



SELF-CONCEPT OF GIFTED CHILDREN: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

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Abstract

This research aims to examine and analyze in depth the self-concept of gifted children. Self-concept is an individual's frame of reference for behavior that originates from internal socialization. This research uses a qualitative phenomenological approach. The subjects in this research were three people, and the data collection process was through interviews, observation and documentation. The results of the research show that gifted children have a self-concept, namely they like being a leader, have a high sense of curiosity, are critical, and sensitive, and have anxiety between their real self and their ideal self. Other things could be studied in further research regarding perfectionism in gifted children.

Keywords: self-concept, gifted children, leadership, anxiety, critical, curiosity, qualitative

Article Information

Received : November 09, 2023

Revised : December 01, 2023

Accepted : December 14, 2023

Introduction

Each individual has a different frame of reference in interacting with their environment. The discussion regarding frames of reference in psychological studies is related to self-concept. Self-concept is an individual's frame of reference for behavior which originates from social internalization so that it has a different meaning, as does the self-concept of gifted children. Gifted children are individuals who have natural gifts in the form of very superior abilities so that they achieve high achievements. This talent is usually related to academic achievement that is far above other students. So, what about the self-concept of gifted children?

Every individual certainly goes through development phases, including special intelligent children with special talents. One aspect that plays an important role is personality in achieving self-actualization (Nanik, 2000) . However, one of the problems that often arises in achieving self-actualization in gifted children is the dynamics of self-concept development. Various studies have explored gifted children regarding their self-concept. As a result, the role of the environment is the biggest contributor to gifted children in building their self-concept (Somantri, 2007) . Gifted children often conceptualize themselves as children who can always be relied on, are first, often get praise, and can do many things.

As with the discussion above, there is a case description of the psychological vulnerability of gifted children. Student AK is one of the talented children at his school. His IQ level attainment is in the superior category which of course makes him a superior student. However, in reality, the counselor at the school stated that AK students were solitary students and did not easily get along with their friends. AK also shows a lack of confidence in his abilities. Ideally, if an individual has advantages then that individual will be able to adapt to their environment. This is the focus of the research.

This external assessment makes gifted children perceive that they must achieve the values that have been standardized by the environment without seeing that each individual has a certain capacity, is unique, and cannot be compared to others. This of course makes talented children behave in harmony with external desires, and not born from a complete self-concept. Continuing, this can cause gifted children to experience stress, leading to depression, which leads to the deconstruction of their potential.

In achieving self-actualization, it is important for individuals, especially gifted children, to understand about themselves. Basically, gifted children are also included in the category of Children with Special Needs (ABK), where they need to receive special assistance to be able to adapt and live normally according to children their age. Understanding self-quality, whether good or bad, high or low, strong or weak and other things is a manifestation of a self-concept (self-concept) (Lopez & Snyder, 2006). This self-concept will ultimately influence the development of an individual's personality and ultimately lead to how this individual lives his life. This research aims to analyze phenomena that occur in the environment of gifted children regarding their self-concept regarding giftedness and specialness.

Method

This research uses a qualitative phenomenological design approach. The design focuses on examining the self-concept of gifted children. The selection of research subjects used snowball sampling, which is a method that aims to add participants who have been interviewed or other related parties to recommend potential future subjects (Creswell, 2015) . Based on these objectives, the research data sources are students who have the criteria of (1) a high IQ group, (2) academic and non-academic achievements. Three students were the primary data sources in the research. Table 1 below explains the general demographics regarding the research subjects:

Table 1. Primary Data Sources

Subject	Gender	Age	IQ
AK	Woman	16	132
AG	Man	17	121
PL	Woman	19	127

Other data sources are also included, namely secondary data sources that support the primary data results. These secondary data sources support the relevance of the research context. The informant is one of the informants who knows and is familiar with primary data sources, namely family, close friends and neighbors. Written documents function to complete data such as IQ test results.

