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Effectiveness of Assertiveness Training Techniques in Classical Guidance to Increase Career Confidence of Special Needs Students

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A B S T R A C T

Self-confidence plays an important role in an individual's life, especially for students in special schools who often face physical, mental, and social challenges in career development. Assertiveness training is one of the effective methods to improve career confidence, as it focuses on communication skills and the ability to express thoughts and feelings assertively. This study utilized a non-systematic literature review to explore the effectiveness of assertiveness training in improving the career confidence of special education students within a classical guidance framework. Relevant literature was analyzed from Google Scholar and PubMed, focusing on publications from the last 10 years. The findings highlighted significant improvements in students' career confidence, communication ability, and decision-making skills following assertiveness training. Key enabling factors included institutional support, appropriate training methods, participant commitment, and intensive guidance from counselors. However, barriers such as low initial confidence levels, limited time, and environmental support remained a challenge. This study contributes to the development of a customized assertiveness training module for special education students and provides practical implications for schools, teachers, parents, and researchers.

A R T I C L E I N F O

1. INTRODUCTION

Self-confidence is a very important aspect for every individual, especially in helping to achieve success, happiness, and life goals, including career achievement and selection. A career is all the jobs a person handles or holds during their working life (Prabowo *et al.*, 2024). Meanwhile, someone who has deficiencies in himself sometimes lacks confidence, such as students in special schools. Special needs school or extraordinary school (Sekolah Luar Biasa, commonly called SLB) is a school for those with special needs and is one of the formal educational institutions that organizes educational programs for children with special needs (Pramartha, 2015). Students with special needs are students who have abnormalities or obstacles psychologically, physically, and with limited social abilities and environmental challenges in their growth and development (Rohmatrismaysi & Harmanto, 2017).

The role of self-confidence in the career development of SLB students includes motivation to develop their potential because often SLB students face physical, mental, or social challenges that hinder their career aspirations. Self-confidence helps them see their potential, accept their conditions, and stay motivated to develop their abilities. Self-confidence also affects the behavior of SLB students, in which case, students who have self-confidence tend not to depend easily on others or be able to manage their lives independently and maximize their potential, while students with low self-confidence tend to depend easily on others and be less able to adjust emotionally (Susilawati *et al.*, 2016).

The obstacles that SLB students often face in gaining career confidence include social stigma and discrimination. In a study entitled World Report on Disability, the social environment or society often has a negative view of students with special needs, considered the trash of society, and useless. Thus, it makes them feel inferior, isolated, and ostracized. Second, difficulties in accessing quality education. Quality education is often difficult for special needs students to obtain, especially in remote areas, as well as inappropriate curriculum and learning methods and inadequate facilities. The Unesco IBE (Ydo, 2020) states that access to education for children with disabilities, especially in developing countries, is still very low, which has an impact on their career opportunities. Third, lack of environmental support, especially family. Self-confidence is built from oneself and also the surrounding environment, while for children with disabilities, the environment determines their self-confidence, especially the family environment. Lack of family support has a significant impact on the psychological development of children with special needs, which is why acceptance is highly prioritized for parents who have children with special needs (Noviati *et al.*, 2022). One of the recommendations to overcome the lack of career confidence of SLB students is to use Assertiveness Training. This technique is one of the effective approaches to increasing the career confidence of SLB students.

Assertiveness Training is a person's ability to express what is wanted and thought honestly and firmly, without hurting other people's feelings or offending them. This technique focuses on building self-confidence and communication skills to express opinions or respond to social situations effectively and assertively. Assertiveness training can be applied to the interpersonal situation of a person who has difficulty accepting reality or asserting that he has done something that is reasonable and should be of course right. Several previous studies have also used this assertiveness training for several problems and proven its success.

Research conducted by Aryani and colleagues (Aryani, 2024) used assertiveness training to increase self-confidence in career decisions in vocational students. In the study, assertiveness training techniques proved effective in improving students' soft skills, especially in terms of self-confidence and career decision-making. There is also research by Nuha and colleagues, a

behavioral approach through assertiveness training to improve students' interpersonal communication skills. Interpersonal skills have many benefits, one of which is self-confidence and the results of the study show that assertiveness training can improve their interpersonal communication skills.

The purpose of writing this article is to discuss the effectiveness of assertiveness training techniques in increasing the career confidence of SLB students based on a literature review. The novelty of this research lies in the sample population and guidance, namely SLB students and classical guidance approaches. Indeed, the benefits of this research will be to be used as a reference for educational practitioners, especially SLB teachers and counselors, and also as additional insight into the application of assertiveness training techniques in classical guidance.

