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## Bibliotherapy on Self Concept in Children with Mental Retardation

Afdalya Ibna Seprita<sup>1</sup>, Ika Permanasari<sup>1</sup>, Suci Amin<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Bachelor of Nursing, Faculty of Health, Al Insyirah Institute of Health and Technology, Pekanbaru  
Corresponding author: [afdalyaibna28@gmail.com](mailto:afdalyaibna28@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

**Background:** the social limitations experienced by children with disabilities cause them to have a negative self-concept. One of the therapies that can be used to improve self-concept is bibliotherapy.

**Purpose:** the purpose of this study was to determine the effect of bibliotherapy on self-concept in children with mental retardation.

**Methods:** the design used in this research is quasy experimental design, the researcher used one group pretest-posttest. The population in this study were all children with disabilities in SLB Negeri Pembina Pekanbaru, namely grade 5 elementary school students totaling 14 students. The sample in this study was selected by non-random (non probability) sampling, namely total sampling, Data obtained from the distribution of the Robson Self-Concepts Scale questionnaire to assess self-concept in children with disabilities. The statistical test used is the Wilcoxon Rank Test.

**Results:** the univariate results in this study obtained the median value for respondent characteristics based on age 12.00 while characteristics based on gender are respondents with male gender as many as 9 respondents (64.3%). Bivariate results using the Wilcoxon Rank Tast test, obtained p value = 0.001 < 0.05.

**Conclusion:** bibliotherapy has an effect on improving self-concept in children with tunagrahita. It is expected that schools and parents can apply bibliotherapy to improve self-concept in children with mental retardation.

### Keywords:

Bibliotherapy; mental retardation; self-concept

## BACKGROUND

Every child is a unique and different individual. This means that no individual is the same even if they are twins, in essence they have several differences in talents, interests, abilities, and so on. In addition, every individual is a developing being, their development is different as happens with children with special needs (Riadin et al., 2017).

Children with disabilities come in many different types, each tailored to address the specific challenges faced by the child. One type is children with mental retardation, also known as tunagrahita. These children have special needs and have a lower level of intelligence, usually below 70. The causes of mental retardation can be classified into two categories: clinical causes and biological causes. Clinical causes include metabolic disorders, chromosomal abnormalities, gonosomal abnormalities, intoxications, and intrauterine infections. These factors contribute to the development of mental retardation in children.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that more than 450 million children in the world are mentally retarded. Mental retardation is a separate disease burden in the world at 12% and is expected to increase by 15% in 2020 (Ismaila et al., 2023).

Based on data from the Information System for Persons with Disabilities on March 9, 2022, it shows that there are 212,237 people with disabilities in Indonesia and 13,145 are people with tunagrahita (Informasi Penyandang Disabilitas Kementerian Sosial RI, 2022). Then according to data from the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (2020), there are 81,443 mentally retarded children in Indonesia who are scattered in public and private schools in Indonesia.

The number of in Riau Province is 1,330 people. Until now, the number of inclusive schools in Riau is minimal and the distribution is uneven. Based on data from the Riau Education Office, currently in Riau there are only 21 inclusive schools spread across Kampar, Pelalawan, Pekanbaru and Inhu (Sari et al., 2021).

The social limitations experienced by children with disabilities cause them to be ostracized from peer groups. This rejection has a huge impact on their self-esteem, making them feel insecure, ashamed, ignored and isolated. As a result, they have difficulty regulating their emotions, fear initiating friendships, withdraw from social interactions, struggle to meet teachers' expectations, and lack motivation to engage in academic and daily life activities. Negative experiences of rejection and adjustment difficulties further contribute to their reluctance to communicate and socialize, ultimately forming negative self-perceptions (Diah Ekowati, 2019).

The self-concept of children with disabilities is influenced by parenting and the surrounding environment. Research conducted by Alesi, Rapoo and Pepi (2012) showed that children with tunagrahita who attend school with normal children tend to have low academic scores, especially in the absorption of numbers, concepts and language skills. Research conducted by (Fransisca & ., 2021) found that the self-concept possessed by children with special needs with tunagrahita is an open (positive) self-concept. Positive self-concept is characterized by children's openness in communication, besides that it is

shown by children's ability to interact with their environment, self-confidence and feelings of equality with others, such as being involved in various competitions, being able to build communication and interaction with the people around them.

