



SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT ON GIFTED UNDERACHIEVER IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL: A PHENOMENOLOGY STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Within the development of adolescence, the most difficult assignment is dealing with social adjustment. Adolescents are required to keep up and adjust themselves with the opposite gender in establishing a social relationship which they have never done before as well as adjusting with the elderly outside the school and family. To accomplish and achieve the adult socialization pattern, adolescents need to make a new adjustment (Hurlock, 2005). Social adjustment is defined as an ability of individual in effectively reacting on particular situation, social reality, and social relationship, thus, the demand and expectation regarding social life can be accomplished (Schneider, 1964). Gifted underachiever students tend to encounter such issues. Using qualitative design study with phenomenology approach, this paper aims at obtaining information regarding the factors closely related on the social adjustment of gifted underachiever students in Junior High School in Malang. The data of this present study were obtained through in-depth interview to the subjects. The findings of this study indicated that the absence of sufficient understanding in regard with the characteristics of gifted underachiever students. As a result, gifted underachiever student will more likely encounter a difficulty in taking a social adjustment.

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INTRODUCTION

The early age of adolescence is the critical age of self-concept development and profoundly changing the concept of self (Dudovitz, Li, and Chung, 2013 in Yengimolki, 2015). A study regarding early adolescent nervous system through neural photography, the scientists found that changes in the nervous system affect their personality. Furthermore, neural development on early youth disrupts adolescent behavior such as increased awareness and effectiveness of peers. One of the most difficult tasks on adolescence development is related to social adjustment. Adolescents must adapt to the opposite gender in their social relationships which have not previously existed and must adapt to adults outside the family and school circumstance.

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To achieve the goal of adult socialization patterns, adolescents should make several new adjustments. The most important and the most difficult is the adjustment to the increasing influence of peer groups, changes in social behavior, new social groupings, new values in friendship selection, new values in support and social rejection, and new values in leader selection (Hurlock, 2005). The research shows that student academic achievement can be predicted based on students' social adjustment, and social function. The study conducted by Rey and Elliot (2006) in Yengimolski, 2015 shows that good academic performance and social adjustment can be obtained if there are factors of social skills and good self-concept. According to Schneiders (1964), adjustment is a process that includes mental and behavioral responses, which is an individual effort to successfully address the needs, tensions, conflicts and frustrations experienced within him. The individual effort aims to obtain harmony and harmony between demands within oneself with what is expected by the environment.

Social adjustment as an important indication of psychological health is a topic that attracts numerous psychologists. Social growth is the most important aspect of a person's development and is gained through relationships with others, particularly with parents, peers and teachers, and it serves as a social growth assessment criterion that deals with the adaptation of a person to himself and others. (Hartup and Rubin, 2013 in Yengimolki, 2015)). On the other hand, living in society with a set of values and expectation paradigms require considerable adjustment. Without adjustment, the person can not meet many of his or her basic needs. If an individual can not live well, he or she will feel isolated (Yengimolki, 2015). Eventhough within adjustments contain many aspects such as social, emotional, physical and educational dimensions, the most preferable aspect is social adjustment which serves as a prerequisite for other adjustment aspects (Mazaheri, Baghiyan, and Fatehizadeh, 2006).

The emotional and social adjustments resulting from positive self-concept can give the person the ability to deal with adversity, and higher self-esteem strengthens one's ability to deal with psychological pressure efficiently (Wilbum and Smith, 2005 in Yengimolki, 2015). Students will establish their confidence in various ways. students who are confident about their abilities will easily adapt to various activities (Siegle, Mc Coach, 2003). Several perception sees that gifted children as someone who has never encountered difficulties and accomplish many achievements as well as their creative trait. However, according to Subotnik *et al* (2011) in Myers *et al* (2013) gifted children also encounter a difficulties and problems in two aspects, such as in academic performance and psychosocial adjustment which can lead to a condition where it can perform below their ability (underachiever) Underachievement is defined as a gap between the capabilities of the learning outcomes obtained. According to Clark (2002) in Gallagher (2005) the term underachievers is pinned on conditions where there is a gap between the potential and the resulting output. In a broader sense, students who perform under their ability are unmotivated individuals. They consistently show no effort and even tend to work under their potential. Underachiever conditions may also be experienced by gifted children. Gifted underachiever children is a complex phenomenon, usually it results from the obstruction of the various interrelated factors. Underachievement pattern is formed in a long time process and it does not merely from learning dissabilities. Although the majority of gifted underachiever indeed suffering from learning difficulties, the cause of this condition is immense not only just because of single particular thing above.

