

Effect of Positive Thinking Training on Self Acceptance in Students with Disabilities

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Abstract: *The objective of this study is to find out the effect of positive thinking training in an effort to raise self-acceptance in students with disabilities. Students with disabilities who receive positive thinking training are expected to have a higher level of self-acceptance compared to students with disabilities who do not receive the training. The subjects of this research are 13 students with disabilities from various faculties with a low to moderate level of self-acceptance based on the result of a prior interview. This research collects data using a scale of self-acceptance containing statements that indicate behaviors on the object variable that will be measured and given directly to the subjects. Data analysis in this research analyzes the comparison of pre-test, post-test, and follow-up results with the Wilcoxon test to compare pre-post, post-follow, and pre-follow. The result of Friedman test analysis shows the coefficient of chi-square=14.711 with $p=0.001$ which shows a very significant difference in self-acceptance between pre-test, post-test, and follow-up. The result of Wilcoxon test on pre-post shows $Z=-2.845$ with $p=0.004$, post-follow shows $Z=-1.187$ with $p=0.23$, and pre-follow shows $Z=-3.062$ with $p=0.002$, which shows that there is a different level of self-acceptance during pre-post, post-follow, and pre-follow. The result of the study based on Friedman test and Wilcoxon test analysis shows that there is a significant increase in self-acceptance after the training. This proves that positive thinking training can increase the level of self-acceptance in students with disabilities.*

Keywords: Students Disabilities, Positive Thinking, Self Acceptance

1. Introduction

Each individual has their own strength and weakness as a part of their character as a human. Every strengths and weaknesses that they have can be a contributing factor in individual success, but it can also turn into an obstacle in their life. The strength can turn them into a strong individual, but it can catch them off guard. Similar to strength, an individual's weakness can either empower or obstruct their life.

Strengths and weaknesses certainly become a unique individual characteristic. Even though having weaknesses is natural for a human, many individuals condemn and hide it. The weakness of individuals can be a physical or non-physical aspect. If an individual's weakness is non-physical, maybe it is not hard to overcome it. But individuals with physical weaknesses will not be able to overcome it as easily.

The disability community certainly face much hardship, often requires external help from other people. This factor is often considered as an obstacle in their life. During the writer's interview with several subjects on March 10th, 2015, the subjects reveal that their physical condition has a serious impact on their mental health and their personal relationships, subjects feel hopeless, afraid to socialize, anxious, withdrawn, even extreme thoughts of committing suicide in several subjects. This is a result of a low self-acceptance level that triggers negative thoughts in these individuals.

When individuals approach adulthood their physical appearances are closely associated with their image, self-image is considered as strength is attached to the individuals. In actuality, self-image is an individual's ability to accept their own strengths and weaknesses (Nugroho, 2009).

Individuals that know about their own strengths and weaknesses will have an easier life. The individual will no longer feel burdened with their weaknesses. Individuals that know themselves will have a more natural life, happiness, without feeling uncomfortable, and without trying to be someone else, but become their own person with a self-acceptance (Nugroho, 2009).

Individuals with good self-acceptance are satisfied with their quality and potentials and accept their own weaknesses. These individuals are not haunted by shame and guilt. The individuals will accept their nature as it is (Chaplin, 2004). The individuals will have more self-confidence and eliminate thoughts of being inferior compared to other individuals.

Sometimes individuals experience painful and unfair treatment from others. The bad and embarrassing memory can prolong or add to their feeling of pain and guilt. Changes of emotion into negative thoughts about themselves and shows a negative emotion towards themselves (Meniger, 1999). In the interview with subjects, they confess of being shunned by their normal friends, this situation is the cause behind their hatred towards their weaknesses and self. Another subject stated that they become a victim of bullying as a student because of his physical appearances, this memory makes them lose confidence, sad, and afraid to socialize with normal friends in their faculties, the subject feels disturbed and feels that they are unworthy.

From these various accounts it can be concluded that self-acceptance is an act of accepting everything in one's self, whether it is a weakness or strength, so that the individuals can realize and accept their personal characteristic, their strengths, and have a higher value of self in pursuing their goals, hopes, and ambitions despite all of their limitations.

A person with negative thoughts tend to have negative feelings and they tend to gravitate towards negative

behaviors that should be avoided. Because of this matter, individuals need a way to control their negative thoughts and turning them into something positive and change their way of thinking to have a more positive outlook (Albrecht, 1980).

