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Zikr Practice Intervention and Analysis of the Subjective Wellbeing of Special Education Students

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ABSTRACT

Subjective well-being or a good life is the dream of every individual including special education students. In developing a sustainable life, subjective well-being is vital and listed as one of the important agenda by the United Nations. However, special education students show limited characteristics of subjective well-being compared to typical students. This has dwarfed the emotional and behavioral development as well as the teaching and learning process of special education students. Therefore, the intervention of zikr practice has been found to be the best practice to help nurture the subjective well-being of special education students, especially from the emotional and behavioral aspects. A total of 30 Muslim special education students, two special education teachers and three parents from SMK Dato' Haji Talib Karim (Dato' Haji Talib Karim Secondary School) Alor Gajah, Melaka in 2022 were selected as the subjects for this study. The data is obtained through observations of the special education students and semi-structured interview sessions with the teachers and parents. The findings are also supported by the analysis of Individual Education Plan documents, behavior checklist, good practice checklist, Student Personality System information and photos of special education student activities. The data obtained is analyzed by assigning codes, categories and themes. The results of this best practice show that special education students who went through the intervention of zikr practice appear to be emotionally calmer. From the behavioral aspect, students obey instructions more easily and show increasingly positive behavioral development. In conclusion, the implementation of this best practice gives positive implications on the aspects of learning and facilitation for special education students.

Keywords: Subjective well-being, special education students, zikr, intervention

Introduction to Best Practices

Subjective well-being is one of the elements found in the field of psychology, which is positive psychology. Subjective well-being is also a focus area for members of the United Nations towards the development of a sustainable life. The Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities (OKU) 2016 to 2022 focuses on this element of subjective well-being for the group of people with disabilities. This means that special education students who belong to one of the groups found in OKU also deserve the right to have subjective well-being. Subjective well-being is often defined as happiness, quality life,

self-actualization and satisfaction with what is owned and done (Diener, 1984; Diener, Oishi, & Tay, 2018; Hefferon & Boniwell, 2011; Jach, Sun, Loton, Chin, & Waters, 2018; Ramesh, 2017). In the Quran, the phrase good life or hayatan tayyiba refers to subjective well-being. This is quoted in the word of God in surah an-Nahl: 97 which means "whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female in a state of faith, then indeed We will give him a good life...". Based on the meaning of the verse in this surah, every individual deserves to have subjective well-being by fulfilling the conditions of being a person of faith and doing righteous deeds (Ali, 2014; Amirus, 2015; Iswan, Annisa Fitri, & Fuad, 2017; Mohd Shafie, 2013). For example, when a person does good, he will gain emotions and feelings such as happiness, calmness and fun. On the other hand, a person with envy will have emotions and feelings such as anger and discomfort in the hearts.

In order to help develop and nurture the subjective well-being of special education students, the intervention of zikr practice has been selected as one of the best practices. Zikr is one of the daily practices that have therapeutic elements (Ahmad A'toa' & Mardiana, 2021; Satriyawati, Hidayat, Wardita, & Arifah, 2021). In general, zikr refers to the act of remembering Allah SWT by saying and reciting the words tayyibah repeatedly with the tongue or in the heart. Among the examples of the word tayyibah are istighfar, tasbih, tahmid, takbir, recitation of the Quran, salutations on the Prophet and recitation of asmaul husna. This zikr practice will help to reduce anxiety, worry in a person's heart (Ahmad A'toa' & Mardiana, 2021; Lainatul, H.Fuad, & Rr. Indahria, 2014; Lili, 2018; Noorfarah Asmira Abdul Malek, 2020). This is in line with the word of Allah SWT recorded in surah ar-Ra'd:28 which means "(That is) those who believe and calm their hearts with zikrullah. Know that with the zikrullah, the human heart is calm."

