THE EFFECTIVITY OF EMPATHIC LOVE THERAPY TO INCREASE SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING AND TEACHER READINESS IN INCLUSIVE SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive education has been done in Indonesia since Law on the National Education System Number 20 the year 2003 is declared. Implementation evaluation of this inclusive education shows that teacher’s readiness in conducting inclusive classroom is still in a low level, whereas the teacher is one of the four pillars in education. The teacher feels hard to facilitate special educational needs children, so influence his/her subjective wellbeing. The education ministry has organized some technical training about inclusive education. Some research shows that the training is only focused on the theory, regulation, and technical implementation, so no session facilitates the teacher’s affection domain. Empathic Love Therapy is a therapy series with a transpersonal approach to recognize self. This research aims to know the effectiveness of Empathic Love Therapy in increasing teacher subjective wellbeing and readiness in inclusive school settings. Research instrument to collecting data uses subjective wellbeing scale and teacher readiness scale. The subjects in this research are ten shadow teachers from Yogyakarta Inclusive School Forum. The result of this research shows that Empathic Love Therapy is useful in increasing teacher subjective wellbeing, but it is not sufficient to increase teacher’s readiness to conduct inclusive classrooms. The description of this result is explained in the discussion chapter.

Keywords: inclusive education, subjective wellbeing, teacher readiness, special educational needs, transpersonal.

INTRODUCTION

The implementation of inclusive education in Indonesia is based on the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, and usually called UUD 1945, article 31, then Law No. 20 of 2003 about the National Educational System, and Secretary of Educations’Regulation No.70 of 2009. Meanwhile, the movement in inclusion on the-
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World stage has long been initiated through international conferences among them are Human Rights and Convention of The Rights of The Children in 1989, The Publication of The Standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities by The United Nations in 1993, Salamanca Statement in 1994 and Agra Seminar in 1998. Efforts that have been done by all parties on local, regional, national and international levels are all movements in order to encourage change and improvement of educational services.

The implementation of inclusive education faces many challenges. One of those challenges is the teacher factor. The attitude of regular teachers who are used to teach normal children plays a big part in the obstacle of succeeding in the practice of inclusive education. Furthermore, regular teachers show negative attitudes towards the potential of Special Need Children compare to teachers with a special education background.

Based on the above explanation, it can be concluded that teachers are one of the constraints in implementing inclusive education. With the release of decree letter (SK) by the Education Department for schools to turn to inclusive school, affected the school climate and teachers’ psychological factors. Teachers will perceive their school situation as different than usual, where they only have to teach “normal” children because now they have to face children with special needs, which are entirely new to them. Teachers are also experiencing a mix of feelings in accepting children with special needs. Individuals’ perception that consists of cognitive and affective evaluation, toward life

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experiences is called subjective well-being. Teachers will evaluate cognitively and affectively concerning inclusive education that they will soon face. This evaluates means inclusive education regulation at school where they work affects teachers’ psychological factor, which is subjective well-being.

There are two approaches to subjective well-being they are Bottom up Theories and Top down Theories. \(^8\) Bottom-up Theories believes that happiness and life fulfillment felt and experienced by an individual depends on the amount of small happiness and a band of happy events. Based on this theory, in order to increase individuals' subjective well-being, a change is needed in the environment and situations that will affect the individuals’ experience, for instance: an adequate job, a safe home environment, and an adequate amount of salary. Meanwhile, in the viewpoint of Top-down theories believes that subjective well-being experienced by an individual depends on the way the individual evaluates and positively interprets an event/occurrence. This approach takes into consideration the type of personality, attitude, and the means used to interpret an event. So in order to increase subjective well-being an effort to change perception, believes, and the nature of an individuals' personality is needed.

