

Can Socratic dialogue techniques be used to increase meaning of life for students with disabilities?

Muya Barida ^{a *}, Intan Hana ^b, Dian Ari Widyastuti ^c

Universitas Ahmad Dahlan. Jl. Ringroad Selatan, Bantul, Yogyakarta, 55191, Indonesia

^a muya.barida@bk.uad.ac.id; ^b intan1600001033@webmail.uad.ac.id; ^c dianari.widyastuti@bk.uad.ac.id
Corresponding Author.

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Abstract: This research was motivated by the low meaningfulness of life among people with disabilities, especially those with autism spectrum disorder with visual impairment (ASDVI). The meaning of life greatly influences a person's quality of life, enthusiasm for living life, productivity, creativity, and happiness in living their own life. So, this research aims to determine the efficacy of individual counseling services using the cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) approach and Socratic dialogue techniques to increase the meaning of life in ASDVI students. The type of research that the researcher applied was a single-subject research experiment with the A-B-A pattern. The subject of this research was an ASDVI student at SLBN 001 Tanjungpinang. The instruments used in this research were observation and interviews. The data analysis method used is the explanatory sequential design. The results of the research showed that there was an increase in the meaning of life in ASDVI students, so the Socratic dialogue technique was considered effective in increasing the meaning of life in someone with disabilities, especially ASDVI specifications. The increasing meaningfulness of life for ASDVI students shows the difference between negative and positive thought patterns. This can be seen in changes in thinking patterns and behavior as well as independence, which shows that ASDVI students have the enthusiasm to live their lives and are independent, and can be active in seeking the views of the general public to achieve the ASDVI students' version of meaning itself and achieve a new, more positive perspective.

Keywords: Meaningfulness of Life; Socratic Dialogue; Multiple Impairment; ASDVI

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INTRODUCTION

The word multiple impairments is used to refer to people who have more than one disability, both physical and psychological. Children with congenital visual impairment are generally reported to be at risk of serious behavioral and psychological problems such as withdrawal, isolation, and autism (Mukaddes et al., 2007). In addition, Absoud et al. (2011) stated that children with congenital severe visual impairment are at risk of experiencing early social communication difficulties, at school age (5-18 years), 11 to 40% are reported to meet the criteria for a series of neurological disorders in the brain or autism. Autism spectrum disorder (ASD), is a persistent and reciprocal disorder in social communication in a variety of settings and restrictive and repetitive behaviors, interests, and/or activities, and a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by stereotypic patterns (Zaky, 2017). A similar opinion was also expressed by Frith and Happé (2005) that autism is a developmental disorder diagnosed based on social and

communication disorders that appear early and rigid and repetitive patterns of behavior and interests. In addition, Lord et al. (2020) revealed that autism spectrum disorder (ASD), also known as autism, is a general and highly heritable neurodevelopmental impairment with underlying cognitive function and usually occurs simultaneously with other impairments. Then it can be concluded that ASD is a neurological developmental disorder that can be identified in patterns of social, communicative, and repetitive behavior, limited interests and activities, accompanied by other physical disabilities. Autism can also occur in children who are blind.

The Big Indonesian Dictionary (Atmaja, 2018) believes that a blind person is someone who cannot see completely or cannot see partially. A similar opinion was also expressed by Fahmi (2013) that the blind with visual acuity of less than 20/200 need services, especially reading and writing Braille. Many people express that they generally think that blind people are the same as blind people who can see perfectly, even though this is not the case because blind people can be divided into two categories, namely total blindness and blindness who can still see a little light (Dewi, 2016). Apart from that, Ramadhan (2019) explains that a blind person is someone who has lost their sight because their vision does not function like someone who can see normally. Autism and visual impairment disorders that occur in an individual can be called autism spectrum disorder visual impairment (ASDVI).

