



Gratitude for Teenagers with Disabilities (Physical Disability)

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to describe gratitude in teenagers with disabilities (physical disability). This type of research is qualitative with a phenomenological approach. The subjects are adolescents who are physically disabled. The results obtained show that gratitude is a feeling and attitude of accepting everything that has been given by God, by trying to return everything to God. Factors that influence the gratitude of adolescents with disabilities are faith in God, the presence of parents, social support (friends, parents, and living environment), religious experience. Meanwhile, the benefits obtained from the feeling of gratitude are physical health, increased ability of self-esteem, not easily despairing, living life without burden and being more patient.

Keywords: Gratitude, Teenagers, Disabilities

Introduction

A new paradigm in the discipline of Psychology is positive psychology. Positive psychology is the scientific study of optimal human functioning (Linley et al., 2006). The goal of positive psychology is to identify and enhance human strengths and virtues so as to make life meaningful, and enable individuals and communities to thrive (Froh, 2004). One of the topics discussed in positive psychology is gratitude.

Emmons and McCullough (2003) mentioned that, gratitude is difficult to define. Gratitude is conceptualized as an emotion, an attitude, a moral virtue, a habit, a personality trait, or an individual response in the face of adversity (coping). Emmons and McCullough also note that as an emotion, gratitude is the result of two cognitive components. First, individuals recognize and acknowledge that they have received positive outcomes. Second, individuals recognize and acknowledge that there is an external source for the positive outcome received. In other words, people cannot be said to be grateful to themselves. Because gratitude is

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something that is attributed to sources outside oneself (external) such as other people, God, nature, and everything in between.

Gratitude in general means thanking those who have done good for the benevolence they have given. Meanwhile, according to specific terminology, gratitude means showing the effect of divine favors on a servant on his heart by believing, on his tongue with praise and flattery, and on his limbs by doing acts of worship and obedience (Al Munajjid, 2006).

Ibnu Mas'ud (Al-Jauziyyah, 2010) said that gratitude is half faith, the other half is patience. Al-Jauziyah further explained that faith is a collection of intentions, words and deeds (actions). Everything pivots on two attitudes: do and leave. To do is to act in obedience to God, which is the essence of gratitude. Meanwhile, leaving means being patient and not committing sins. Religion its totality consists of carrying out commands (being grateful) and abandoning prohibitions (patience).

Wood, et al (2007) in their book entitled *Gratitude: The parent of all virtues*, it is stated that gratitude is an important human character strength as it is one of the things that has the strongest relationship with mental health. Gratitude, like Forgiveness, has been studied extensively in recent years. Like Forgiveness, gratitude can be thought of as an inner experience and attitude. In Emmons' research (Friedman, 2006) assessed an inner experience and attitude using the 6-item Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6). The results showed that grateful people reported higher levels of positive emotions, life satisfaction, vitality, and optimism and lower levels of depression and stress. Watkins (Friedman, 2006) using the Gratitude Scale (GRAT), reported similar findings that gratitude is positively correlated with life satisfaction, happiness and other positive attitudes. In addition, gratitude is negatively correlated with several measures of negative affectivity such as depression, hostility, and physical aggression.

Research conducted by Miller, et al. (2013) found that grateful people with a foundation in faith experienced thickening in the parietal, occipital, and medial frontal lobes in the right hemisphere and also in the cuneus and precuneus in the left hemisphere. Thickening in these parts of the cortex increases resistance to depression.

In addition, the concept of gratitude is also related to a person's mindfulness. Tumanggor, et al. (2020) in their research revealed that the higher the mindfulness of teenage athletes with disabilities, the higher the psychological well-being. This means that teenagers who have high mindfulness will be more aware of their abilities so that they can develop themselves according to their interests.

Data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) shows that the number of people with disabilities in Indonesia reaches 22.5 million or around five percent of the total population in Indonesia (Ministry of Social Affairs, 2020). Based on the Basic Health Research (Riskesdas) in 2018, disability groups in Indonesia generally have 4 types of disabilities, first, physical disabilities (movement disorders); second, sensory disabilities (hearing or vision impairments); third, intellectual disabilities (such as memory loss); and mental disabilities (such as phobias, depression, schizophrenia or anxiety disorders). People with physical disabilities are generally more prone to feelings of depression, stress and low life satisfaction. This can be because generally people with disabilities are more prone to seeing themselves as individuals who have

limitations that make them become hopeless, not optimistic, have a low spirit of life and even forget other small things that make them grateful.

Based on this explanation, the topic of gratitude in adolescents is important to research, especially in people with disabilities. Gratitude is important to study in adolescents with disabilities to find out how they experience feelings of gratitude in the midst of all the limitations they have.

Research Method

This research uses a type of qualitative research with a phenomenological approach that aims to understand the phenomena experienced by research subjects (Sugiyono, 2015). Data collection was carried out using the in-depth interview method. Before conducting interviews, the author has compiled interview guidelines. The interview guidelines used are only in the form of outlines of the problems to be asked. During the interview process the author did not only focus on the questions in the interview guide but the author conducted probing to obtain more complex information.

The research subjects for this study consisted of three respondents. The three subjects are inclusive junior high school students in the city of Makassar. The first subject with the initials RA is 14 years old, the second subject with the initials LN is 15 years old. The third subject with the initials AS is 14 years old. The three subjects are people with physical disabilities (physical disabilities), namely damage resulting from disorders of the bones, muscles and joints in their normal function. Apart from that, the three subjects were disabled teenagers who had experiences of religiosity in the sense of being active in religious activities at school and home.