From the overview above, it can be concluded that a policy from the system which has authority over the institution where someone works could affect the subjective well-being of the individual. In the context of inclusive education, teachers' subjective well-being becomes disrupted by being appointed to apply inclusive education. Established subjective well-being is then disrupted because of the new situation and bigger responsibility. This research will focus on the top down theories, which affect the point of view of teachers in perceiving the environment. The teachers' subjective well-being will be excellent if they could interpret their life experiences more positively. Looking at life experiences more positively could be gained if teachers are in a condition full of love towards themselves and others (a full of empathic love condition). Chan also emphasizes that gratitude, forgiveness, and views toward happiness affect individuals' subjective well-being.


well-being, which this condition could be achieved when a person able to know themselves as a whole.\textsuperscript{10}

Transpersonal psychology discusses the highest potential a human could have, and doing the extraction, understanding, forms of unity, spirituality, and also transcendence.\textsuperscript{11} Assagioli, a psychiatrist from Italy who is the pioneer of transpersonal psychology, believes that aspects of psychoanalysis are not enough in understanding humans because to understand yourself or others, one must have aesthetics experience, inspiration, and a higher form of consciousness.\textsuperscript{12} Based on the understanding of transpersonal, Assiogoli developed a psychosynthesis module as the first pioneer in understanding the transpersonal psychology approach.

Psychosynthesis is a form of psychology that directs the integration of spiritual dimensions in the conscious. Psychosynthesis is a dynamic concept about the psychological life that is related to various power that is different from one another and seems opposed to one another. This concept assumes the existence of a spiritual center in each individual and also uses a certain method that enables that center to move harmonically and creatively so that life energy could be expressed consciously and naturally in life. The most important of the conscious of the soul in this concept is about “identity” and “transpersonal-self”.\textsuperscript{13}

*Empathic Love* is a condition where someone could understand and starts to develop love toward own personality as a whole. Someone could accept and love even take responsibility for their health and growth in each of their life experiences. Someone would be able to have “unconditional love” in all aspects of personality. That person would not take sides but understands and respects, embrace all. Magnificent recovery and growth from *Empathic Love* are “Me” as a whole personality, therefore, creating “I live, full of love and give myself.”\textsuperscript{14}


\textsuperscript{13} Rueffler, M. *Para Pemain dalam Diri Kita: Sebuah Pendekatan Transpersonal dalam Terapi*. (Jakarta: Batavia Press, 1995).

\textsuperscript{14} Firman, J., & Gila, A. *Assagioli's Seven Core Concepts for Psychosynthesis Training*. (California: Psychosynthesis Palo Alto, 2007).
Studies showed that there is a lack of quality of the implementation of inclusive education in the city of Yogyakarta, especially the competence of human resources. Teachers, as the primary element in the education system, do not fully understand inclusion and do not have any positive perceptions about inclusion and children with special needs. In practice, this then affects the viewpoints of teachers. The viewpoint of teachers (cognitive evaluation) is much determined by conditions outside of them (external factors). An unideal condition of inclusive education then helps construct a negative viewpoint from the teachers, even though cognitive evaluation could be affected by individual values to perceive the current condition. As Diener has stated, to increase subjective well-being needed to focus on changing perception, believes, and personality.\textsuperscript{15}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{scheme.png}
\caption{Scheme of Theoretic Construct}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{15} Diener, E. Culture and Subjective Wellbeing. (MIT Press, 2000).
Related to teacher readiness, someone has done cognitive evaluation about inclusion regulation and special needs children, so that the teacher will do something as their perception. This behavior is teacher readiness to conduct inclusive education. Widiasti stated that readiness is willingness and competence in doing something as a response to a new situation. More clearly, the result of the study could be seen from scheme in Figure 1. This research aims to know whether empathic love therapy is effective to increase subjective well-being and teachers’ readiness at inclusive school. Through empathic love therapy, teachers will feel more prosperous and ready to become teachers at the inclusive school in facilitating special needs children.

**RESEARCH METHODS**

**Research Participants**

Participants in this research are 10 shadow teachers in Yogyakarta. The ten subjects come from inclusive schools from all over Yogyakarta from Kindergarten to High school. Inclusion criteria in choosing the subjects are teachers who have worked as shadow teacher at least for 2 years and have low, moderate, or high levels of subjective well-being and readiness.

**Measurement Instruments**

Data were collected with four instruments, namely: the first instrument is self-report. Self-report as an instrument to do a manipulation check concerning aspects of empathic love therapy. Self-report serves as data that state dynamics on aspects of manipulated variables (independent variables) before seeing the effects on the dependent variable. The second instrument is the Subjective Well-being Scale. The subjective well-being scale used in this study is the subjective well-being scale developed by Utami. This scale was designed based on the theory of Diener that subjective well-being consists of three aspects, they are positive affect, absence of negative affect, and

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life satisfaction. The researcher used the scale directly, considering the reliability of this scale is quite high. This scale has realibility of $r = 0.911$ for positive affect; $r = 0.941$ for negative affect; and $0.908$ for life satisfaction. This scale also has composit reliability score with a high-reliability coefficient, to that is $r = 0.939$.

