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SELF-REGULATION TRAINING AS AN EFFORT TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' COMPETITIVENESS (A STEP TOWARDS WORLD CLASS UNIVERSITY)

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Abstract

The aim of this study was developing a self-regulation training model to enhance students' competitiveness. The training involved skills in goal-setting, management of emotion, management of physical environment, management of social environment, time management, power presentation skill, academic writing skill, learning from textbook and journal, preparing for examination, and team work. The result showed that there was an effect of self-regulation training on competitiveness. The implications of this study are discussed.

Keywords: self regulation learning, competitiveness, college student

1. Introduction

The competitive academic and work situation requires people to cope it with high competitiveness. Adolescents as a generation for the future need to have high competitiveness. Education is one of the most prominent pillar in developing human resources with high competitiveness, and one of education institutions that has a big role is university. One of the indicator of successful university is how the students can get a job, highly valued by the work market, and create the job market (Helmi, 2004).

To cope with this challenge, Diponegoro University has the criteria named COMPLETE, i.e:

- *Communicator* (exhibit oral and written communication skill),
- *Professional* (work based on rules, achievement, and ethics),
- *Leader* (has the ability to be adaptive, responsive to the need of the environment, proactive, has an ability to motivate others and work with others),
- *Entrepreneur* (demonstrate high work ethos, entrepreneur skill, innovative, and autonomy),
- *Thinker* (has the ability to think critically, perform life-long education, to be a researcher),
- *Educator* (able to be agent of change).

A survey from Lepdik (2008) showed a decreasing tendency of students' 2007-2008 GPA in semester 1 and 2, as described in Table 1.

Table 1. Students' 2007/2008 GPA Mean

PSSB		Entry Path SPMB		UM	
1	2	1	2	1	2
2.91	2.90	2.90	2.84	2.85	2.84

Note: PSSB = Program Seleksi Siswa Berprestasi; SPMB = Seleksi Penerimaan Mahasiswa Baru; UM =Ujian Mandiri

Those data were in line with Sukadji (2000), that many new students were unaware of the educational achievement and slowing down their efforts because they thought that being accepted in the university was the final purpose of their big effort. They were still unaware of the school-to-university transition. Most of them were wrongly anticipating the extremely new situation which led them to have inappropriate orientation, attitude, and habit.

Interview with students from different faculties at Diponegoro University showed parallel outcomes. Freshmen found some difficulties in having academic adaptation (e.g., understanding materials, looking for references, taking notes, memorizing), as well as difficulties in managing time to complete the assignment, collaborating in teamwork, writing academic report, presenting ideas in class,

understanding peer presentations, giving argument in a discussion, understanding English textbook and references, managing social relationships (peers, new situation, being separated with parents and family), and communicating with lecturers. Some of those difficulties were also found in juniors and seniors. Those facts showed that self-regulation skills are needed to manage their behaviours in achieving excellent academic achievement.

Previous studies demonstrated that self-regulation helped students achieving their academic goals and helped students with average capability to achieve satisfying academic achievement (Jones, Estell, & Alexander, 2008). Self-regulation refers to the individual effort to regulate him or herself using the active capability in learning activity. Self-regulation involves: (1) self-motivation (goal setting and self-efficacy), (2) using learning strategies (task strategies), (3) effort regulation (time-management), (4) self-monitoring comprehension, (5) using environment successfully (choosing optimal physical locations), and (6) selective help-seeking.

Helmi's (2004) qualitative report about some high achieving students in Gadjah Mada University showed that student with high competitiveness usually performs all self-regulation aspects. Those participants demonstrated high level of motivation, capability to use appropriate learning strategy, ability to plan their study, and capability to make use of social and physical environment. In other words, those students were having the required hardskills and softskills to anticipate the competitive working situation. More recently, research also demonstrated the correlation between authoritative parenting and *self-regulated learning* (Wijayanti, Indrawati, & Sawitri, 2006), and the relationship between perception on effective communication with parents and students' competitiveness (Kusumadewi, Indriana, & Sawitri, 2006). However, previous studies have not produced an interventiin to enhance students' competitiveness.

Further, some studies concerning Psychology students' academic and social adaptation showed variety of antecedents. Those studies found some correlations, such as self-efficacy and academic stress (Kusumawardhani, 2008), communication management training and academic public speaking anxiety (Fatmasari, 2009), academic self-efficacy and attitude towards student-centered learning (Sudewo, 2008), academic achievement and personality types (Gunawan, 2007), expressive writing training and academic adaptation in freshmen (Prasatiati, 2006), student-supervisor communication effectivity and thesis-related stress (Gunawati, 2005), self-esteem, interpersonal

competence, and loneliness in freshmen (Pangestuti, 2003). Those researches have also not recommended the intervention yet.

