

Effectiveness of Reality Therapy Group Counseling to Increase The Self-Esteem of Students

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of reality therapy group counseling to improve the self-esteem of State Islamic High School (MAN) Semarang City students. To pursue such objective, this study used experimental method with Non-equivalent Pretest-Posttest Control Group Design. Meanwhile, there were sixteen students involved as the subjects of the study with the focus on their self-esteem (8 students joined experimental group and 8 other joined control group). Once their data were collected and analyzed by using independent sample t-test, it showed that reality therapy group counseling was effective to improve students' self-esteem ($t_{(14)} = 8,01, p < 0,01$). For more, the discussion of the results of this study was directed to identify the implications of the application of reality therapy group counseling in improving students' self-esteem.

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INTRODUCTION

Self-esteem is one important factor which contributes to the formation of identity for adolescent. If adolescents fail in this stage, there will be a confusion of role or an identity crisis (Erickson in Papalia, Olds, & Feldman, 2001). Moreover, self-esteem appears to be an evaluation made by an individual and developed into habits which are primarily related to his self-esteem which is expressed to be the attitude of acceptance or rejection, and indicates the degree to which the individual believes in himself to be the one who has capability, significance, success, and worthiness (Coopersmith, 1967). According to Guindon (2010) and Mruk (2012), self-esteem is defined as a person's evaluative attitude towards himself; the individual's affective judgment of his self-concept is based on feelings of worth and feeling of being accepted as a consequence of his awareness of the competence and feedback he receives from the immediate environment. Such feedback or assessment is seen from one's appreciation of the existence and significance of himself either positive or negative (Santrock, 2007).

The symptoms of students showing a negative self-esteem tendency occur in almost all levels of education, from primary school to college level and not to mention to Islamic High School (MA) students. Adolescents who have negative self-esteem often show negative behaviors characterized by the feelings of inadequacy and worthiness compensated by other actions that seem to make them more valuable (Santrock, 2007). Studies conducted by Baret, et al. (in Erol & Urich, 2011) found that low self-esteem in adolescents has the potential to cause antisocial, eating disorder, and depression. In addition, adolescents with poor self-esteem tend to develop a negative cognitive coping strategy. Any of these problems can affect adolescents development. Therefore, they need a good self-esteem in order to achieve success in academic, social and mental health (Bos, et al. 2006)

Boden, Ferfusson and Horwood (2008) argue that self-esteem becomes an important

factor in determining success or failure in various duties in adolescent life. In general, people who have a positive evaluation of themselves tend to have a high self-esteem. Conversely, people who have a negative evaluation of themselves tend to have low self-esteem.

An individual who has high self-esteem will be satisfied with his character and ability, be more independent in influencing the situation, has a consistent character in response to something. His self-image will explain that he is a valuable and important man as well as a capable person as others at his age. As a result, the individual feels that he is valued as someone who is valued and considered by his closest people (Coopersmith, 1967). Hence, the importance of having high self-esteem for the individual is the advantages of gaining success in displaying social behavior, confident performance and feeling valuable in the social environment.

Self-esteem becomes an important factor for adolescent development. The adolescents need a good self-esteem in order to achieve success in academic, social and mental health (Bos, et al. 2006). Thus, any problems of self-esteem found in adolescents become important issues to study because they involve a very important phase in the life of the individual.

A research conducted by Bos, et al. (2006) shows that individuals with low self-esteem have low success in school and are usually less accepted by their friends in social relationships, experience anxiety, depression and eating disorders. Similarly, a research conducted by Rosli, et al. (2011) shows that self-esteem has close relationship with academic performance, social adjustment and intensity of law violation. For more, a study conducted by Aryana (2010) describes that self-esteem has a significant relationship with academic achievement of high school students. The same thing also goes to the research conducted by Overholser, et al. (in Plummer, 2005) which shows that low self-esteem in adolescents is closely related to high levels of depression, despair, and suicidal ideas. Based on the results of these previous studies, efforts are required to increase the self-esteem of

Islamic High Schhol (Madrasah Aliyah or MA) students who are in adolescent phase.

Problems that arise because of low self-esteem can be reduced by organizing a program, especially in schools and is designed specifically to improve students' self-esteem such as by providing reality therapy group counseling. Several studies have shown that effective reality counseling is able to improve low self-esteem in educational settings as well as in other settings. In line with this, the study conducted by Kim (2008) proves that the counseling group of reality can increase the self-esteem of students who experience internet addiction. Other studies conducted by Jusoh, Mahmud and Ishak (2008) also show that reality counseling and client-centered counseling can improve self-esteem and counseling skills from diverse backgrounds. Also, Glasser's study (in Wubbolding, 2007) on several research findings also shows that this approach has been proven to deal with various types of problems experienced by students, including low self-esteem issues.

From the results of previous studies, it is known that there are still few portions of reality therapy group counseling used to deal with problems related to self-esteem and the research subjects taken came from different culture of the Indonesia. Therefore, this study became interesting because its subjects of study were taken from an Islamic-based school, namely Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 1 Semarang City.