Underachiever is generally regarded as an unfulfilled potential. However, it should not be defined as simple as unfulfilled potential. The difficulty of finding a clear definition is also due to failure in determining the solution to this problem (Gowan and Torrance, 1972 in Chan, 1999). Reis and Mc Coach (2000) define gifted underachiever as a condition of students who show a considerable gap in weight between expected achievement (as measured by standarad test, assessment, etc.) and achievement exposed (as measured by tests performed by teachers on hierarchically). Another definition proposed by Whitmore (1980), defines that if there is a gap between the potential or capability with performance or achievements it is called underachiever. While Rimm (1997) mentions the condition of an underachiever as low achievement in four

areas, namely gifted ability, creativity, productivity and motivation and emotion. In regard with low achievement on gifted children, several researchers conclude that factors contributing to the low achievement. These factors are expected to be utilized as an intervention subject to resolve the existing issues and problems. The factors which primarily influence are school environment factor, family, and individual factor (Davis and Rimm, 1998). Within school environment factors, the causes are inappropriate curriculum development by the school, teachers' stereotype on the gifted children by putting a high demand and expectation on them and as a result, they could not accomplish it well (Pendarvis, Howley and Howley, 1990 in Hong, 2012). Family factors that contribute to low achievement of gifted children by Rimm (1995) in Reish and Mc Coach, 2000 was about the importance of parenting and parental involvement. Underachiever can occur when the family does not provide adequate support for the child. Parents with inconsistent parenting is commonly seen in children gifted underachievers. Patterns applied in homes conflict with each other. One of them, choose to be authoritarian and the other tend to be authoritative. Family with underachiever children tend to apply the punishment-oriented parenting (Clark, 1983 Reis and Mc Coach, 2000). While personal factors that contribute to underachievement include learning problems or concentration disorders common in gifted children (Reis and Mc Coach, 2000). The discrepancy between the expectancy of parents and children in school selection and the determination of a career can also cause underachiever (Hong, 2012). According to Chan, 1999 the problem of low achievement is usually associated with problems of motivation, emotion and behavior in students. Besides, the personal factors that also contribute to underachievement is the issue of school readiness, bad attitude toward school, and low motivation.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a phenomenological qualitative design approaches that will explore the experiences of gifted underachiever children. In this case is Junior High School students in Malang. In addition, learning experiences that contribute to the social adjustment was also observed. The researchers observe the phenomenon, open up, let the phenomenon appear clear and understand it in a phenomenological perspective that let the phenomena 'telling' to us and trying to understand a phenomenon related to the experience of others about his or her world. The reserachers also tried to record and note down a visible experiences and social reality occur and also obtain informants' subjective understanding, such as school's headmaster, students, teachers, and parents. In recent trend of underachiever research, most of the previous researchers employed quantitative design, thus, it encouraged the researchers in this study to conduct a further study and analysis regarding social adjustment on underachiever gifted children in Junior High School. According to the obtained data in the field observation, several points were obtained as follows: (1) it is confirmed that there are several gifted children who failed to enhance their potency to the greatest extend (underachiever) which is indicated by the low academic acvhiement obtained and also the low commitment of the students, (2) the classification of gifted children on the accelaration class was confirmed is not adequate and significant and meet the needs of the gifted children regarding learning circumstance and atmosphere, in this study, the subject is a gifted children who enroll in the

acceleration class program on Junior High School, (3) both home and school circumstance are confirmed take a contributing role within the process of self development regarding academic issue in gifted children, (4) both parents and the gifted children possess different perspective and way of thinking regarding to the learning process and understanding upon achievement. The focus of this study is closely related on the research questions formulated. In accordance with the data field obtained during observation and the above-mentioned literature review, the focus and concern of this study is to describe the informants' subjective understanding regarding the experiences encountered related to the self-adjustment of gifted underachiever students in Junior High School in Malang. Pursuant to the focus of this present study, the researchers formulate a research question which state how did gifted underachiever student involve in his or her social adjustment process? In this study, it began by exploring the informants through the interview and in-depth analysis on initial test results of intelligence from school counselors in two school to obtain the students who belong to gifted underachiever classification. This intelligence test was conducted by the school and psychological service which in accordance with the need or criteria of acceleration class program enrollment. Next, it continued by exploring the score of students' report and daily assignment score as well as connective book obtained from the classroom teacher and school counselors. As a result, it obtained two students who are classified as gifted underachiever as the subject of this study.