This best practice has been implemented in the Integration Special Education Programme of SMK Dato' Haji Talib Karim (STARIM), Alor Gajah, Melaka. The target groups for sampling include 30 muslim special education students, 2 special education teachers and 3 parents of special education students. The study began in September 2021 to April 2022. Special education students are students who have been certified by medical experts and who are experiencing delirium related to aspects of understanding, the use of spoken and written language (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2015; U. S. Department of Education, 2004). This disorder causes the learning, behavioral, social and emotional processes of special education students to be disturbed. Nevertheless, these special education students still have the right to improve their subjective well-being in line with the Disabled Persons Act (OKU) 2008 and the Disabled Persons Action Plan (OKU) 2016 to 2022.

Justification on the Implementation of Best Practices

Every student has challenges in facing the learning and facilitation process including special education students. The author found that special education students at STARIM find it difficult to control their emotions if something or a situation is not the way they want it to be. Students easily utter negative words among their peers. These unstable emotions also make it difficult for students to control their behaviors. Students would freely pinch and hit their friends. Students like to leave class without teacher's permission. In addition, students also lack religious practice in their daily lives.

Students are less exposed to the readings of prayers and verses of the Quran either at home or at school. The results of this observation also reinforce the findings of previous studies that special education students have limited well-being in their daily lives (Giuliani & Jacquemettaz, 2017; Nik Asilah, Madhya Zhagen, & Ghazali, 2016; Nor Hidayah, Mohd. Hanafi, & Mohd Mokhtar, 2016; Siti Shahidah, Mohd Hanafi, & Mohd Mokhtar, 2016). This indirectly causes the teaching and facilitation process (PdPc) of special education students to be disrupted.

Various interventions have been implemented at STARIM to help improve the subjective well-being of special education students. Among them are equestrian interventions, archery, bowling, economic tokens and physical exercise. However, these interventions lack spiritual elements. Apart from biological, social and psychological elements, spirituality is one of the components in human beings (Al-Ghazali, 1990; Hefti, 2011; Mohd Affifudin & Nooraini, 2017). This shows that there is a spiritual element gap in the implementation of previous interventions for special education students in STARIM. This spiritual element if it can be filled with good inputs such as dhikr practice will give birth to individuals with good personalities. According to al-Ghazali's theory, the end goal of this good personality is to achieve subjective well-being (Fariza, Salasiah Hanin, & Mohd Jurairi, 2008). Thus, the intervention of zikr practice has been chosen by the author as the best practice to help improve the subjective well-being of special education students in their daily lives.

Implementation Objectives

The objectives of the implementation of this best practice are:

- 1. Analyze the subjective well-being of special education students who go through the practice of zikr from an emotional point of view.
- 2. Analyze the subjective well-being of educational students who go through the practice of zikr from the behavioral aspect.

Implementation of Best Practices

The zikr practised by the author is based on the Quran and sunnah because generally, all verses of the Quran and supplications from the Prophet PBUH can be used as zikr. The practice of zikr practiced by the author is based on the Quran and sunnah. Students perform this zikr practice starting from early morning when they arrive at school until they return home. The process of implementing this zikr practice is as shown in Figure 1. Videos are used as auxiliary materials during the implementation of zikr practices. After the practise of zikr is practiced daily, students can pronounce and recite the recitations of zikr heard. Therefore, special education students no longer need video assistance.

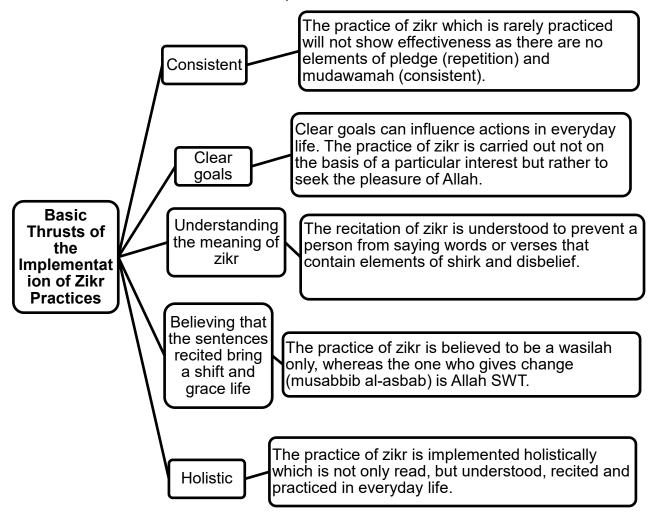
Figure 1 Zikr Practice Implementation Process

