by their lecturers. On the contrary, negative perception (resulted from their disinterestedness toward the activities) will downgrade children’s performance for their mind has been blocked by themselves.

2. How do the activities suit the needs of the children?

Children in normal condition possess an interestedness on a certain field. The activities designed by the orphanage should at its best satisfy children’s interest. The orphanage should, then, be able to design, implement, and analyze the activities for the reason of sustainability. Certain condition where children experience disinterestedness when dealing with the activities should actually be inspiring the orphanage to evaluate and appreciate the children’s individuality which might previously be implemented by orphanage.

3. How do the activities (as Unit Rehsos Taman Harapan’s product) and OVC’s interests interact?

Children are different level individuals who should follow their interest through the orphanage activities. Similarly to adults, children face the challenge in the activity differently. Activities’ priority should then be able to accommodate the variety of children’s needs to its maximum level. The orphanages are definitely obliged to spot the specific step (particularly through activities) so that every single child may participate in at least one activity which meets his/her interest. These two elements or actors (i.e OVC and Taman Harapan) will eventually meet in one adjustable design which is called activities. Through this question then, their interaction (what is happening and what is not happening) is going to be explained further.
Children’s Perception Towards An Orphanage’s Activities

Through questions above, we expect to acquire a certain depth of professional skills-related activities of the orphanage. Its precision will be very pivotal for us to understand the matter in a correct way. This reality brings a learning opportunity so that through this discussion children may be awarded with correct way of skill-transfer for their future professional life.

Research Purpose and Significance

- **Research Purpose**

  Perception become more important as the identification of what children experience should take the dominant place. Children, in this case, should feel the realness of the activities in where the children are empowered to be at their best. Based on the same discussion, thus, children are expected to be focus in their involvement to the given activities. Next, they will hopefully be strong enough to implement what they have got in the activities to the real world.

  The purpose of this research is then to investigate children’s perception on activities which have been prepared for them. Bringing further expectations, they deserve to have a deeper understanding on this matter which represents their needs as OVC.

- **Research Significance**

  This research essentially has a social issue and action significance. OVC are interacting with many elements inside the orphanage. The main element of all is the one who affects their existence related to their goals in orphanage, i.e. the activities. The given activities are the ones which shape OVC in order to get the most of their potential abilities. Through these practices, perception indicates OVC’s level of understanding in ‘digesting’ the activities. Despite activities’ implementation is run by system, other practices alongside and inside the activities are filled with many elements, one
of them is social element. This issue is important as they, through long processes, may affect OVC’s perception which eventually also affects their action and the whole picture of OVC being in the orphanage. Also, there may be a little bit of additional significance in my research, i.e. theoretical significance, which is resulted from the OVC’s phenomena in understanding the activities.