Research was conducted to show the clinical characteristics of autism spectrum disorder in blind children or autism spectrum disorder visual impairment (ASDVI). A total of 273 participants, 214 of whom had cerebral vision problems, and the remaining 59 participants had peripheral vision problems. Research has found that autism spectrum disorders are more common in blind people compared to the general population, and the prevalence varies according to the type of blind person, including 2.8% for cerebral visual impairment and 8.4% for peripheral visual impairment. Subjects with cerebral visual impairment had autistic symptoms consistent with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder. In children with peripheral vision impairment, certain symptoms associated with the absence of vision overlap with clinical features of autism spectrum disorders, making clinical diagnosis more challenging (Fazzi et al., 2019). Based on research from Fazzi in Italy, autism spectrum disorders generally occur in the blind. Similar research does not yet exist in Indonesia because cases of double impairment with the specification autism spectrum disorder visual impairment (ASDVI) are also rare cases. However, ASDVI of varying degrees in the visually impaired can still be found.

Individuals with a dual disorder with ASDVI specifications have disabilities that interfere with the way they interact with members of the surrounding community at large, small organizations, and personal relationships. ASDVI individuals with a mild level of autism can still feel low self-esteem due to their lack of vision, which creates negative imagination in the subconscious mind of ASDVI sufferers throughout their life which can affect their overall personality and make their psychological balance vulnerable. There is still no research found that states that ASDVI individuals experience mental problems because of negative thoughts, but research results from Ghribi (Abarghouei et al., 2016) show that blind people experience mental and emotional problems such as depression and anxiety because of their negative thoughts. This problem is the most basic thing for blind people to have a low meaning in life.

Based on the information from the experts above, we can conclude that ASDVI is someone with visual impairment as well as an autistic spectrum disorder, which does not mean they cannot see at all, but there are people who are blind with low vision category, that is, they can still see with an acuity of 20/200 and also This does not mean that individuals with mild levels of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) cannot experience mental problems from negative thoughts. Loss of the sense of sight and other disorders result in a person losing the ability to follow

normal and correct rules in society. This can give rise to a sense of helplessness, isolation, and a poor meaning of life in blind individuals.

The meaning of life from every human's point of view has different meanings. Frankl stated that there is always meaning in life, but living meaningfully in all situations, even adversity is the main determination for every individual (Sunandar, 2016). According to Ericson, the meaning of life is a biased feeling, namely that everything that happens to an individual has a strong basis and is full of interpretation, or a person is motivated to make good movements and decisions that have a sense of meaning in relation to themselves and others.

The results obtained from the expert's statement above are, the meaning of life, which means that the meaning of life is biased in that everything that happens to a person has a strong basis and is full of interpretation, giving rise to a sense of purpose. Including individuals with disabilities, especially ASDVI individuals, in the general view of life who receive guidance assistance, it is seen that they are individuals with abilities that are weaker than normal individuals in general so they sometimes receive discriminatory treatment due to their differences. This cannot be supported by research which shows that ASDVI with mild autism can also feel low self-esteem. In general, individuals who only experience visual impairment feel low self-esteem, this is supported by the results of research that although blind children get along with the people around them and look confident, blind children feel frustrated, irritated, angry, emotionally unstable and this makes Blind children feel inferior about their condition because they are treated badly by sighted friends (Rohmat, 2017a, 2017b).

The above phenomenon is in line with previous research that living a meaningless life is meaningless because of disability and having a negative self-image because of feeling helpless and useless occurs in blind people. This was reinforced in September-November 2011 when the research was carried out so that the data obtained at the Bina Netra Social Institution in Bali was that many blind people had a low sense of life (Adhi, 2017). The next researcher, Ilmaknun (2018) stated that someone who is unable to complete the self-actualization procedure properly because of their disability experiences all the signs of abandonment, depression, loneliness, despair and feels like life is a waste. AL-Suhimi (2019) states that blindness is a disability that interferes with the way of communicating and doing things as well as relationships with other members of society that take place in limited organizations with closed interactions. Blind people create negative imaginations.