Data was collected using structured interviews in the form of open questions which were then transcribed verbatim, observation and documentation. The interview method is the choice because it can to review individual experiences more subjectively (Creswell, 2013) . Apart from that, this research was accompanied by open-ended observations. Observations are carried out in a structured pattern where the researcher has determined the themes to be observed, such as body language, expressions, and voice intonation. The results of data collection were then analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. Thematic analysis is a method used to analyze and report patterns (themes) that aim to find central aspects in a data collection. The thematic analysis process starts with transcribing the interview results to verbatim to create data. Then the researcher reads it to get a general idea of the themes in the overall data. Next, divide the general ideas into main themes and subthemes. Moreover, the data was coded and grouped within the same predetermined themes (Creswell, 2015) . The validity of the data is measured through credibility,

transferability, dependability, and suitability using resource data triangulation techniques (Creswell, 2015; 2013). This technique is carried out by comparing and examining several sources, for example the interpretation of thematic analysis, with the results of data collection and existing theories. The correspondence between all data resources can be used as a basis for validating research results

Credibility in this research is carried out in the form of : (1) accuracy in recording findings; (2) complete archives; (3) member check, by asking participants to read the recorded findings again and sign; (4) checking fellow volunteers regarding the results of interviews, observations and documentation; (5) data triangulation, namely checking the validity of the data; (6) completeness of references as a supporting tool for researchers in the field.

Result and Discussion

Based on the explanation above, analysis was carried out on three self-concept themes, namely: personal identity and social identity. Personal identity consists of several things related to the nature and personality and individual characteristics that make each person unique. Furthermore, social identity consists of the environment and groups one follows, including religion, school or other communities.

Table 2.1 Theme Analysis of Research Results

Theme	Sub Theme	Coding	Statement	
			Subject	Informant
Personal Identity	1.a. Characteristics	1.a.1 Leadership spirit	1.a.1.1s The subject has the desire to be the one guiding the course of an activity (AG, W1, 05-11-2023)	1.a.1.1i The informant assesses that The subject (AG) wants to be heard (LL, W2, 05-10-2023)
			1.a.1.2s The subject has the desire for his friends to follow his orders (AK, 05-11-2023)	1.a.1.2i the informant did not feel ordered by AK during this time (IF, W2, 05-10-2023)
			1.a.2.1s the subject hopes for more detailed information from anyone to answer all his questions (PL, 05-14-2023)	1.a.2.2s if not satisfied, the subject finds out more details by reading, watching, etc. (AG, W1, 05-10-2023)
		1.a.3.1s subjects often ask questions outside of class material (PL, W1, 05-11-2023)		
		1.a.2 Curiosity		1.a.2.1i The informant saw that PL subjects were often dissatisfied with the teacher's answers (OL, W2, 05-18-2023)
		1.a.3 Critical		1.a.3.1i the informant found the PL subject looking for answers in electronic search

Theme	Sub Theme	Coding	Statement	
			Subject	Informant
				media and asked again (IF, W2, 05-10-2023)
	1.b. Traits	1.b.1 sensitivity	1.b.1.1s subjects easily feel different from other friends (AG, W1, 05-11-2023)	
		1.b.2 anxiety	1.b.2.1s the subject is anxious if it does not match expectations (AK, W1)	

Participant AK

AK is a class 1 middle school student at a state high school and is currently 16 years old. AK comes from a good family so it is a matter of pride if AK is one of the students who has the privilege of intelligence. AK is busy every day with various activities, both academic and non-academic. Academic activities such as competitions outside of school held by universities, while non-academic activities related to strengthening sports competence such as volleyball and taekwondow practice. AK has shown interest in these activities since junior high school. According to AK, doing many activities is a pleasure for him, especially if he wins in every competition. This increases his enthusiasm to continue to hone his abilities, both academic and non-academic. AK has a future vision of becoming an influential woman in her environment, so she can bring about change. So far, AK feels confused when he finds that children his age spend their time on activities that do not increase their potential. According to him, *it is a waste of time* if the productive period is only used for activities like that, for example hanging out late at night, smoking, and so on. AK realized that by judging other people like that, AK often found his friends calling him *"the most genius"*. This is what sometimes makes it difficult for AK to enter and mingle with many of his friends.

AK's positive character is shown through his persistence in learning things and his resilience in facing various problems that arise. AK doesn't get bored of seeking knowledge and new worlds to hone his skills. However, apart from that, AK considers himself to be a different child compared to his friends his age. AK often feels that his interests with his friends are different, for example, at that time his friends were actively playing on the social media TikTok, but according to AK, this would be useless and waste his study time. Despite this, AK cannot change his interests and interests following the flow of his friendship.

Participant AG

AG comes from a fairly well-off family, with parents who are civil servants. AG's life did not experience any difficulties with facilities. This is what allows AG the opportunity to freely choose activities that support his talents and interests. Plus, AG goes to a school that is quite a favorite with a good academic environment and high competitiveness. AG students have academic interests in the field of exact sciences, while non-academic interests are in the field of organizations. With its financial capabilities, AG did not waste this opportunity. AG is happy to take part in tutoring. AG's goal is to be the best among others. According to AG, if he cannot be the best, then all his efforts so far will be in vain. AG also wants to always make his parents proud.