The subjective well-being scale consists of three subscales, that it positive affect subscale, negative affect subscale, and life satisfaction subscale. The positive affect and negative affect subscale measure the affect condition of the individual. The positive affect scale consists of 27 items of words and showing positive emotions. Meanwhile, the negative affect subscale consists of 29 items of words that show negative emotion. The subscales were presented together into one part with random patterns between the items of the two scales. Then, the life satisfaction subscale measures individuals’ life satisfaction based on specific aspects (financial, food, health, home, work, transportation, social relationship, self-actualization, time management, work facilities, the ability to help others, spirituality, and rest.\(^{21}\)

The third instrument is Inclusive School Readiness Scale on teacher standard.\(^{22}\) This scale includes readiness for technical competence and collaborative competence. This scale consists of 42 items that represent teachers’ readiness, whether cognitively, affectively, and behavior in implementing inclusive education. Widiasti explains that GPK has a school readiness indicators, among others are: designing special need children programs, participate in finding special need children, consultate to experts of the matter, executing tests, participate in constructing Individual Education Program, implementing Individual Education Program, held a meeting with parents, working together with regular teachers, and helping children in developing self-understanding.\(^{23}\) Widiasti stated that the content validity of the scale was achieved through professional judgement.\(^{24}\) Statistical analysis showed that school readiness scale has item differential index coefficient of 0.269 until 0.864. Meanwhile, the reliability of the school readiness scale in $r = 0.987$. This number shows that the scale is reliable.

\(^{23}\) Ibid.
\(^{24}\) Ibid.
The fourth instrument is the General Overall Assessment (GOA) and Specific Assessment and Reaction (SAR). These measuring instruments are an evaluation tool to the whole therapy process. The data received from this measure is used as a descriptive analysis, whether related to the therapy process per-session or related to research subject dynamics. GOA and SAR consists of a set of questions that includes: experience while joining the therapy, how far does this therapy help for individual, how much amount of therapy materials is understandable, what is the benefit of the therapy for the subjects, recommendation that will be given after the therapy, the change felt after the therapy and the follow up after therapy.

**Research Design**

This research uses the quasi-experiment. This research manipulates a variable intentionally to see the effects on a specific group.\(^{25}\) The design of this research is *one group pre-post test design*.\(^{26}\) Table 1 following is the experimental design used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Postest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>O1</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: O1: pretest; X: *empathic love therapy*; O2: postest.

**Data Analysis**

The number of data received from the self-report will be treated to be graphic data that shows the subjects’ *empathic love* dynamics from the first day until the last day. The collecting of data in the form of numbers on the subjective well-being scale and teachers’ readiness scale will be analyzed quantitatively using a *t-test* to compare scores on the *pretest* and *posttest*. Moreover, they will do descriptive analysis to field observation results (observation and interview), and the subjects’ response to open-ended questions on the GOA and SAR sheet.

**Research Execution**

The execution of the research consisted of two stages. The first stage is the preparation stage and the second stage is the execution stage. Preparation stage includes: (1) research license, (2) module constructing and module validating, (3) constructing the


\(^{26}\) Ibid.
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manipulation check, (4) adaptation of measure instruments. This research had received official permission from related institution that is the Department of Licensing and Department of Education, City of Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Module validation received through several of experts they are: the first expert is professional judgment from four experts (academics and practitioners) that understand the basic concept of transpersonal psychology; participants of module testing in the external try out stage. Participants consist of 10 people that have similar characteristics to the experiment group in terms of age and professional background. The second expert is psychologist participating in Training of Trainer (ToT). Psychologist who participating in ToT are a total of 7 people. These seven psychologists are the collector data team on all the research in this research project.