2. METHODS

The research design in this article was to use a non-thematic literature review method. In this study, the use of the literature review method aimed to see several previous studies on the effectiveness of assertiveness training techniques to increase students' self-confidence. The source of literature refers to journals, and full-text articles that are relevant to the author's article and focus on publications that discuss assertiveness training, career confidence, and special education students. The data collection procedure used databases such as Google Scholar and Pubmed over the last 10 years. The keywords were assertiveness training, career confidence, special education students, and classical guidance. The data analysis was carried out descriptively, emphasizing the suitability of the research results with the topic of the article (see **Table 1**).

Table 1. Database search results.

No	Database with Filters			
	Keyword		**Google Scholar**	**Pubmed**
1	Assertiveness Training		37	891
2	Career Self-Confidence		327	1511
3	SLB Students		191	5
4	Classical Guidance		315	327
No	**Title**	**Result**	**Article & Open Acces**	**Relevant**
1	Assertiveness Training Techniques on Students' Career Confidence	725	19	5

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of literature searches in Google Scholar and Pubmed are traced based on relevance to the title of the research (see **Table 2**), namely from 725 types of studies after filtering focus on journal articles and open access to 19 available articles, and of the 19 articles only 5 are relevant to the author's research topic. The following articles consist of 5 and are relevant to the topic based on the title Assertiveness Training Techniques on Student Career Confidence.

Assertiveness training is a very suitable technique to help students acquire social skills that increase their ability to express their wishes comfortably and smoothly in situations that previously made them anxious (Dalimunthe, 2023). The main concept of assertiveness consists; first, of self-confidence which includes the ability to express opinions or needs without fear or guilt. Second, respect for others which includes not dominating or demeaning

others when communicating. Third, verbal and nonverbal communication, namely conveying messages with appropriate voice intonation, facial expressions, and body language. Fourth, emotional management is the ability to remain calm and focused despite facing difficult situations (Noormiyanto & Purwaningrum, 2019).

Classical guidance is a guidance program designed by holding face-to-face meetings with counselees and is class-based. The application of Assertiviness Technique in classical guidance in (Aryani, *et al.*, 2024) and adapted to SLB students (Noormiyanto & Purwaningrum, 2019) as follows: (1) Socialization and counseling, this session is carried out at the beginning of classical guidance in which material is presented about self-concept, self-confidence and decision making, delivered with the use of visual and audio media or adjusted according to disability and of course using simple language; (2) Simulation and role playing, in this session students are invited to participate in the practice of assertive communication through scenarios that are relevant to the context of career decision making and are designed as much as possible according to everyday situations that are easily understood by SLB students or using sign language for hearing disabilities; (3) Group discussion, after the simulation, students are asked to discuss their experiences in practicing assertive behavior, and of course their facilitators or teachers provide feedback and help students understand their strengths and what needs to be improved, and this group discussion is carried out with smaller groups to be more effective for students with disabilities; (4) Independent Training (Transfer of Training), namely students are given the task of applying assertiveness techniques in real situations or outside the classroom, such as expressing opinions to teachers, parents or peers, this aims to increase the courage of SLB students in communicating assertively; (5) Evaluation through pre-test and post-test, in this session the pre-test assessment is carried out at the beginning before classical guidance begins to measure the level of student confidence and then after the training, a post-test is carried out to see the extent of change and effectiveness of this assertiveness training technique. The literature review that has been conducted by the author, shows a significant increase in students' career confidence in making career decisions.

From the results obtained from the literature review, there are supporting and inhibiting factors. Supporting factors consist of: (i) Support from school institutions, in Aryani *et al* (2024), the success of this training was due to the support of the school in providing time and space for training which greatly helped the success of its implementation. And in the research of Dalimunthe *et al* (2023) the role of school counselors is very helpful and provides support for the implementation of assertive training; (ii) The suitability of research methods, the use of pre-test and post-test as well as the role-playing and simulation allows students to understand and practice assertive behavior and provides clear results; (iii) Participant Commitment, which in this case is very important for the success of the training, when the counselee or student has a very large commitment, success is easy to obtain; and (iv) Intensive Guidance from the counselor or teacher, of course, the role of the facilitator is also very important to provide results as expected because his position is to provide feedback and evaluation of the extent to which students understand and apply assertiveness techniques more effectively.

The inhibiting factors consist of: (i) Internal student barriers which include low self-confidence at the beginning and high social anxiety (Aryani *et al.*, 2024; Mardiana *et al.*, 2023); (ii) Time limitations, research involves a long enough time for satisfactory and successful results, but with limited duration, it does not allow optimal results to be obtained; (iii) Variations in student abilities, student abilities vary both cognitive and emotional. Thus, they affect the success of the technique; and (iv) A less supportive social environment, especially

for SLB students, acceptance needs to be done by parents. Thus, they can provide full support later.