RESULTS

According to the data obtained during observation to the gifted underachiever students, it was indicated that gifted underachiever students encountered an obstacles during their social adjustment due to several factors as follows: (1) Psychological burden felt by the gifted underachiever student due to clueless condition which they are considered as a smart student, yet they possess low achievement. In addition, it enforces them to hel low self-image due to high expectation they receive. (2) The ability of students in managing themselves takes a role as one of contributing factors. In regard with this notion, three findings were obtained. It dealt with self-control ability within the students and the ability to set goal and objectives. (3) The ability of the students in taking a control of a things outside themselves. In regard with this notion, it was discovered that students were attempted to take on self-adjustment and considered that they have done what they were being asked to do. In addition, in line with the above-mentioned notion, students were failed to take a social adjustment. However, social adjustment is closely related to the achievement obtained (yengimolki, 2015).

DISCUSSION

Ungoverned psychological burden increases the potency to damage individual beliefs or self beliefs regarding the students' potential they possessed. Olszewski-Kubilius (2011) in Myers (2013) define it as the academic performance problems. The academic performance problems is considered as conditions where the social environment is not appropriate for intellectual abilities and social maturity. Hence, they experience attitude of boredom, frustration and low academic motivation. This is because they did not understand the

distinctive character of the gifted underachiever that the development is not aligned (asynchronous development). The second deals with the ability of students in managing themselves. It dealt with self-control ability within the students and the ability to set goal and objectives. Because it begins with a poor self-image and social adjustment therefore, the goal or desire defined are not being understood by others, thus it allows them to have psychosocial problems (Myers, 2013). The third deals with the ability of the students in taking a control of a things outside themselves. The findings in regard with this notion deals with the existing attempt to take on self-adjustment and considered that they have done what they were being asked to do. In addition, it was indicated that the students were failed to take a social adjustment. However, social adjustment is closely related to the achievement obtained (yengimolki, 2015).

There are several aspects regarding social adjustment according to Schneider (1994) which was unable to accomplish from this notion. (1) The first is the low recognition. It deals with how the individual does not respect and acknowledge other individual's right. The moment the individual does not respect and acknowledge the other's right, the other will also treat the same way. (2) the second is the absence of altruism trait. It deals with how the individual tend to not possess humble trait and altruist. In regard with this notion, the individual often exposes a rude words and impolite behavior. (3) The absence of conformity. Conformity deals with how the individual respect and obey the value regarding law integrity, tradition, and culture or social customs. The individual remains have no awareness to obey and respect the rule applied within social life as well as the social customs and thus, the individual is not accepted well in the middle of society.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Social adjustment as an important indication of psychological health is a topic that attracts numerous psychologists. The development of social aspect within individual is the most important aspect of a person's development and is gained through relationships with others, particularly with parents, peers and teachers. In addition, it serves as the development of social aspect criterion dealing with adjustment to themselves and others as well. This process should also be accompanied by the understanding of the development of gifted children hence there is no understanding in regarding the gifted students. The psychological burden that arises is one of the consequences of the difference in perspective.

The significance of this research are: 1) theoretically, it is expected to contribute the idea of academic self-concept of gifted students with low achievement and the development of science in the field of educational psychology, 2) as for practical use of research that is for (1) School; This study provides an illustration of academic self-concept of gifted students with low achievement. (2) Teachers; this study provides additional insights in the form of teaching strategies to improve student self-concepts of gifted underachievers therefore the teachers become more creative and skilled in addressing the issue of motivation to learn on gifted children who are underachieving. (3) Students; This research can encourage and improve self-concept that is useful to achieve learning achievement and mastery learning. (4) Future researchers;

This research on academic self-concepts in gifted students with low achievement may encourage further research which is linked to broader research areas.

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