The researcher conducted a field study at SLB Negeri 001 Tanjungpinang through interviews with a child with a visual impairment with mild autism at SLB Negeri 01 Tanjungpinang. The results of the interview regarding the socio-economic conditions of the family of a student with disabilities showed that the student had obstacles related to socio-economic conditions, namely a female student at the SDLB level with the initials M whose parents were private employees. Apart from the poor economic situation, M also experienced social conditions of rejection, ostracism, and discriminatory treatment both from his extended family and at the church. M had expressed his desire to become a professional singer so he could be a doctor and singing leader at church on Sundays. However, M felt that it was impossible for everything to be meaningless because of the physical condition he was suffering from and the economic conditions which were also unsupportive so M had to throw away the desires he once wanted.

Based on phenomena and cases, previous research clearly illustrates how blind and ASDVI individuals live their lives with feelings of inferiority. Even though there are many people with disabilities, not only ASDVI and the blind, the children that researchers met at SLB Negeri 001 Tanjung Pinang have advantages such as singing and playing musical instruments, many are also accomplished in the field of *saritilawah*, have a lot of religious knowledge and many

strengths. Others are diverse and capable of further exploration. However, children with disabilities, especially children with ASDVI cases, with their disabilities, still feel helpless, worthless, useless, feel that they are full of shortcomings, do not have clear goals in life, have low life expectancy, feel that they are not accepted by society, and feeling that no one will need them in the future, worrying about being alone if one day they are abandoned by their family and feeling like they are a burden on their surroundings because they continue to need help or special treatment. The complaints expressed by blind children are influenced by low self-esteem and thus become the main source of low meaningfulness of life for blind children.

The reality is that all humans created by Allah SWT are not perfect, they are born with shortcomings, both physical, character, and cognitive, as well as the advantages they obtain vary for each individual. Islam views it as neutral or equates people with disabilities with all living individuals. So it is better for individuals to focus on building good character and good deeds rather than human physical form, which is the true Islamic view (Mukaddes et al., 2007).

One effort to increase the meaning of life for students with ASDVI specifications is using individual counseling using the Socratic Dialogue technique. Susanti (2013) states that the Socratic dialogue method is a guidance technique that provides material in the form of valid and structured questions in order to obtain the desired teaching objectives. With Socratic dialogue, the counselor uses questions to the counselee to independently find the problems they are currently facing as well as answers to solutions to current problems. This is based on the results of research conducted by Diniari using logotherapy techniques that focus on Socratic dialogue to increase the meaning of life in students (Diniari, 2017). Socratic questioning is based on the philosophy of guided discovery, in which clients are encouraged to consider related information and reach their own conclusions as opposed to being pushed toward predetermined conclusions by the counselor (Padesky, 1993). Clark and Egan (2018) stated that the use of the Socratic method is in bridging insight and changes in views by allowing clients to come to their own conclusions. Socratic Dialogue sometimes referred to as Socratic Questions by Padesky is a feature of therapeutic interaction in Cognitive Behavior Therapy (Kazantzis et al., 2018).

METHODS

The research method applied is experimentation with a single-subject design with an A-B-A pattern. The A-B-A pattern design has three phases. Phase A1 is the first baseline phase, namely the condition where target behavior measurements are carried out in natural conditions before any intervention is given. Phase B conditions are the intervention phase, namely conditions where an intervention has been provided. The final phase A2 is the second baseline phase, where the target behavior is measured after the intervention conditions have been provided. The addition of condition A2 is intended as a control for the intervention phase so that it is possible to draw conclusions about the existence of a functional relationship between the independent variable, dependent variable, and connecting variable.