Self-concept is formed from positive self-views and experiences. When children are often involved in the activities of the surrounding environment, it grows confidence in themselves, a positive self-concept will grow in the child and impact on the ability to be able to interact in their environment well. The low ability of children with disabilities causes them to tend not to have friends so that a negative self-concept is formed which results in mental obstacles in children such as aspects of attention, emotions and self expression (Nursalam et al., 2018).

Some therapies that can improve self-concept in children with special needs, especially children with disabilities, include self-help occupational therapy, play therapy and bibliotherapy. Bibliotherapy is one of the creative communication techniques for children with disabilities, where books are the media used in the therapeutic and supportive process. The use of this book can connect children with their personal experiences such as those in storybooks and can also be used as a basis for discussion (Santoso & Suprpti, 2019). Bibliotherapy is not only applied in visual form, but also in audio-visual form. Such as recorders, videos, movies and so on (Diah Ekowati, 2019).

Bibliotherapy is useful for changing self-concept, increasing self-motivation, mental stress, emotional resilience, socializing and expressing oneself in the environment. Bibliotherapy refers to using literature as a medium for social and emotional treatment (Heath, Smith and Young, 2017). It is based on the assumption that through identification with story characters, children can think about their difficulties and find solutions to personal problems (Betzelel and Shechtman, 2017). Research conducted by (Nursalam et al., 2018) found that bibliotherapy can improve self image, self-identity, self-esteem, self-ideals and self-role in children with disabilities. The results showed that self-esteem was the most influential variable in bibliotherapy.

Based on an initial survey conducted by researchers on January 9, 2024 at SLB Negeri Pembina Pekanbaru, some children with disabilities fail to communicate, characterized by the difficulty of starting conversations with their peers, children are also difficult to start friendships, besides that children are also difficult to follow orders or instructions given by the teacher. The limitations possessed by tunagrahita children cause obstacles for children to carry out activities. Researchers want to explore the problem of self-concept in children with disabilities using bibliotherapy methods. Based on the above phenomenon, it is important to conduct research with the title The Effect of Bibliotherapy on Self-Concept in Mentally Retarded Children (Tunagrahita) at SLB Negeri Pembina Pekanbaru.

## **OBJECTIVE**

The objective of this study was to determine whether there is an effect of bibliotherapy on self-concept in children's mental retardation (tunagrahita) at SLB Negeri Pembina Pekanbaru.

## METHODS

This research used quantitative methods with pre experimental design with research design of one group pretest-posttest design. The population in this study were all children with disabilities who attended SLB Negeri Pembina Pekanbaru 5th grade elementary school students totaling 14 students consisting of boys and girls. The sampling technique in this study was non-random (nonprobability) sampling technique, namely total sampling. The research instrument used by researchers to measure the independent and dependent variables is the Robson Self-Concepts Scale questionnaire, measuring the self-concept instrument using a Likert scale. The statistical test used is the Wilcoxon Rank Test.

## RESULTS

Based on the table below showing the results of the characteristics of respondents based on age, the median value of SLB children who are respondents is 12.00. The frequency of characteristics of respondents based on gender of 14 respondents is mostly male as many as 9 respondents (64.3%).

**Table 1.** Characteristics of Respondents Based on Mean Age (n=14 years 2024)

Respondent Characteristics	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
Age	12.14	12.00	1.027
<b>Gender</b>	F	%	
Male	9	64,3	
Female	5	35,7	

**Table 2.** Frequency Distribution of Self-Concept in Respondents Before Bibliotherapy Intervention (Pre-Test)

No	Category	F	%
1	Positive	5	35.7
2	Negative	9	64.3
	Total	14	100

Based on Table 2, it is obtained that the pretest score of self-concept in respondents is mostly in the negative category, namely 9 respondents (64.3%).

**Table 3.** Frequency Distribution of Self-Concept in Respondents After (Post Test) Bibliotherapy Intervention

No	Category	F	%
1	Positive	13	92.9
2	Negative	1	7.1
	Total	14	100

Based on Table 3, it is obtained that the posttest score of self-concept in respondents is mostly in the positive category, namely 13 respondents (92.9%).