Conclusively, little attention has been given to the intervention in coping with the revealing academic adaptation problem in first-year students. Hence, it is important for reseracher to create an intervention program to enhance students' competitiveness. The aim of the study was to develop a self-regulation model to enhance Diponegoro University students' competitiveness.

1.1. Definition of Competitiveness

According to Houston, McIntire, Kinnie, & Terry (2002), competitiveness is the desire to win in interpersonal situation. Competitiveness is developed from a set of skill and competence. Competence is represented as knowledge, skills, and ability that performed actively (Bernadin & Russell, 1998). Competitiveness is needed in a competitive situation, that is an activity or effort to exhibit an offence towards other people for certain purpose without considering other people's need (Brehn & Kassin, 1990). Further Baron and Byrne (1984) stated that competitiveness is a big effort from an individual to maximize her or his profit, and usually sacrificing other people's interests.

Chickering and Reisser (1993) developed seven vectors of university student development that involves competence development, emotion management, autonomy towards interdependence, development of mature interpersonal relationship, identity determination, goal development, and integrity development. Those vector were developed based on Erikson's theory that certain challenge sistematically reveals when physical development and cognitive maturity meet with environmental demands. Erikson stressed on the eight periods in psychosocial development, with specific challenges in each stages that leads one into progression, regression, stagnation, or repeat the same problem with a new context. Chickering and Reisser (1993) used the term vector because each of them has direction and value. Human development is more appropriate to be expressed by spiral or stage instead of a line. Vector describes a way to individualisation.

Conclusively, competitiveness is knowledge, skill, and capability that are performed actively through the competence development, emotion management, autonomy towards interdependence, development of mature interpersonal relationship, identity determination, goal development, and integrity development, to survive in a competitive situation.

1.2. Aspects of Competitiveness

Aspects of competitiveness were developed based on university student's development vector from Chickering and Reisser (1993) as well as Chickering and Schlossberg (1995), i.e.:

- a. Competence development. Competence consists of intellectual, physical and manual, and interpersonal competence. Intellectual competence involves thinking ability, comprehension, analysis, synthesis, and interpretation. Physical and manual competence involves the use of body to show performance, expression, and creativity. Interpersonal competence involves capability to communicate and collaborate with others.
- b. Emotion management. Emotion management begins with awareness of feelings and flexible control of expression. Awareness of feelings involves the ability to differentiate emotions, to be aware of the intensity of feelings, and to be aware whether the feelings are destructive or supportive. Awareness of the cause of feelings, acceptance of feelings as something valuable, and knowledge of consequences of emotion are also important.
- c. Autonomy towards interdependence. Autonomy towards interdependence involves three components, that is emotional independence, instrumental independence, and interdependence.
- d. Development of mature interpersonal relationship. Development of mature inter-personal relationship refers to being comfortable with different people and showing an open personality to others.
- e. Identity determination. Identity determination involves the development of awareness of competence, emotion, values, beliefs to have autonomy as well as in a condition to work with others, and move from non-tolerant towards openness.
- f. Goal development. Goal development involves skill to determine priorities, to synchronise the effort and goal, to have consistent self-motivation, and to show persistence.
- g. Integrity development. Integrity development involves reviewing personal values.

1.3. Antecedents of Competitiveness

According to Chickering and Reisser (1993), eight keys that affect students' competitiveness are:

- a. The clear and consistent goal of institution
- b. The size of institution
- c. Lecturer-student relationship
- d. Curriculum
- e. Class-teaching
- f. Relationship in students' community
- g. Students' development program and service

- h. Educational environment

1.4. Definition of Self-Regulation Learning

Self-regulated learning (SRL) refers to the individual way to control in direct one behaviour (Zimmerman, 1989), or the capability to manage learning process using metacognition, motivation management, and behavior effectively (Zimmerman, 1994). Zimmerman (1989) revealed strategies in SRL:

- a. Self-evaluating
- b. Organizing and transforming
- c. Goal-setting and planning
- d. Seeking information
- e. Keeping records and monitoring
- f. Environmental structuring
- g. Self-consequating
- h. Rehearsing and memorizing
- i. Seeking social assistance
- j. Reviewing records

In short, SRL refers to individual's effort to manage oneself in learning process, using metacognition, motivation management, and effective and active behavior to achieve the learning goal.