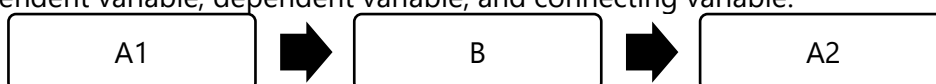


Figure 1. Single Subject Design A-B-A

The research subject was an ASDVI student at SLBN 001 Tanjungpinang Riau. M is fully blinded (completely blind) where the eye is completely unable to see even a little light or sunlight. To walk, M usually walks while feeling the walls and objects around him, sometimes using a stick, when he wants to look for someone, M must call the person and follow that person's

voice, apart from that, M also needs time to memorize the route, such as the rooms, parts of the house, school, and church. M's physical appearance is very thin and too small and has lots of scratches. M's facial expression looks flat and sometimes laughs when something is considered funny. M always tries to smile to hide his feelings of hurt, and discomfort and prefers not to listen too much to the person he is talking to when talking about his goals. M's mother stated that M and his family often received unpleasant remarks that led to discrimination from people around them, especially at church. This is what makes M low in self-esteem and reluctant to discuss his goals or what he wants to do in the future. This also makes M feel that the meaning of her life does not mean anything with the blind condition she is experiencing, M feels useless to those around her, feels like a burden, and is afraid that in the future M will be alone, abandoned by her family and feels that M does not fit in. whatever field in future work, M always shows a smile and cries just at simple things. M's mother often encourages M and his older siblings to continue to be positive towards people who discriminate against M. This is done to reduce M's low self-esteem and believe that M has potential that can be developed for the future.

Researchers collected data using interview guide instruments and meaning-of-life observation guides. Data were analyzed using graphic descriptive statistical analysis. Graphic analysis is used to visualize concise data in an interesting way, including histograms, polygons, ogive, pie charts, and many other types. The advantage of a visual in the form of a graph or diagram is its ability to represent long explanations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of observations before being given treatment showed that M had a low level of meaning of life.

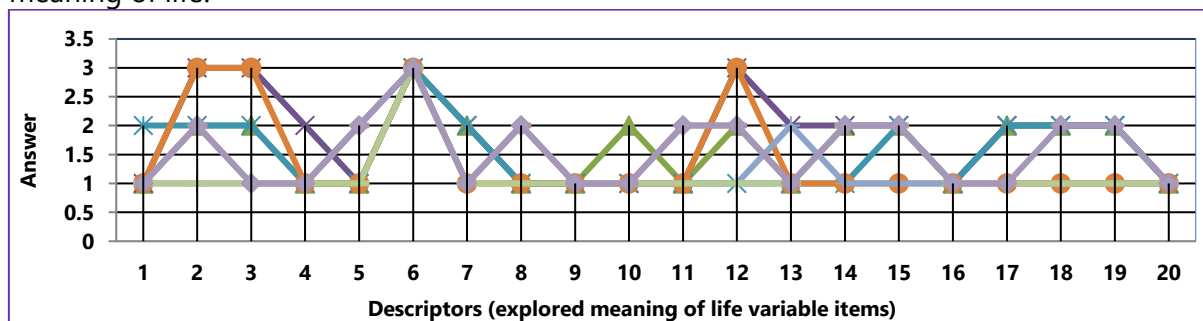


Figure 2. Graph of Observation Results A1 (Baseline)

Meanwhile, the following are the results of interviews as complementary data for M before and after being given Socratic Dialogue treatment to increase the meaning of life on a regular basis, M tends to answer no, don't know, and other words contain negative connotations and this shows that the condition of the level of meaning of life The low one.

Implementation of counseling using the Socratic dialogue technique uses questions with the following characteristics: (1) Analysis Questions, these questions require someone to find answers by identifying the problem notification presented, looking for evidence that supports the conclusion or generalization, drawing conclusions based on existing conclusions, (2) Application Questions, these questions are questions that require giving a single answer by applying knowledge, information, criteria rules to the case, (3) Synthesis Questions, these questions are questions that develop the individual's potential and creative power to make predictions and solve problems based on imagination, and (4) Evaluation Questions, evaluation questions are

questions that require individuals to answer by providing an assessment or opinion regarding an issue presented.

Next, based on the baseline obtained, threats are given to Socratic dialogue techniques. After being given the threat, measurements were taken at baseline 2.