Students recite surah al-Fatihah: 1-7, surah al- Bagarah: 1-5 and 255, surah an-Nas, al-Before starting each Falaq, al-Ikhlas, selawat, istighfar, recitation learning process of learning prayers, prayer avoiding disease outbreak Students read istighfar minimum 5 times When a student makes a mistake or emotions are • The number of istighfar readings is increased unstable so that emotions are stable **During mealtimes** Reciting meal prayers When it rains Students read rain prayers When it comes to · Students pronounce the words of istirja' misfortune When you want to go home • Students read prayers in vehicles

The practice of zikr is implemented based on five basic cores which are being consistent, having a clear goal, understanding the meaning of zikr, believing that the sentences recited bring a shift and grace life and being holistic. The description of each of the cores is as shown in Figure 2.

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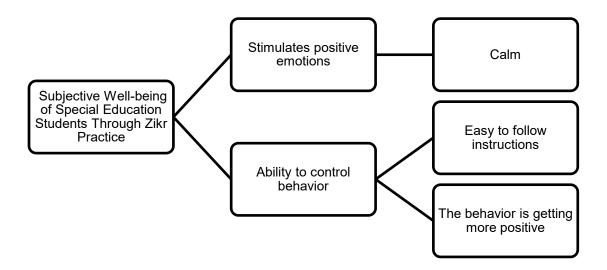
Figure 2
Basic Thrusts of the Implementation of Zikr Practices



Effectiveness from the Implementation of Best Practices

The data of the study on this best practice are obtained through a semi-structured interview method with 2 teachers and 3 parents of special education students. Observation sessions are also carried out with the special education students for six months. In addition, the findings on the use of this best practice are also supported by document analysis of the Individual Education Plan, behavioural checklists, checklists of good practices, information on the Student Self-Responsibility System and photographs of special education students' activities. The findings highlight that there are two themes that exist after students go through zikr practice interventions. The themes are 'the ability to stimulate positive emotions' and 'the ability to control behavior'. Below each of these themes are several categories as seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3
Subjective Well-being of Special Education Students Through Zikr Practice



Stimulates Positive Emotions

The best practice findings display the emotions of special education students which through the practice of zikr seem calmer. The calmness of special education students also affects the individuals around the students such as teachers and parents. All target groups consisting of teachers and parents agree that special education students seem calm when their spiritual needs are met.

Target group/ subjects	Interview verbatim
Teacher 1	"What I see is that when we get close to the Quran or the zikr, we see that the emotions of the people are calming down. For what reason, before starting to study, they will start with the recitation of Quran and zikr. Actually it's one of the ways people release people have energy. Like us, we have to clean ourselves up. So we start with the zikr reading. Even emotionally, I think they'll be calmer when we listen to the verses of the Quran."
Teacher 2	"We have to be sure. This Quranic verse is the antidote for these students. Because, like the parents, if he practices, indirectly himself, he will feel closer to God. He's not an impression on the child, he's going to have an impact on his teacher, the impact on the parents, the impact on the people around him. For when we start our day with the verses of the Quran, he becomes calmer".
Parent 1	" There's one zikr, another zikr he seems to hear as usual, but this one zikr, he's going to face this tab. Since then, I've noticed, I think he likes others. Ever since he heard the zikr, his emotions are getting cooler".
Parent 2	"I sometimes go to eat, take him, he does things, I tell him to pay him. That's right, I told him to pay. I'm tasmic to, keep him quiet.