**Table 4.** Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test Results of the Effect of Bibliotherapy on Self-Concept in Children Mental Retardation (Tunagrahita)

Category	Median	Mean	Std. Deviation	<i>p value</i>
<i>pre test</i>	60.00	62.29	4.358	
<i>post test</i>	88.00	84.21	8.675	.001

Based on Table 4, it shows that from the results of statistical tests with the Wilcoxon signed rank test, the median value of self-concept before giving therapy is 60.00 and self-concept after giving therapy is 88.00 with a p value of 0.001.

## DISCUSSION

Based on the results showed that the characteristics of respondents based on the age of 14 respondents obtained the median age of the child was 12.00. Characteristics of respondents based on gender of 14 respondents, namely most of the percentage of respondents with male gender as many as 9 respondents (64.3%).

Other research showed that the characteristics of respondents according to age obtained the average age of tunagrahita children, namely 13.20 of 41 respondents with a standard deviation of 1.123, the minimum age of tunagrahita children is 11 years and the maximum age is 15 years. While the characteristics of respondents based on gender resulted that respondents with male gender being greater, namely 23 respondents (56.1%) and female gender was smaller at 18 respondents (43.9%) (Puspitasari et al., 2022). This is in line with research conducted by Parulian et al., (2020) The frequency distribution of the characteristics of tunagrahita children found that the largest percentage of tunagrahita children were school age (7 to 12 years) as many as (64.1%) and male gender (51.3%).

This study supports several previous studies that homeless children are more likely to be male than female. Boys tend to experience more psychological disorders than girls. Learning difficulties are more experienced by boys, for example reading barriers, counting barriers, and writing barriers. According to Purnomo's research (2013) that men have an XY chromosome form, while women have an XX chromosome form. The cause of more males suffering from mental retardation is due to the abnormality of Fragile X Syndrome sex cells. Fragile X Syndrome is a gene mutation at the damaged end of the X chromosome. Children with special needs are generally indicated when a child cannot do something or is not in accordance with their developmental stages, or has activities/experiences that are not the same as other children.

According to Prasada (2016) in school-age children there are also changes in motor and cognitive improvements. This age is a critical period for the acceptance of ability training and health towards a healthy adult life. Mentally retarded children aged 7 years have a mental age below 8 years so that children have difficulty in understanding learning, while 12-year-old children have a mental age of 8 years so that they better understand the learning provided.

Based on research and theory, researchers assume that mentally retarded children often show rapid development. Most mentally retarded children occur in children who are male, this is because boys experience more psychological disorders than girls and there

are chromosomal abnormalities in children that cause mental development to be inhibited.

The results of this study indicate that of the 14 respondents, most of the self-concept in children with disabilities before therapy was in the self-concept of less. The results of this study are in line with the research of Widodo et al., (2020) which says that of 30 children with tunagrahita in the intervention group before being given therapy, 16 (53.3%) children experienced insecurity with an average of 2.13. In the other research explained that of the 14 children, before being given therapy, 9 (64.3%) were found with a moderate level of self-confidence and 5 (35.7) with a high level of self-confidence (Malasari et al., 2024).

The problem experienced by mentally retarded children is a decrease in self-concept such as shyness, not knowing their own strengths, being independent and rarely gathering or playing with friends. The importance of self-concept in mentally retarded children as a stage that in this case is fundamental and has an influence including being the basis for subsequent developmental goals that will determine the success of mentally retarded children to recover and be able to interact with the community environment (Khoirin Nida, 2018).

Families who have not provided maximum support for students with disabilities so that they grow up with a negative self-concept. Various behaviors towards people with disabilities vary, such as rejection, shame or guilt (Tri Sulistyarini & Yudha Saputra, 2015). Elkington (2012) states that the stigma against people with intellectual disabilities such as mentally disabled people greatly affects their self-concept. Students with disabilities have already been stigmatized as disabled so they experience low self-esteem. This low self-esteem affects their self-concept to be negative.

Based on the results of the study and related theories, the researcher assumes that mentally retarded children have a low self-concept due to a lack of support from the family, besides that mentally retarded children get stigmatized by their peers so that the attachment of children can affect their self-concept. Self-Concept in Children with Mental Retardation (Tunagrahita) After Bibliotherapy. Based on the results of this study, it shows that the self-concept of tunagrahita children has increased after bibliotherapy from 14 respondents, namely being in a good self-concept.

