

## Daily Journal of Gratitude as the Implementation of Positive Psychology in Student Personality Development Guidance and Counseling Program

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**Abstract**—The theory of positive psychology pioneered by Martin Seligman focuses on efforts to explore and develop characters as the human strengths. By exploring and developing the positive side of the individual will lead someone to have true happiness. Human life will be meaningful if the positive side of humans can be maximally developed. By applying positive psychology, it is expected that lecturers can carry out guidance and counseling for the development of student personalities. Personality developments needed are intrapersonal, interpersonal, problem solving, learning and professional skills. The Daily Journal of Gratitude is an activity that can be applied to motivate the growth of grateful habit which is an aspect of positive psychology. Gratitude as a cognitive construction is shown by acknowledging mercy and kindness for the blessings that have been received by a person and focusing on the positive things. The connection with personality development is the ability of students to develop intrapersonal skills. As an emotional construction, gratitude is characterized by the ability to change the emotional response to a thing happened so that it becomes more meaningful. This is related to the development of students when facing other people or the ability to develop interpersonal skills. Gratitude emotions involve feelings of amazement, gratitude, appreciation and happiness for the blessings and the life to be lived. Gratitude as a construction of behavior is kind of respond in return to others for the benefits and gifts received . Personality development in the construction of behavior is related to learning skills, problem solving skills and professional skills. By applying the Daily Journal of Gratitude it is hoped that students can be guided and counseled to become individuals who are able to develop optimally in their lives on campus up to the graduation day, so that they can have the skills to interact in a complex and diverse multigeneration environment.

**Index Terms**—Daily Journal of Gratitude, Positive Psychology, Guidance and Counseling, Student Personality Development

### I. INTRODUCTION

Positive psychology pioneered by Martin Seligman focuses on efforts to dig and explore characters as the promotion of human strengths. By digging and developing the individual side will deliver individuals on authentic happiness and have optimal functioning in life, as individuals, family members, city and society members. With these strong characteristics of individuals will lead to the possibility to empower individuals to have strengths within National development.

Positive psychology aims to catalyze a change in psychology, which is not only fixing something that is the worst in life but also building the best quality in life and fixing imbalance things in the past. Positive aspects that are not explored or unnoticed in a person must be developed. The positive psychology approach is an individual and society empowerment to build a civilized nation. In this paper the individual mentioned is a college student.

All students at Yogyakarta University of Technology are required to take four excellent

courses. They are entrepreneurship, information technology, English and personality development. Special for personality development course, it is taught by lecturers with psychology education and counseling as their background study. Theoretically there are five skills presented in the course. They are intra personal skill, interpersonal skill, problem solving skill, professional skill and learning skill. In delivering material, lecturers are allowed to improvise the learning style and materials so that they could be more easily understood by the students.

It is found that students often have low preseverance, always complain, have lack of gratitude, have a greater negative feeling than the positive one in dealing with problems. If we do not overcome those problems, may the students will only grow physically but mentally they will be less mature in developing themselves to face the future and become part of the complex multigeneration. Therefore the writer was inspired to implement positive aspects of psychology for the development of inner personality in guidance and counseling

program. In this paper positive aspect implemented is gratitude.

Creative ideas offered by the writer for the development of positive psychology is the Daily Journal of Gratitude or a daily book about gratitude as an activity in guidance and counseling program to motivate the growth of grateful habit.

## II. THEORETICAL REVIEW

### A. *Positive Psychology*

At the beginning of its establishment, Psychology had 3 main objectives, namely 1) Cure the mental health; 2) Identify and nurture talent, potential, and develop strength; 3) Helping humans to live more productively and meaningfully (Seligman, 2002). However, after World War II, Psychology focused on the first objective. Positive Psychology built by Martin Seligman in 1998 as the latest developments that return the three main objectives of Psychology.

Seligman as the president of APA (American Psychology Association) with some of his colleagues (Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Ed Diener, Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Chris Peterson, and George Vaillant) developed Positive Psychology. The purpose of establishing Positive psychology is that humans have a good life, a pleasant life, and a meaningful life.

Positive psychology is much influenced by the Humanistic approach. The term positive psychology first appeared in the last chapter of the book Maslow, entitled *Motivation and Personality*, whose chapter title is "Toward a Positive Psychology". In part of this book, Maslow said that psychology itself does not have an accurate understanding about human potential, and that subject will not develop. Furthermore, Maslow explained that psychology is more successful for explaining the negative side than explaining the positive side of humans; digging too much about human weaknesses, problems, and sins but digging a little about human potential, talent, aspirations that can be achieved, or the highest psychological conditions (Froh, 2004).

Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000), defined positive psychology as a scientific study of positive and developing human function in several levels

that include biology, personal, relational, institutional, culture, and the global dimension of life. The goal is to identify and increase human strength and wisdom which makes it possible for human to live properly and allows individuals and communities to develop.

### B. *Guidance and Counseling*

The word guidance comes from the word guide which means to show, determine, regulate or drive. Basically guidance is a process of helping individuals to develop optimally. Guidance concerns facilitate individuals to be able to develop their potentials or achieve their development tasks (concerning physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and moral-spiritual aspects). (ABKIN, 2008)

Guidance is a continuous process, it means that guidance is not incidental activity but we need a careful planning, analysis of individual needs, expectations and environmental conditions, compiled by involving all mentioned, and in the implementation, we should pay attention to facilities, place and time and it carry out with full responsibility.