One of AG's positive characteristic is that he is confident in his abilities and is a visionary. AG sees himself as capable of being in all situations and can show himself to be the best. However, behind his self-confidence, AG has many fears and anxieties regarding the expectations placed on him.

OT Participant

PL is the second of three siblings with a sufficient economic background. In his daily life, PL takes part in various academic activities held at his school. Apart from that, PL also follows the best study guidance available in his city. During learning activities, PL always shows his enthusiasm by discussing with his teacher, asking questions and giving his opinions. This is what makes PL always win parallel champions at his school and is nicknamed "*the genius*". PL makes other contributions at his school, namely taking part in university competitions and winning championships. This is what increasingly makes PL a school star.

PL's positive character who is tough and persistent in achieving all his goals and aspirations is also accompanied by a character who is easy to think about other people's judgments about him. His fear is of getting a bad image if PL does not match the track record he has built so far.

Themes of self-concept of gifted children

The results of data analysis show common themes that emerge from the subjects that support the self-concept of gifted children, namely: leadership; curiosity; criticality; sensitivity; worry; afraid.

Leadership

Leadership is a strong character that appears in each subject. This character is reflected in their ability to manage themselves and other people as well as groups/organizations. The results of the analysis show that each subject has the character of a leader for the reason that he is more comfortable relying on himself for results commensurate with his expectations and reduces disappointment if the results are not appropriate.

" I would prefer if I managed everything, because it doesn't feel right if someone else manages it and the results are disappointing. It's better if I don't join the group, he..he " . (PL.W1)

" I always want the best, and I think I am capable of creating that. My friends also support me" (AG, W1)

The quote from the statement above illustrates that leadership is a strong character that exists in gifted children. By becoming a leader or head of certain activities or groups, subjects are more able to voice their opinions and make decisions and be responsible for the results. The OT subject expressed his concern that he was not the one responsible. The reason is that the subject of the PL never wanted to be chairman of a certain activity, and in the end the activity did not run well and was not held accountable.

" I was once not part of event x, and chose to just be a member. Because at that time I was called the leader. So yeah, I'll just keep quiet. Well, what happened was on the day of the event, the order of the event was not the same as the rundown, which ended up being the vendors complaining while the chairman was confused about what to do. Finally, with all my limitations and efforts, I took the initiative to provide compensation and apologize so that it would not be posted on social media. Embarrassed" (PL, W2)

According to AK subjects, being a leader is not only being able to direct and organize other people in a large environment, but also yourself. Both AK, PL, and AG

agreed that all this time they had made it a habit to always schedule activities, rest and *me time* . This is important because the subject wants regular and purposeful activities.

Curiosity

Asking questions and finding out about things that are not clear has become a habit of the subjects in this research. High and uncontrollable curiosity sometimes makes the subject feel uncomfortable, but if not done it will also disrupt emotional stability.

" Sometimes my friends might show that they are uncomfortable and uncomfortable if I ask questions often. Once in class, the time had finished but I was still not satisfied and wanted to ask. Yes, my friends are cheering me on huuuuu" (PL, W2)

The subject only wants to clarify the existing information with the truth so that the subject does not encounter confusion with the information. However, the subject also admitted that his curiosity often received rejection, either directly or indirectly.

" Once I was said to be an impudent child for asking about the existence of God. Even though I just wanted to get a concrete explanation, not just be asked to believe" (AK, W2)

This curiosity is accompanied by the subject's willingness to pursue areas of interest to them, for example PL subjects spend 3 hours every day just studying, starting at 03.00 WIB until 06.00 WIB. These concrete steps are what made the subjects in this research get answers to their curiosity about something all this time. Remembering that they are limited in space and time, the subjects initiate themselves to explore knowledge independently and continuously.

Critical

This character is a special characteristic of the subjects in this research. High curiosity gives rise to the subject's criticality in responding to certain things. The subjects in this research have various points of view when faced with certain situations.

" When someone else has a problem, I try to position myself as outside of other people's problems, me as someone else who is affected by the problem, and me as a third party who is affected by the problem. This is strange, and not all of my friends do it. But automatically I act like that" (AG, W3)

Critically referred to in this research is the individual's desire to get as clear and comprehensive an answer as possible to something. Sometimes criticism of the research subject triggers arguments. Subjects often express their views and opinions to get an explanation or just to clarify certain things.