Next, manipulation check used in this research is a form of self-report that consists of 15 empathic love indicators. These sheets are constructed based on the result from the module implementation stage. Meanwhile, the measure for subjective well-being was constructed by adapting to the subjective well-being scale of Utami and inclusive school readiness scale in teacher competence that constructed by Widiasti.27

The execution stage includes: the first is determining the research group. Research subjects were explained about the general picture of the activity of empathic love therapy and asked to fill in the form of informed consent. The second is pretest phase. Research subjects filled in the subjective well being scale and teachers’ readiness scale as the pretest data. The third is the intervention phase. The empathic love therapy was done in 8 sessions where each session was done every day for 4 hours. The fourth is posttest phase. After all the sessions in empathic love were executed, the researcher do a posttest to all experiment groups. The researcher measured subjective well-being and teachers’ readiness using subjective well-being scale and teachers’ readiness scale (teacher standard).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

Pretest

Based on the calculation on the subjective well-being scale, ten people who filled the criteria of inclusion precisely two people have low subjective well-being, seven people have moderate subjective well-being, and one person on the category of high in subjective well-being. Ten other shadow teachers were not recruited as research subjects because they did not fulfill the inclusion criteria (very high subjective well-being category) and did not agree with the points in informed consent.

On the calculation of teachers’ readiness the researcher used formulas and categorization that has been decided, 5 teachers was picked with moderate readiness and 5 teachers that have high readiness. Ten other shadow teachers that were recruited as research subject because they didn’t filled the criteria of inclusion (very high teacher readiness category) and didn’t agree on the points in informed consent.

Analysis of Visual Inspection (Graphic Data from Manipulation Check)

The figure 1 is the graphic data manipulation check to ten subjects on seven sessions of empathic love therapy:

![Figure 1](image_url)

Figure 1

Manipulation Check_Model 1-15 Aspects

Based on Figure 1, the graphic data manipulation check empathic love above, it can be known that all subjects of the research experience reach dynamics increasing on every empathic love aspect from the first day until the seventh. The score moved from 5.99 to 8.64 with trend climaxing on the fourth day (I Love My Self session) then stabilize on the fifth until the seventh day with an average score of 7.24. The result of the data from this manipulation check is then could be used as a stepping stone to continue on the
independent variable measure stage because it can be concluded that individuals have been in the condition of empathic love (the empathic love has been reached).

**Quantitative Analysis (Hypothesis testing)**

In the event of testing the hypothesis, the researcher used paired sample t-test to compare subjective well-being score and teachers’ readiness score between pretest and posttest. Statistical analysis result as written in the table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subjective well-being</td>
<td>2.435</td>
<td>0.038</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readiness</td>
<td>2.014</td>
<td>0.075</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Field Notes**

Ten research subjects showed high commitments in participating in a series of empathic love therapy. This result could be seen in the full attendance, and the discipline showed in working on and handing in homework, the focus on following the therapy sessions through visualization, thoughtfully listening to other subjects’ experience sharing, also the openness attitude about the personal journey process. One of the homeworks given was relaxation and visualization training everyday. This task was used as a control for the research subjects to constantly practice this training as a basic skill in the empathic love therapy.

**Descriptive analysis**

Data used in this descriptive analysis are data from General Overall Assessment (GOA) and Specific Assessment and Reaction (SAR). From seven sessions, the participant went through, and research subjects stated that the seventh session (Love and Gratitude) is the session that helped them the most. Moreover, the Love and Gratitude session is also the session most felt to be the most understandable.

Psychological or feelings expressed by the subjects are: a feeling of calmer, more comfortable, more sincere, enjoy, a feeling of more happiness, more gratitude, more mature, emotions slowly eroded, more confident, more able to control emotions, body feels more relaxed, and easy to concentrate.

Related to the process of self, after participating in empathic love therapy, research subjects admitted to being able to know themselves, love themselves, accepting
and managing themselves, self-control, forgive themselves, and helps in facing life. Furthermore, subjects also able to accept many of their imperfections, realizing various roles in themselves, able to reach out to an everlasting full of peace life purposes, and keep a distance from trouble. Related with obstacles, subjects can recognize more of the obstacle, accepting obstacles as a part of themselves so then able to harmonize and equalize between their strengths and weaknesses.

The therapy process that involved a whole personal process is actually also felt by subjects relating with other and the environment. Subject felt having more friends, love the surrounding people and environment, learning form the environment, accepting others as they are, doesn’t demand from others, understanding the character of other people, are more able to face reality, are more able to face problems, and positively affected attitude, mindset, and behaviour. All this experience showed empathic love experience successfully achieved by subjects to find “I”.