	It's not that he's quiet. But he doesn't do things that are ridiculous.
	That's it. The verses of the Quran are themselves that can give
	peace, control him to have a mind, what is it, wallahualam la".
Parent 3	"So, when you read that, it's slowly he'll be cool. Then he sees me,
	he'll smile"

The results of the observation and analysis of the documents on the Individual Education Plan (IEP) report and photographs of the students' activities, on the other hand, show that the special education students appear calm after practising the recitation of the zikr. Students control is also easy after students practising this best practice.

Ability to Control Behaviour

The results of this best practice feature special education students who through zikr practice interventions are capable of controlling their behaviour. There are two categories under this theme namely students follow instructions more easily and behave more positively.

Students Follow Instructions More Easily

Based on the results of interviews with the target group, special education students who go through the practice of zikr consistently display improvements in simple behavior of following instructions. Special education students who initially found it difficult to sit still and kept on showing tantrums, can now follow instructions from teachers. Parents, on the other hand, state that special education students can easily follow the instructions especially in helping to do tasks at home.

Target group/ subjects	Interview verbatim
Teacher 2	"It was in the early days that they were tantrums. But when we apply this zikr practice, so, in class he can follow what you teach, can do, listen to what instructions are from the teacher."
Teacher 1	"Some are irritable, some when we tell him to sit down, he doesn't want to. He was screaming. There's something like that. But, after he practices these recitations of zikr,alhamdulillah, the command is acceptable. When we give orders, he can follow."
Parent 1	"Just, my son is getting cooler, listen, alhamdulillah, I'm happy. That thing changes a little bit, but, to me is a big la kan".
Parent 3	"If we tell him to do anything, say please take this, please lift the clothes to, what, indeed he's gone. If the other child gets two three times. If he keeps going. If you lift my clothes, he knows how I'm going to sort. He did it. Whose basket. Who It's all he's doing. There's no need to worry about that. He's happy to hear it."

The findings of this interview were also reinforced by the observation of special education students. The document analysis of behavioural checklists, Student Self-

Responsibility System information and Individual Education Plans also showed students were able to comply with instructions. Students are able to obey instructions when at school.

Students Behave More Positively

All the target groups interviewed agreed that the negative behaviour of special education students was found to decrease after going through the constitutional practice of zikr. The behavior of special education students who used frequently show tantrums, pinching and hitting friends; and agitated a lot have been reduced. The word istighfar is used as a reinforcement to control the behavior of special education students. All members of the target group believe that the change in the behavior of the students is due to the ingenuity of the recitations of zikr which are based on the Quran and hadith.

Target group/ subjects	Interview verbatim
Teacher 1	"Alhamdulillah, so far, it has had a positive effect, in class time. After reading these verses of the Quran and zikr, he can reduce the behaviour of these students. It was their beginning of the tantrum. But when we apply zikr reading, so, in class he can follow what you teach, can do, listen to what instructions are from the teacher."
Parent 2	"I think, when we practice the verses of the zikr, or any piece of the Quranic verse itself, he feels like it can control our mind. yes, when I see When he goes on a rampage, we tell istighfar, or when he's restless, we ask him about the Quranic verse, he can stop him having a behaviour and divert to the Quran. That means, with the verse itself, it could be a medicine near him"
Parent 1	"He's got a raging too. But, still, you can control it again. I usually do this. That's right there. Ask istighfar. While he's crying, he's istighfar too. He's crying to, raging to, we're telling him to istighfar. He did it anyway."
Teacher 2	" Throughout my experience of teaching, it's been seen. It means we know when parents come, they'll say, teacher, my son never prays. Teacher, my son has never even read. I mean, parents don't practice that at home. When he started giving his child a chance to learn to recite, pray, ablution and what about it, Errrand we asked parents to practice at home, there was a change of that. Even if it's not much, there's a little bit. We'll see. Most parents admit that after he approached his son to the Quran, his son had a change."