METHODS

This study employed Pretest-Posttest Control Group design. Further, the experimental group was the group treated with the reality therapy group counseling. The implementation of this reality therapy group counseling experiment was conducted in 5 (five) sessions. Session 1 was aimed at giving self-esteem understanding to group members; session 2 was aimed at understanding the steps in reality therapy with WDEP techniques and expressed students' desires, needs, perceptions, expectations, and dreams; Session 3 was done by observing students' current actionsto know whether the

students led their actions to their goals and expectations; Session 4 was focused on making plans for behavior change; Session 5 contained evaluating against the plans that have been made. While the experimental group received such treatments, the control group did not get it at all.

The subjects of this study were taken from 16 students of Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Kota Semarang who had low self-esteem. They were divided into two groups, namely 8 (eight) students as experimental group and the other 8 (eight) students as control group.

This study used psychological scale research instruments in the form of self-esteem scale as the data collection technique. The scale consisted of 44 items. After validation of the instrument, the result of valid self-esteem item scale were 41 items, and had Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.894.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result of statistical calculation with t test pretest, posttest and gain score of self-esteem scale from the experimental group and control group as presented in table 1 showed that the research subjects initial performance in the experimental group (A) obtained the average value of 91.25 and the control group (B) obtained the average value of 90.13. After the group (A) was given reality therapy group counseling, the posttest results obtained the average grade of 114.50, while the posttest result of the control group 90.25.

Table 1. The results of t test Pretest, Posttest and Gain Score of Self-esteem Scale in Experimental Group and Control Group

Group	Pretest		Posttest		Gain score	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Eksperimental group (A)	91.25	13.90	114.50	10.30	23.25	8.00
Control group (B)	90.13	13.21	90.25	13.13	0.13	1.642

Further, the self-esteem scores obtained from gain score of experimental group and control group were analyzed by using SPSS parametric statistic of Independent Sample t-test. The results showed that the reality therapy group counseling was effective to improve the self-

esteem of students of MAN 1 Semarang City with the equation of ($t_{(14)} = 8.01, p < 0.01$).

The above research findings are in accordance with the results of the previous studies. For example, the research conducted by Kim (2008) which proves that the reality therapy group counseling can increase the self-esteem of students who experienced internet addiction. Another study conducted by Jusoh, Mahmud and Ishak (2008) also show that reality counseling is appropriate to apply in Malaysia, among others, to improve self-esteem and counseling skills from diverse backgrounds.

Group counseling is one of the services in guidance and counseling programs in schools. One of its usable approaches is reality therapy counseling. Reality therapy counseling is one of the approaches used to change a person's behavior that focuses on fulfilling the basic human needs which consists of a group of strategies designed to make changes. Moreover, the WDEP framework involves a collaborative approach in which group leaders and group members join together in setting goals and action plans (Wubbolding & Brickell, 2005).

The reality therapy group counseling will provide assistance to counsees in meeting their needs. According to this approach, every human action is motivated by five basic universal needs: survival, love and belonging, power (achievement, acknowledgment, worth, and the like), freedom, or independence, fun or enjoyment (Corey, 2012). Indeed, individuals are not necessarily able to meet those needs because what people firstly did starting from the beginning at birth and lasting throughout the life span, are doing something that can bring them closer to the desired state. They then keep the information in mind and build a document that contains a collection of desires, called the quality world. In the quality world, there are the specific desires to be fulfilled, such as the people, activities, events, the things that they want to have, and the situations that can meet their needs, in this case is the need for self-esteem (Wubbolding in Corey, 2009).

At the time of counseling, an individual will express desires different from the current

reality. The gap between desires and perception of the reality of self-achievement leads to lower individual self-esteem. Any individuals who experience low self-esteem felt that they could not achieve the ideal conditions (wants) that have been stored in their quality world memory. Also, the individuals who experienced such things repeatedly developed a failing identity (low self-esteem) that caused their behavior led to failure (Wubbolding, 2007).

In order that fail identity (low self-esteem) becomes the successful one (high self-esteem), reality counseling encouraged individuals to do something in order to achieve the goals set since the beginning of counseling. This steps were done based on the view of reality counseling that low self-esteem occurs because individual actions are not effective in achieving the desires stored in his quality world. By planning and performing effective actions in fulfilling their desires, gradually the individuals will regain their sense of esteem and pity so that their fail identity would turn into a successful identity.

CONCLUSION

From the findings of this study, it is known that the reality therapy group counseling is effective to improve the self-esteem of the students of MA Negeri Semarang City.

Thus, it is suggested that counseling teacher or counselors in schools can use this technique to improve the self-esteem of students having low self-esteem problems. They can also creatively modify it, it as long as it remains related to the objective of Choice Theory. Meanwhile, future researchers are recommended to conduct any studies about reality therapy group counseling to improve self-esteem by involving the variables of intelligence and socioeconomic status as control variable.

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