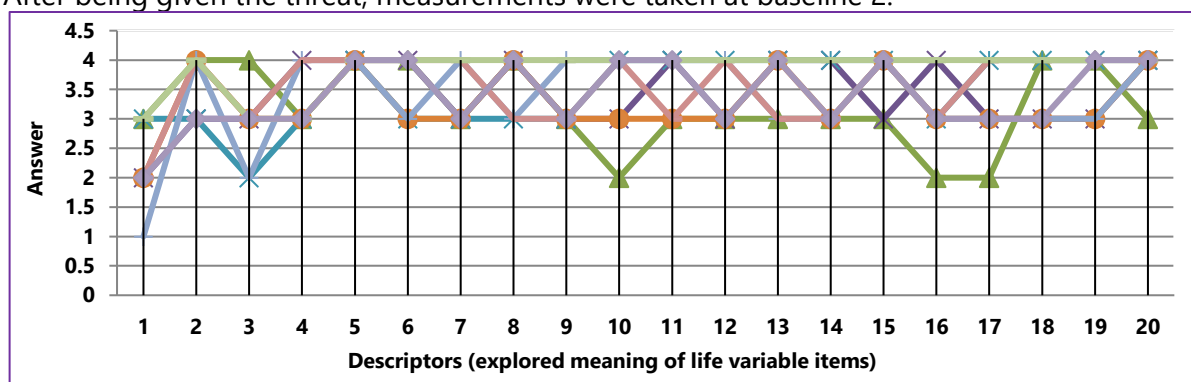


Figure 3. Graph of Observation Results A2 (Baseline)

The results of observations after being given the Socratic dialogue treatment showed that M had a slight increase in the meaning of life. This shows that M's level of meaning in life is beginning to increase. Then the results of interviews as complementary data with M after being given Socratic dialogue treatment to increase meaning of life show that M has answers containing positive connotations and this shows that the condition of his level of meaning of life is increasing.

Researchers found an interesting phenomenon that people with ASDVI specifications or blind people who were either congenital or had an accident when they were growing up tended to feel that life lacked meaning. This is in line with research conducted by (Adhi, 2017; AL-Suhimi, 2019; Ilmaknun, 2018). However, the interesting thing is that it takes more time to be able to carry out Socratic dialogue treatment in cases of multiple disabilities, especially the ASDVI specifications. This Socratic Dialogue treatment is intended to increase the meaning of life in a child who has a low level of meaning of life, but in the case of M, a child with a dual disability, who is not only blind but also has mild autistic disorder, makes new experiences and knowledge very challenging. Students with special needs, such as autism, require innovative learning methods, including guidance and counseling services (Ahmad et al., 2023; Barida & Widyastuti, 2019). The CBT approach to the Socratic dialogue technique was initially difficult to apply to ASDVI cases, but researchers found the key to being able to focus ASDVI thinking. The counselor needs to be able to understand and join in full control of the world of interest to ASDVI sufferers in order to gain concentration and similar thinking concepts. However, at the most basic stage, it is important to build good communication and be sincere in wanting to be a friend of ASDVI sufferers who guides them to maintain their perception of correct values, and of course, this only works for cases of mild autism spectrum disorders.

The meaning of life is a special and rare entity, meaning that the meaning of life depends on how each individual views it, interprets it, lives it, and changes over time, and cannot equate the meaning of life for one person with another person (Adhi, 2017). The meaning of life refers to the place where individuals experience their lives as meaningful and understandable, on the grounds that life has a purpose and mission that transcends worldly concerns (Bastaman, 2007). Frankl also focuses on seriousness in interpreting life, focusing on the world and not on the person's vitality (Tomy, 2014). Individuals who have meaning in life experience their life as something meaningful, have life goals to achieve, have vital values, and are full of meaning. However, when someone fails to find and fulfill their life's needs, it will cause frustration so that

they cannot overcome various problems in their life. Apart from that, the meaning of life cannot be determined or generalized between one individual and another, because individuals have different views regarding the meaning of life and are found in the world of life.