The findings of the observation of special education students over a 6-month period found that this target group showed increasingly positive behaviour from day to day. These findings were further reinforced by the document analysis of behavioural checklists, checklists on good practices, Student Personality System information and photographs of special education students' activities.

Discussion

After going through the practice of zikr, the findings showed that special education students seemed calmer from an emotional point of view. Calmness is one of the indicators that a person possesses subjective well-being. The findings of this best practice further reinforce the findings of past researchers that the practice of zikr which contains the recitation of the Quran can provide peace even if a person is not able to read and understand the verses of the Quran (Haslinda, Latifah, & Wan Nasyrudin, 2015: Lainatul et al., 2014: Mohd Affifudin & Nooraini, 2017: Siti Patonah, Zulkifli, & Duriyyah Sharifah, 2013; York, 2011). Brain activity will be at the alpha wave level in the electroencephalogram (EEG) display during the recitation of Quranic verses. This alpha wave makes it clear that a person is in a calm stage (Azian Azamimi & Zainab, 2011; Mohd Amzari, 2018; Nurul Fazrena, Nasrul Humaimi, & Nor Aini, 2013; Siti Patonah et al., 2013). Calmness is an important thing for special education students. This is because the PdPc process will be able to run more effectively if the special education students are in a calm state (Noor Aini & Nor Hafizah, 2015; Nor Hidayah et al., 2016). Special education students who are in a calm state will be more receptive to learning from the teacher and less intrusive to peers in the class.

The findings of best practice also made it clear that special education students were found to be easier to follow instructions both at school and at home. Following instructions is one of the important skills in the process of PdPc and daily life. However, one of the characteristics of special education students is that it is difficult for them to follow instructions (Manisah, & Norizza 2016; Zalizan 2009). These limited instruction-following skills can disrupt the course of the PdPc process in schools and further affect the subjective well-being of special education students. Past studies have used social story interventions, reward methods and the use of origami to help special education students to follow instructions (Manisah & Norizza, 2016; Siti Shahidah et al., 2016). However, this zikr practice is still underused as a best practice intervention to control behavior. Therefore, the findings of this best practice also further expand the findings conducted by past researchers.

In addition, the findings of the study also showed that the behaviour of special education students appeared to be increasingly positive after consistently implementing the practice of zikr. All target groups consisting of teachers and parents agree that special education students are showing less tantrums, shouting, pinching and beating friends. On the other hand, special education students will easily recite istighfar if they commit a behavioural offence. The findings of this best practice reinforce the results of past studies which stated that zikr practices can help change a person's behavior (Haslinda et al., 2015; Khader, Abdullah, & Mohd Farhan, 2014; Khadher, Mohd Anuar, & Nor Azian, 2016; Luthfi, 2017; Noorfarah Asmira Abdul Malek, 2020). In addition, al-Ghazali's theory states that human behavior is influenced by the components of reason, heart, lust and spirit. All these components when filled and filled with good words such as verses of the Quran and zikr will affect the body or behavior of a person (Ahmad A'toa' & Mardiana, 2021; Al-Ghazali, 1990; Muhammad Hilmi, Zakaria, & Raudhah, 2016; Zulfahmi & Wan Hasmah, 2014). Therefore, the intellect, heart, passions and spirit of special education students who are constantly entrenched with the practice of zikr will help to form towards positive behavior. This positive behavior, in turn, will help special education students acquire subjective wellbeing.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The implementation of this best practice demonstrates the proliferation of knowledge related to the intervention of zikr practices and the subjective well-being of special education students. This zikr practice intervention was carried out based on five basic cores with a specific recitation of zikr starting in the early morning and ending before the students returned home. Special education students who go through the practice of zikr exhibit calmer emotions. They can also easily obey commands and show increasingly positive behavior in everyday life. All these findings showed that special education students obtained positive subjective well-being with the implementation of the zikr practice intervention as the best practice. This in turn will help students in the PdPc process as well as improve social relationships among friends, family members and the community

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