Positive thoughts are closely related to life satisfaction, self-regard, and optimism. Life satisfaction is how individuals feel satisfied with their life, self-regard shows a feeling of confidence in their personal qualities and characteristics (Caprara & Steca, 2006).

Based on the phenomenons above, arise the question of whether positive thinking training can increase self-acceptance in students with disabilities.

Definition of Self-Acceptance

Self-acceptance is a behavior where individuals accept themselves. This term is used with a specific connotation that this acceptance is based on relatively objective tests towards an individual's talents, abilities, and unique general values. Realistic acceptance of their limitations and a feeling of whole satisfaction towards their talents and limitations (Artur, 2010).

Hurlock (Satyaningtyas, 2005) stated that self-acceptance is the ability to accept everything in one's self, whether it was a weakness or strength that they have, so that in the case of unpleasant event the individual can think logically about the good and the bad in their problem without causing a negative feeling, conflicts, inferiority, shame, and insecurities.

Definition of Positive Thinking

Positive thinking is a cognitive skill that can be learned by training, pessimistic individuals who go through a positive thinking training will experience a learning process of the cognitive skill in viewing various events that happen in their lives (Lestari and Lestari, 2005). Based on that it can be concluded that positive thinking training is a part of cognitive therapy.

The introduction of positive thinking in this research was done through a training approach. The training approach is selected because it is a learning method that aims to change the aspect of cognitive, affective, and skills in the group. The benefits of a group approach compared to individual approach is how a group approach creates a collective process of catharsis, mutual supports (motivations), and a shared feeling and experience to create a safe, comfortable space with a bond of kinship full of empathy (Johanson & Johanson, 2001).

Definition of Disabilities

There is a wide range of physical limitations, it depends on each individual. For individuals with physical limitations, it is hard or even impossible to do day to day activities normally. Physical disabilities also cause the loss of a physical function, ranging from sensory organs to body motoric such as lack of limbs and other physical disabilities. This imperfect physical condition is known as disabilities (Coleridge, 1997).

Difabel is an Indonesian word that refers to a person with a disability. The word difabel is a contraction of the term different ability. Difabel are the people with abnormalities and difference compared to the normal individual, whether it is a physical, mental, or social aspect, because of this they need a specialized education service to fully develop their potentials (Pranaka, 1996)

Connection between Positive Thinking and Increased Level of Self-Acceptance

Through positive thinking, the students with disabilities are expected to increase their level of self-acceptance, because they can think logically and approach problems from the positive side, so they will not fall into despair and can figure out how to solve their problems. The goal of this training is to improve the participant's ability to thinking positively as a preventive measure against possibilities of negative thoughts that can disturb and hinder their lives. Therefore with this training of positive thinking, the writer hopes subjects will be able to form a positive behavior for themselves. Subjects have a more optimistic outlook on their life, avoid hopelessness or feeling that they are inferior, and affect the subject's self-acceptance.

2. Research Method

The Population of Sampling Method

This research uses the Experiment method, with training approach. This research uses a sample of 12 students with disabilities that can participate in the training. In this research the writer attempts to measure with a test (scale) given to 50 subjects, to test the module's eligibility the writer also conducts a test based on the professional judgment from practitioners and academics from the field of psychology.

The analysis used in this research is Friedman analysis and Wilcoxon analysis. Analysis of content according to Poerwandari (2007) is an analysis that refers to words, meanings, values, images, symbols, and ideas that are communicated through texts.

3. Results

The result of Wilcoxon test shows Z score of 2.845 with $p=0,004$ in pre-post because the level of significance is smaller than the level of error ($p < 0,05$), the hypothesis is confirmed, meaning that there is a significant difference in the level of self-acceptance between pre-test and post-test score. Post-follow shows Z score of -1.187 with $p=0,235$, because the level of significance is higher than the level of error ($p < 0,05$), the hypothesis is rejected, meaning that there is no difference in the level of self-acceptance between post-test and follow-up score.

Lastly, the pre-follow shows Z score of -3.062 with $p=0,002$, because the level of significance is smaller than the level of error ($p < 0,05$), the hypothesis is confirmed, in other words, there is a very significant difference in the level of self-acceptance between pretest and follow-up score.

4. Conclusion

Based on the result of data analysis from the conducted discussion, it can be concluded that training in positive thinking is proven to increase the self-acceptance level in students with disabilities.

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