The practical implications in this study from the results of the literature review consist of: (i) Practical implications for schools, namely by implementing regularly and making counseling guidance programs in schools and becoming support in career transitions; (ii) Practical Implications for Teachers and Counselors, of course, as strengthening the role of counselors and teaching effective communication; (iii) Practical implications for students, namely as social skill development and also reducing students' social anxiety, especially for SLB students; (iv) Practical implications for parents, this assertiveness training can be used as an increase in support at home by parents to their children; and (v) Practical implications for researchers and program developers, this research will be used as an increase in training modules, especially in special and inclusive schools and also further research.

Table 2. Relevant topic results.

No	Author	Year Published	Effectiveness	Research Steps	Forms of Assertive Techniques Used
1	Aryani *et al*.	2024	Assertive training increased vocational students' self-confidence by 55%, self-concept understanding by 40%, and assertive behavior by 38%.	- Preliminary survey to identify learners' problems. - Training implementation using socialization, counseling, and simulation methods. - Evaluation using pre-test and post-test with self-confidence and career maturity scales.	- Socialization and Counseling: Providing materials on self-concept, assertive behavior, and self-confidence. - Simulation: Role-playing exercises to express assertive behavior in real career situations. - Classroom Guidance
2	Dalimunthe & Dewi	2023	Group guidance services for assertive training techniques show a positive correlation with the self-confidence of class X students with rcount> rtable (0.261> 0.237)	- The sample selection was purposive sampling. - Data collection used a questionnaire with four answer scales. - The analysis used the product moment correlation technique to measure the relationship between independent and dependent variables.	- Group Discussion: Train students to express their opinions assertively in small groups. - Feedback Exercise: Advising friends in an assertive way without offending others. - Group Guidance
3	Kamil *et al*.	2018	Group counseling services with assertive training techniques effectively increase junior high school students' self-confidence, as indicated by significant t-test results (t count = 36.701> t table = 2.228).	- Experimental design with a control group and an experimental group. - Pre-test to measure the initial condition of students. - Treatment in the form of group counseling with assertive techniques. - Post-test to evaluate the treatment results.	- Role Play: Practicing real-life situations to convey feelings, wishes, or objections assertively. - Systematic Desensitization Training: Reduces anxiety in certain social situations. - Group Counseling

Table 2 (continue). Relevant topic results.

No	Author	Year Published	Effectiveness	Research Steps	Forms of Assertive Techniques Used
4	Mardiana & Endriani	2023	Assertive technique counseling significantly reduces social anxiety of social studies XI class students with the results of t count = 8.531> t table = 2.571.	- Identification of students with high levels of social anxiety through observation and questionnaires. - Implementation of counseling with assertive techniques. - Effect measurement using pre-test and post-test design on one experimental group.	- Assertive Communication Exercise: Teaches students to state feelings or opinions straightforwardly without fear. - Modeling: The counselor models how to be assertive in difficult social situations. - Group Counseling
5	Noormiyanto & Purwaningrum	2019	Indicates that the factual condition of the assertive attitude of deaf disabilities after participating in the Assertive Training process has increased significantly.	- Using descriptive qualitative research - Conducted planning and observation for the first 1 month - Field research 2 months later - Next 1-month data processing and interpretation and research report	-Expressing Feelings: Students are trained to express emotions (angry or happy) appropriately. -Role Play: Simulation of social situations to practice skills such as refusing an invitation or expressing an opinion. -Instruction and Feedback: The teacher gives instructions on assertive communication, followed by evaluation for improvement. Self-Control Training: Focus on controlling emotions when facing social pressure. -Group Pressure Management: Train students to resist negative peer influence. -Visual Communication: Students are taught to ask for clear explanations through body language or orally before responding. - Individual Counseling

4. CONCLUSION

This research shows that assertiveness training is effective in increasing the career confidence of SLB students, especially when applied in classical guidance. Through methods such as socialization, simulation, group discussion, and independent practice, students can develop assertive communication skills, make career decisions with confidence, and overcome social anxiety.

The main supporting factors include the support of the school institution, the commitment of the participants, and the intensive role of the counselor. However, there were some

barriers, such as time constraints, variations in students' abilities, and lack of environmental support.

The practical implications of this study involve the routine integration of assertiveness training in school guidance programs, strengthening the role of teachers and counselors, and increasing parents' support for their children. The research also encourages the development of specialized training modules for SLBs and further research to strengthen this approach in various inclusive education contexts.

5. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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