Sensitive

The subjects in this study showed sensitivity in social interaction. For example, PL subjects feel that PL is often the subject of gossip among their friends, because PL always asks questions to their teacher/mentor while the others want to immediately finish the learning activity.

" When I asked, it seemed like my friends were whispering behind my back" (PL, W2)

This sensitivity is formed because research subjects feel different from others, coupled with expectations and assessments from the surrounding environment.

" I feel uncomfortable if my friends call me the smartest, and so on" (AK, W2)

This sensitive character makes the subjects in this research individuals who easily experience *trust issues* and think that they have never had friendships that meet their expectations. The subjects of this research assume that if someone is friends with them, there is another purpose they want.

" I don't know if it was my fault or I wasn't meant to be friends. Often friends who are close to me use me to, for example, do assignments, shift responsibilities and so on. So this is what makes me not find friends. I only believe in myself and my parents" (AK, W2)

Worry

Feelings of anxiety also colored the daily lives of the subjects in this study. Often subjects worry about the final results in each activity. Whether the results are in accordance with his expectations, other people's expectations or not.

" I like to worry about my results, I'm afraid they won't meet my expectations. I wish I could get good grades like that" (PL, W3)

This was also felt by other subjects, they were worried about other parties' assessments of the results they achieved.

Based on the results of data analysis regarding the self-concept of gifted children, it shows that there are six important themes that are part of the self-image of gifted children. The first theme is leadership, the second is high curiosity, the third is critical character, the fourth is sensitive character, the fifth and sixth are anxiety and fear.

Regarding leadership, basically gifted individuals choose to be responsible and do not easily trust other people (Bakar et al., 2014; Edmunds & Yewchuk, 1996) . This was proven by the subjects in this study that they felt more comfortable and calm when they were in a decision-making position. Leadership is meant here not only in relation to other people , but also to oneself. Individuals with talents will organize in detail everything that concerns themselves. These individuals will know the extent of their competencies and weaknesses so that they are able to measure the extent of the results they have obtained. Individuals with talents also show high curiosity and criticality about things that they think are not appropriate or comprehensive. Children ask for details about whatever they are confused about (Cropley, 1993; Negara et al., 2013; Papandreu, 2023). However, behind this ability, gifted individuals also experience worry and anxiety about the future (Balley, 2023; Negara et al. ., 2013) . These worries, anxieties and fears are related to other people's assessments and expectations of their abilities (Gur, 2011; Papandreu, 2023) .

This anxiety can hinder the psychological development of gifted children, because gifted children worry about other people's opinions and judgments without looking at the extent of the efforts they have made so far. This is in line with the theory put forward by person centered therapy which discusses the real self and the ideal self (Corey, 2013; Sue & Sue, 2012) . This theory teaches that the characteristic of a healthy personality is that there is congruence between the real self and the ideal self , so it can refer to the fact that the individual will be calm and have minimal anxiety when the individual puts aside other people's expectations (ideal self) and stops comparing them with existing reality (real self) .

Conclusion

Individuals with talents are a gift from God that must be grateful for with full awareness. Basically, talent appears with certain criteria and it is very possible that it will be different from other individuals. Giftedness requires awareness to be better able to adapt to existing differences. This research focuses on deepening the self-concept of gifted children, the results of which have five themes, namely that gifted children are in harmony with their desire to be a leader for themselves and others, that gifted children are curious and critical of things that are unclear and incomprehensive. . Apart from that, gifted children also have a fairly high level of sensitivity, making them more sensitive to their surrounding environment. Apart from that, children with disabilities also have anxiety and fear about the judgment and expectations that other people place on them. This research is not enough to reveal more broadly about the way gifted children view themselves. Several variables were found that could become material for further research, namely regarding perfectionism in gifted children. This is because gifted children expect final results that match their expectations and have minimal errors and this can sometimes be a boomerang for the psychological development of gifted children.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank the Direktorat Pengajaran, Penelitian dan Pengabdian Masyarakat (DP3M) at Universitas PGRI Kanjuruhan Malang who has helped so that research can be completed.

Author Contributions Statement

The following are contributions from each author AINR develop research ideas and quality checking for research. IA collaborators in research and data collection. AINR drafting articles and data analysis.

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COUNSENEsia: Indonesia Journal of Guidance and Counseling

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