**DISCUSSION**

Based on the data analysis on the manipulation check, it can be known that all research subjects showed increasing in score on each aspect of empathic love from the first day until the seventh day. The score moved from 5.99 until 8.64 with the trend climaxing on the fourth day (*I Love Myself* session) and then stabilized again on the fifth day until the seventh day with an average score of 7.24. The result of data analysis from the manipulation check showed that research subjects have been in the condition of empathic love (achieved empathic love).

Results from the manipulation check are supported and strengthened with field notes and descriptive analysis. Field notes show that research subjects have the high commitment that supports the process of achieving empathic love. Moreover, the descriptive analysis also shows that research subjects could achieve “I” so this achievement could be used to love another. The result of the three analysis is in harmony with the result of the hypothesis testing, which showed that empathic love theory is significant in increasing subjective well-being though not significant in increasing the teachers’ readiness at inclusive schools. The result of the hypothesis testing is discussed in the following.
Based on the result of the quantitative analysis, it could be known that empathic love therapy was effective in increasing subjective well-being. Individuals’ judgments on the affect inside the self and cognitive evaluation toward one’s life satisfaction are facilitated after an individual achieved empathic love. Empathic love is a condition where someone could understand and start developing love towards their personality. A person could accept and love even be responsible for health and personal growth in each of their life experiences. A person would have the ability to have “unconditional love” in all aspects of their personality. That person would not take sides but would understand and respect every part of their selves. Extraordinary recovery and growth that emerge because of *empathic love* is “I” as a whole personality so as to form “I live, full of love and give myself”.

The operational definition of readiness in this research is the willingness and ability to practice a specific behavior as respond to new situations. Related with teachers’ readiness, readiness meant by shadow teacher is constructing program for special educational needs (SEN), participate in netting SEN, consult with related experts, doing tests, participate in constructing Individual Learning Program (ILP), implementing ILP, conducting teacher-parent conference, working with regular teachers, and helping children develop self-understanding. Results from the hypothesis testing of the research show no significance, which means empathic love therapy is not effective in increasing teachers’ readiness in implementing inclusive education. This result is because the sessions in empathic love therapy do not facilitate achievement in shadow teacher technical competences. Sessions in empathic love therapy stimulated the willingness and ability to practice certain behaviors as a respond to the situation as shadow teachers at inclusive schools.

**CONCLUSION**

From the results of *manipulation check* data, it can be concluded that research subjects have been in the condition of empathic love (empathic love has been achieved). Results from statistical testing showed that on the variable of subjective well-being, there

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is a significant difference between before treatment and after treatment. Though on the readiness variable, there was no significant difference between pre-test and post-test. Descriptive analysis showed that research subjects felt the use and effectivity of empathic love therapy related to physiology, affection, self-processing, and also relating to other people or the environment.

Based on the three analyses above, it can be concluded that empathic love therapy could lead individuals to achieve a condition of empathic love. Then, statistical analysis showed that empathic love therapy is effective in increasing subjective well-being, though not effective in increasing teachers’ readiness at inclusive schools. Descriptively, research subjects could feel the advantages of the therapy, whether for themselves and the affects for others.

**Research Limitations**

The result of this research shows that the proposed hypothesis proved on one dependent variable that is subjective well-being. This result means empathic love therapy is useful in increasing subjective well-being, though not effective in increasing teachers’ readiness at inclusive schools. This result is caused by the limitation of this research, which is the teachers’ readiness scale that much covers technical and collaborative competence, which is less could be facilitated through empathic love therapy. Furthermore, this research did not do scale testing before and the subjects’ character difference factors could not be anticipated.

**Suggestions**

Research suggestions include: the first suggestion is for teachers in inclusive schools. Shadow teachers that have participated in empathic love therapy could convey their experience with empathic love to other shadow teachers. For other shadow teachers, they could learn how acceptance and loving themselves could help lead them to love others, especially children with special needs. The second suggestion is for the Department of Education of Yogyakarta. In the context of inclusive schools, this empathic love condition could give positive effects and cosmos for children and other teachers in inclusive schools. The Department of Education of Yogyakarta could do follow up to do empathic love therapy to a broader group of teachers. The third suggestion is for the next researchers. Descriptive data received from this research are prosperous empirical data that could be developed in the next research. Other researchers could use
this data as a basis to develop the next research. Results on the next research could be presented to the researcher and the research team of empathic love therapy in order to keep developing the Empathic Love Therapy Module and transpersonal psychology discussion to achieve a soul that is healthy and full of love.

REFERENCES