Frankl stated that people who find meaning in their lives, or what are often called healthy people, admit that there are indicators such as: (1) Individuals are able to choose actions freely, (2) Individuals can fulfill responsibility for their way of life and the pattern of norms they believe in. the destiny of an individual's life, (3) the power of other people cannot influence the individual's life, (4) the individual seeks suitability for the meaning of life and his own life, (5) the individual controls his life consciously and rationally, (6) the individual is skilled at expressing the value of creative power, skill values and norm values, (7) Individuals can control their focus on themselves, (8) Individuals focus on the future, in line with ongoing life goals and obligations, (9) Individuals focus on obligations to fulfill their life goals, (10) The individual masters how to provide reciprocity in a loving relationship, and (11) The individual continues to maintain control in order to continue living life. Meanwhile, the meaning of an individual's life can be influenced by, among other things, thinking patterns, attitude patterns, self-concept, mental style, religiosity, and character (Sunandar, 2016). The meaning of life influences well-being and happiness (Fridayanti, 2013). The meaning of life has an influence on self-efficacy and connectedness with others (Yuen & Datu, 2021).

The results of research using individual counseling approaches, Cognitive behavior therapy (CBT), and Socratic dialogue techniques, can increase the meaning of life. Implementation of CBT counseling emphasizes the present over the past, which does not mean ignoring the past (AD & Megalia, 2017). CBT tries to make the counselor accept the past while continuing to appreciate the past as something valuable in the client's life and constantly changing current thinking to achieve changes in the future. Therefore, the goal of CBT can be said to invite counselors to challenge the counselor's wrong beliefs and ideas about current problems. Socratic dialogue is a procedure used by the Greek philosopher Socrates to guide his students toward knowledge through dialogue (Vyskočilová & Praško, 2012). With that conversation, Socrates used critical questions to help broaden his students' perspective on an issue and then changed that perspective with a new perspective created by his students.

Calero-Elvira et al. (2013) state that the Socratic method is defined as a dialogue between counselor and counselee in which the counselor tries to make the counselee reflect on the suitability of his or her thinking patterns and then change them, from dysfunctional to functional thoughts through questions and debate strategies. The Socratic Method is also defined by Beck and Dozois as a method of guided discovery in which the counselor asks a series of carefully sequenced questions to help define a problem, assist in identifying thoughts and beliefs, examine the meaning of events, or assess views. of certain thoughts or behavior (Clark & Egan, 2015). Diniari (2017) states that Socratic dialogue is a form of conversation between the counselor and the counselee, where the counselor tries to help the counselee find answers to the problems they are currently facing by asking questions and statements to the counselee. Overholser (2018) states that the Socratic dialogue method includes systematic questions to guide truth reasoning in seeking a more universal definition and is done with humility. This integrated discovery makes a new innovation aimed at exploring a lot of information during the psychotherapy process.

Delić and Bećirović (2016) stated their opinion that Socratic dialogue has the aim of applying types of questions in dialogue during discussion sessions; one form of elenchus is a cross-examination in which questions were asked about beliefs in such a way as to reveal contradictions that would give rise to debate. The debate here is not to 'win' and make the counselee or other

people feel embarrassed, the purpose of debate in dialogue is to find the truth or broaden the counselee's horizons. Then another opinion expressed by Roth (2016) is that this Socratic dialogue method can be used to show the client that he is not correct or to make him agree to a question that is contrary to the original question.

Socratic dialogue has proven effective in increasing the meaning of life. The advantages of the Socratic technique according to Lammendola are (1) Guiding clients to think rationally and scientifically, (2) Encouraging clients to actively learn and master illustrations of knowledge, (3) Growing motivation and courage in expressing their own opinions and thoughts, (4) Cultivate self-confidence, (4) Increase counselee participation and compete in learning which creates dynamic competition, and (5) Cultivate a sense of discipline (Pahlavi et al., 2014).

CONCLUSION

The description of the level of meaning of life in ASDVI students before being given counseling services using the Socratic dialogue technique in the cognitive behavior therapy approach is very low. After counseling using the Socratic dialogue technique in a cognitive behavior therapy approach, a picture of the meaning of life of students who experienced ASDVI had increased. Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the Socratic Dialogue technique is effective in increasing an individual's meaning of life.

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