Guidance is intended for both people with problems and those who do not have, both men and women, children, teenagers, adults and elderly. The approach taken in guidance activities is more preventive in development than in healing for the long term. The focus of the implementation of guidance services is achieving success for each individual, it means that individuals are not only motivated and encouraged to learn knowledge or achievement at the campus only, but also individuals are helped to be successful at campus and in life and the individuals are expected to contribute in their multigeneration community.

Counseling is an effort to help individuals through a process of personal interaction between the counselor and client so that the client is able to understand himself and environment, make decisions and set goals based on the values he believes so the client feels happy and has effective behavior (Nurihsan 2006).

Counseling can only be done by experts such as counselors, psychologists, psychiatrist and social worker. Nurihsan (2006) explained that counseling is a process that involves interpersonal relationship

between counselor with the client using the psychological methods a systematic base of knowledge about human personality in an effort to improve the mental health.

Counseling is skill, knowledge and building relationship so that people feel safe, comfortable, helped and they make changes.

### ***C. Student Personal Development***

At the first time, student personality development told about simple characteristics of personality definitions. Then students are asked to tell their personalities with the strengths and weaknesses. This lesson is called intrapersonal skill.

The function of the two activities is so that students are able to understand that each individual has a unique and different personality. In specific, students are able to recognize about themselves. By recognizing weaknesses and strengths, students are directed to have positive emotions and attitudes so they can develop their personalities well.

The next material is about interpersonal skill. In this material, students are taught about skills to develop the abilities of recognizing, understanding and having relation to others in form of positive behavior, emotions and attitudes. To form emotions and positive attitudes the students use gratitude journals and have interviews with successful people.

After having knowledge and skills about gratitude, happiness and success in intrapersonal and interpersonal material skill, students are taught about problem solving skill. In this material, students are given an understanding that life is not always smooth, but sometimes it also has various problems that must be faced. How to have positive emotions and self-attitudes in dealing with problems is an important part of implementing psychology positives that need to be developed in the material problem solving skill.

Students are also taught about professional skills related to their disciplines. Owning the ability to know yourself, having good relationship with others and solving problems that integrated with hard skills obtained by students according to their majors, it is expected that students can apply it and succeed in their professional working world they will face later

. After applying the four soft skill materials, students then are taught to apply learning skills. That means from various things happened in their lives, students are able to understand and learn the mistakes ever done and have a positive thinking to fix those mistakes.

### ***D. Gratitude***

Gratitude is a cognitive, emotional, and behavioral construction (Emmons, 2007). Gratitude as a cognitive construction is shown by acknowledging mercy and kindness for the blessings that have been received and focusing on the positive things. As emotions construction, gratitude is characterized by the ability to change emotional responses to become more meaningful (McCullough, Tsang, & Emmons, 2002). Gratitude involves the feelings of amazement, accepting love, appreciation and happiness for grace and life. Gratitude as a construction of behavior that is taking action to others for the benefits and gifts that have been received in return. Watkin (in Emmons & McCullough, 2004) reveals there are the close relationship between gratitude and the welfare component.

Gratitude is a positive experience that will add to positive memory on cognitive. The more often someone is grateful for experience, the more positive emotions and memory will recollect these conditions which called Danner (2001) as happiness or subjective well-being.

This positive experience will be recalled when needed, for example when facing depressive conditions, the positive experiences and emotions will help in facing depressive conditions.

Gratitude also directs someone to look at himself more positively. Research by Froh, Yurkewicz, and Kashdan (2009) proved that gratitude has a strong relationship with respect for self, positive point of view, and good initiative. Wood's research, Joseph, and

Linley (2007) also found that gratitude is positively correlated with positive reinterpretation, active coping, life planning and it has negative correlation with blaming behavior. Gratitude can improve prosocial, make people feel satisfied with their lives (Froh, Sefick, & Emmons, 2008; Chen & Kee, 2008; Lambert, Fincham, Stillman, & Dean,

2009), and gratitude is a strong predictor of one's well-being (Watkin, Woodward, Stone, & Kolt, 2003).

### ***E. The Implementation of Positive Psychology in Student Personality Development Guidance and Counseling Program***

A nation needs qualified individuals in working. From positive emotions like being happy, smiling, always being grateful to God and wanting to care and thank others people will form a healthy and productive person. Taylor et al. (2000) found that optimists person were less likely to get physical pain and illness compared to pessimistic people. Besides that, people were also found optimistic and happiness to perform better in the workplace. They are also more relaxed, have low stress levels and good health, and also have good social relations with other people

The implementation of positive psychology which is compiled in the five soft skills materials in guidance and counseling program is expected to form students who can develop a positive side in themselves, be grateful, develop positive emotions in dealing with with other people, have positive thinking in overcoming various problems faced, have a positive attitude in learning from mistakes ever done and integrate all materials in accordance with the hard skills obtained from each major they study.

### **III. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

In the relation to for self-development activities for students, institutions also play a role in developing knowledge into soft skills so students become a more-valued person in living his life. This condition cannot be created easily. It takes a continuous willingness from various parties to socialize positive psychology for better students personality development in intrapersonal or interpersonal, problem solving, learning and professional skills.

For having better student personality development, the writer suggests that the Daily Journal of Gratitude which is a daily record compiled by students based on events for one week about what things should be grateful for in life. By

having the journal, it can be used as a material for discussion in guidance and counseling activities that will direct students to see themselves positively, have a positive point of view, improve prosocial behavior and feel satisfied with their life. Students will gain a positive understanding of gratitude behavior and decrease the complaining habit that often happens nowadays.

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