The results of this study are in line with the research of Trihantoro et al (2019) showing the results of pretest and posttest in the experimental group, before being given treatment, all members were in the negative category. The average score before being treated was 151.8. Meanwhile, after being given treatment, the average score increased by 13.77% to 184.3. Based on the pretest results, there were twelve students with negative self-concept, six of whom were given bibliotherapy treatment. The bibliotherapy treatment showed the results of five students who changed to the positive category, one student remained in the negative category.

These results are in line with other researchers, the pre-test analysis results showed an average of 80.333 while the post-test analysis results showed an average of 144. This shows an increase in self-concept in students (Mariance Yuliana Faikusa et al., 2024).

Gunawan et al (2021) in his research found that the post test results increased the score after being given therapy, namely the percentage of subjects with the highest increase was 43%. In the end, the role of self-concept is how a person thinks about himself.

Various therapies that can be given to tungrahita children such as, occupational therapy is a type of therapy that is used specifically with the aim of helping children to live independently with all existing health conditions by providing activities or busyness to children so that children will try to focus on doing their activities (Khokasih 2012). In addition, confident book therapy can have a big influence on the self-confidence of children with disabilities, the effect size given by my confident book game in increasing children's self-confidence has a large effect The provision and application of my confident book games in children with disabilities provides cognitive development in children, language development, and social, emotional development in children with disabilities (Widodo et al., 2020).

Based on the results of research and related theories, researchers assume that bibliotherapy has an effect in improving self-concept if done continuously. This is evidenced by the results of the study that there was a significant increase in self-concept in respondents.

The results of this study indicate that there is a significant effect after being given bibliotherapy on self-concept with a value ( $p$  value 0.001). This research is also in line with the results of research conducted by Trihantoro et al., (2019) showing that bibliotherapy has a positive influence on changes in self-concept in a positive direction. Hypothesis testing shows that bibliotherapy change students' self-concept. In addition, the treatment activities also make members feel more able to accept themselves, see their strengths and accept their weaknesses without feeling inferior, and feel more appreciative of what they have.

The results of this study are in line with the research of Nursalam et al., (2018) which shows that there is a significant effect of bibliotherapy on self-concept in mentally retarded children (tunagrahita). The significant value is in the aspect of self-image  $p=0.005$ , self-identity  $p=0.033$ , self-esteem  $p=0.001$ , ideal self  $p=0.004$  and role  $p=0.006$ . The results showed that bibliotherapy significantly affected the self-concept.

The results of the *paired t test* of the effectiveness of bibliotherapy techniques on resilience showed that the value of *sig. (2-tailed)*  $0.000 < 0.05$ . Since the significance value of 0.000 is less than 0.05, it can be seen that bibliotherapy techniques can significantly improve the resilience factor (Munawaroh & Sofyan, 2018).

This bibliotherapy method is an interesting means, conveying messages in bibliotherapy can increase self-concept which causes children to be aware of their situation. This is in accordance with what has been explained that bibliotherapy is based on the assumption that through identification with the characters of the story, children can think about their difficulties and find solutions for the individual in dealing with problems (Betzalel and Shechtman, 2017).

According to Trihantoro et al (2019) Several factors cause bibliotherapy to change the self-concept of group members. The first factor is that bibliotherapy allows group members to see different points of view. The second factor is that the process of group members' activities can release the emotions that have been held in them so far. Group members share feelings with other group members regarding their view of themselves. The third factor is because bibliotherapy helps them develop positive thoughts about themselves. The dynamics of life told in the reading make them think that everyone has problems and that is not an excuse for not excelling.

Based on the results of the research and related theories, the researcher assumes that bibliotherapy has an effect on improving self-concept. Bibliotherapy can improve self-concept, because bibliotherapy provides an opportunity for group members to see the point of view, the process of group members' activities, and helps them develop positive thinking about themselves, and a life that thinks that everyone has problems. Bibliotherapy can be done at school or at home continuously to be more effective for improving self-concept.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research that has been carried out, it can be concluded that: The characteristics of the respondents based on age were obtained with a median value of 12.00 and the characteristics of the respondents based on the gender of most of them were male as many as 9 respondents (64.3%), the self-concept before the bibliotherapy was mostly less self-concept as many as 9 respondents (64.3%). Self-concept in children with disabilities increased after undergoing bibliotherapy, most of which were good self-concept as many as 13 respondents (92.9%). The results of the statistical test with the wilcoxon signed rank test, showed that there was an influence of bibliotherapy on self-concept as evidenced by a p value of 0.001 (p value < 0.05).

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