Result and Discussion

The results of data analysis regarding gratitude, especially for disabled teenagers or physically disabled people, can be seen how the process of feeling grateful occurs in disabled people with all the limitations they have. In general, according to the three respondents, gratitude is a feeling and attitude of accepting everything that God has given, by trying to return everything to God. Gratitude appears as a process that is not easy at first. The subject begins acceptance with all the limitations he has due to support from parents and family. The acceptance referred to in this case covers all aspects of disabled people's lives, both in terms of physical conditions and the external environment of disabled teenagers. The growing acceptance of all the limitations of people with disabilities is influenced by several factors, namely, faith in God, the presence of parents, social support in the form of support from friends and the living environment, and the presence of religious experiences.

Belief in God includes belief in the greatness of God. This is manifested in the form of an attitude of returning all problems faced to God, then believing that God will answer his prayers. Confidence arises from the daily activities carried out by teenagers. Teenagers are also active in religious activities at school. These beliefs and attitudes have an impact on how the

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subject responds to all forms of problems faced in his life. The three subjects felt that in this way they became lighter and carefree in living their lives even though they were in limited and different situations from their friends.

Furthermore, the physical limitations made several teenagers with disabilities able to instill a sense of gratitude within themselves, especially because the subject was a Muslim. Islam encourages its adherents through the holy book Al-Quran to increase their expressions of gratitude so that God will increase His blessings. As He says in Q.S Ibrahim verse 7, which means:

"And (remember) when your Lord announced, indeed if you are grateful, surely I will increase (favors) to you, but if you deny (My favors), then surely My punishment is very heavy." (QS. Ibrahim:7).

In principle, being grateful means caring for and developing all the gifts that God has given him. The expression "alhamdulillah" in the context of gratitude must be translated into the spirit of caring for oneself and being grateful for these blessings (Muhibbuddin, 2019).

The presence of the closest people, namely parents, is one of the factors that increase feelings of gratitude in the three subjects. With the support of their parents, they feel ordinary and more meaningful. The three subjects can feel how much God loves them, so they feel the need to be grateful for everything in the subject's life. In addition, teacher support also makes the subject more enthusiastic about undergoing activities at school because they feel no different from their friends.

Social support also plays a role in the emergence of feelings of gratitude in these three disabled adolescents. Social support in the form of support from close friends, relatives and the environment around the subject makes the subject feel like he has a place to share when there is a problem and makes the subject feel useful. For example, by being in an Islamic environment where there are religious people in it, the subject gets the opportunity to learn about religion. Which by studying religion, the subject is getting stronger in terms of internalizing the importance of feeling grateful in living life. In addition, the existence of social support makes people with body disabilities feel accepted in society.

Religious experience is also a factor that influences the emergence of feelings of gratitude in the subject. Religious experiences include experiences where he carries out religious activities, reciting the Koran and listening to Islamic studies. In this experience, disabled teenagers felt God's help and greatness in their lives. This experience then increases the subject's belief in the greatness of God and God's power, so that the subject believes that nothing is impossible when God wills. The subject believes that with confidence and patience he will be able to live his current life. The effect is that the subject will surrender and return everything only to God. According to Subandi (2011), patience is defined as an effort to restrain oneself from harshness, suffering, feeling the bitterness of life without showing an attitude of complaining. Astria (2021) explain that patience and gratitude can be related to each other even though they have different meanings.

This is supported by the results of research (Putri, 2023) showing that the lives of Muslims with physical disabilities in Sragen will never be separated from a test. Patience and gratitude are tests. Patience is a test of calamity while gratitude is a test of pleasure. When people with physical disabilities get a disaster and then accept and go through it wholeheartedly, it is strengthened by patience. Every disaster experienced by people with physical disabilities must have wisdom behind it, this wisdom is said to be gratitude.

Factors that are influenced by feelings of gratitude include being physically healthy even though limited, not giving up easily, living a carefree life, being more patient in facing pressure in the environment. Feelings of gratitude cause disabled teenagers not to complain about all the shortcomings they have in life. Reducing mental stress has an impact on physical health. Research conducted by Dewanto and Retnowati (2015) stated that there was a significant increase in well-being in the experimental group compared to the control group as measured using a scale of positive negative experiences, psychological well-being and positive thoughts in subjects with physical disabilities. Increased well-being along with increased gratitude.

Apart from that, these disabled teenagers are able to internalize Islamic values such as sharing with others and being grateful for the small things in life, making them happy to share. This is a form of feeling of gratitude. He is also able to complete the assignments given by the teacher. Apart from that, the subject admitted that after sharing with other people he often got better luck. Feelings of gratitude also have an impact on how parents treat them. The subject admitted that after feeling grateful he felt more patient in dealing with difficult situations.

Conclusion

The research results show that gratitude is a feeling and attitude of accepting everything that God has given by trying to return everything to God. Several things that influence gratitude in teenagers are, faith in God, the presence of parents, social support (siblings, friends and living environment), and religious experiences. Meanwhile, the benefits obtained from feeling grateful are being physically healthy, increasing self-esteem, not easily giving up, living a carefree life and being more patient.

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