1.5. Aspects of Self Regulation Learning

There are three aspects of SRL:

- a. Metacognition. Metacognition refers to the individual perception of one's knowledge on their own capability, covering the ability to plan, organize, initiate, monitor, and evaluate learning activity.
- b. Motivation. Motivation is a booster from inside that covers self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, and autonomy in conducting learning activity.
- c. Behaviour. Behaviour refers to the individual effort in self-management, environmental selection and use, to support learning activity, control and regulate the effort, and to conduct teamwork and help-seeking behavior (Zimmerman, 1986).

1.6. Hypothesis

There would be a mean difference in experiment group and control group. There was a mean difference in experiment group before and after treatment.

2. Method

We collected data using Competitiveness Scale ($\alpha = .88$). Students were asked to rate their competitiveness on a 4-point Likert-type scale, which ranged from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 4 (*strongly disagree*). We used *non randomized pretest-posttest control group design*. The newly developed self-regulation

training module was reviewed by experts in training design and experimental psychology.

Screening was conducted to filter first year students from Faculty of Psychology and Faculty of Veterinary who achieved GPA < 2.75. Pilot study was conducted and evaluated by student and expert in training design. Pretest dan posttest were conducted by giving Competitiveness Scale to the experiment and control group.

The self-regulation training captures essential themes, i.e., goal setting, management of emotion, management of physical environment, management of social environment, time management, power presentation skill, academic writing skill, learning from textbook and journal, preparing for examination, and team work.

Revision of the training module was conducted by considering the feedback, hope and fear, and declaration of excellence from participants, as well as feedback from trainers, facilitators, and experts in training design.

3. Result and Discussion

Paired-sample *t*-test in experiment group showed that there was a significant mean difference (table 2) before and after treatment $t = 21.25$ ($p < .05$). Paired-sample *t*-test in control group showed that the mean difference (table 3) before and after treatment was nonsignificant $t = 77.13$ ($p > .05$).

Tabel 2. Paired-Sample *t*-test in Experiment Group

Treatment	N	M	SD	Significance (1-tailed)
Before	22	87.73	6.12	.000
After	22	118.32	7.31	

Tabel 3. Paired-Sample *t*-test in Control Group

Treatment	N	M	SD	Signifikansi (1-tailed)
Before	32	85.03	12.67	.81
After	32	119.22	14.54	

An independent *t*-test was used to compare the average competitiveness reported by participants in the experiment group ($N = 22$) to the average competitiveness reported by control group ($N = 23$). Before treatment, there was no mean difference in competitiveness ($p > .05$), but after treatment, there was a mean difference, $t = 19.1$ ($p < .05$). See table 4 and table 5.

Tabel 4. Independent-Sample *t*-test Before Treatment

Group	N	M	SD	Significance (1-tailed)
Experiment	22	87.73	6.12	.12
Control	32	85.03	12.67	

Tabel 5. Independent-Sample *t*-test After Treatment

Group	N	M	SD	Significance (1-tailed)
Experiment	22	118.32	7.31	.018
Control	32	99.22	14.54	

The result showed that the first and second hypothesis were accepted. This result was in line with previous study about the relationship between self-regulation and academic success (Ablard & Lipschultz, 1998). Self-regulated learner was an individuals who can set a goal, have learning strategy, show learning persistence, and have the ability to evaluate the effort (Purdie, Hattie, & Douglas, 1996).

Limitation of this study are as follows. The control group experienced an enhancement in competitiveness score, but it was nonsignificant. This could happen because of maturation and history (Azwar, 2004). In addition, we conducted the study in a limited sample. Future studies should involve more diverse populations.

4. Conclusion

First, there was an effect in treatment (self-regulation training) on students' competitiveness. Experiment group experience the enhancing score on competitiveness after participating in the self-regulation training, but not with the control group. Second, there was a mean difference of competitiveness in experiment group before and after treatment. The competitiveness score after treatment was higher than before treatment. Recommendations are as follows. Students need to identify their academic barriers to find the appropriate solutions as soon as possible, for not experiencing the same problems in the next semester. Further, after identifying problems, students, especially with low GPA (< .75) should seek help from the academic advisor or related institution (e.g., student consultation bureau), to help solving the problems. In addition, the faculty needs to identify students with low GPA as early as possible, assess their needs, and conduct self-regulation based intervention program. Finally,

future researchers need to involve broader sample, for example students from other faculty in Diponegoro University to participate in relevant studies to get more comprehensive model of self-regulation training.

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