

The Effectiveness of Solution-Focused Brief Therapy Group Counseling to Improve Students' Self-Concepts

Dicky Novriansyah^{1✉}, Edy Purwanto² & Mungin Eddy Wibowo²

¹ Public Senior High School 1 Lemahabang, Cirebon, Jawa Barat, Indonesia

² Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

Article Info

History Articles

Received:
May 2019
Accepted:
June 2019
Published:
December 2020

Keywords:

*miracle question technique,
scaling technique,
SFBT,
solution focused brief therapy*

DOI

<https://doi.org/10.15294/jubk.v9i2.31343>

Abstract

This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of SFBT group counseling on students' self-concepts. To pursue this objective, this study applied One Group pre-test – post-test design to 8 students of Public Senior High School 1 Lemahabang who had low self-concepts. The data of these subjects were collected using Tennessee Self Concept Scale (TSCS) instrument and were analyzed using wilcoxon test. The results showed that SFBT group counseling was effective to fully improve the students' self-concepts, and partially in each aspect of self-concepts, namely individual's physical, ethical moral, personal, family, social, and self-criticism. At last, the discussion of this article is directed to the review of SFBT effectiveness to improve SMA students' self-concepts.

© 2020 Universitas Negeri Semarang

✉ Correspondence address:

KH. Wahid Hasyim No. 70 RT.04/RW.01 Cipeujeuh Wetan,
Lemah Abang, Cirebon, Jawa Barat, 45183
E-mail: dicky.novriansyah@gmail.com

[p-ISSN 2252-6889](#)

[e-ISSN 2502-4450](#)

INTRODUCTION

Self-concept is one's subjective representative regarding himself as a whole. The process of self-concept formation is considered as the major determinant of each's behavior. One of the elements forming self-concept is how individuals see and feel themselves. This concept can be created through self-views and positive experiences. Hence, self-concept is a critical and basic aspect of individuals' behavior. Based on these assumptions, it is known that self-concept is important given its fundamental role, which influences overall individuals' perspectives and actions on themselves as a result of interactions with their environments.

Besides, self-concept also affects students' academic achievement. Positive self-concepts will help students significantly improve their academic performance and confidence (Alrajhi, and Aldhafri, 2015). The positive academic self-concepts would encourage students to be optimum in their learning. According to Sheverlson, and Bolus in Saifullah (2015), students with positive self-concepts will do self-acceptance, confidence, and give self-rewards related to the academic field. The more self-concepts formed, the more students' characteristics would develop.

On the other hand, negative self-concept is realized when an individual does not recognize himself and does not even recognize his weaknesses. This is in line with that Trzesniewski states that a negative self-concept takes place when people tend to have a bad impression of themselves. Adolescents with lower self-concept levels tend to have mental and physical health problems, and high levels of criminal behavior as adults (Bidell, and Deacon, 2010).

The above explanation shows that one's self-concept, especially adolescents, is very important to be investigated since self-concept influence an individual's life in the future. About this, students need positive self-concepts to obtain a positive perspective on themselves. Therefore, self-concepts are necessary, particularly for students who are experiencing negative self-concepts such as mocking each other, saying

rude, lacking discipline, often late, cheating on friends' assignments, and playing truant. These realizations of low self-concept will affect self-acceptance, confidence, and result in low self-esteem.

The implementation of SFBT group counseling is considered appropriate as an alternative solution for its effectiveness in overcoming low self-concept problems. The effectiveness of each technique was tested to improve students' self-concepts as a result of previous studies. However, in this study, it did not only examine the effectiveness of each technique but also compare which technique worked more effective in improving students' self-concepts in three experimental groups. This is the novelty of this study. The selection of this topic was based on theoretical studies from various sources to support the relevance between the offered alternative solutions with the existing problems.

The selection of SFBT group counseling services is based on the assumption that the problems of self-concept cannot be identified directly, but require in-depth identification to be able to know the level of self-concept in students. Based on Seligman (Mulawarman, 2014), stages to carry out in the SFBT approach are first, establishing a relationship. In this stage, counselors, and counsees establish a good relationship to collaborate using neutral topics. It aims to find out possibilities and counsees' strengths to find solutions for particular problems.

Second, identifying a solvable complaint. It is done by questioning the counsees to know the reasons for negative academic self-concepts and reveal counsees' backgrounds so that counselors can provide possible approaches as solutions to change the negative self-concepts into the positive one.

Third, establishing goals. This stage is carried out by giving miraculous questions to the counsees such as "if you obtain a good score, what do you feel?" This is aimed at knowing the counsees' objectives to improve their academic self-concepts.

Fourth, designing and implementing the intervention. In this stage, the counselees are given interventions to improve their academic self-concepts; for example, by giving a situation to the counselees to make them find out solutions on their own to improve academic self-concepts, and as a task.

Fifth, termination, evaluation, and follow-up. In this stage, the counselors provide scaled questions to know the improvement of students' academic self-concept before and after the counseling. Also, it is possible to make an appointment to repeat the counseling processes if the improvement of self-concepts is still required.

Nurfitasari, Wibowo, and Sugiharto (2014); Rachmawati, Purwanto, and Awalya (2018) argue that group counseling is a process of assisting with a group situation with personal topics or secret problems. It is done as an effort to assist individuals in a group situation in the form of prevention, healing and directed to the development and growth (Natawidjaya in Gladding, 2012; Winkel, and Hastuti, 2007; Gibson, and Marianne 2011). The purpose of this counseling is a change in attitude and behavior. Changes that occur after counseling are actualized attitudes in various attitudes aspects such as self-acceptance, positive attitudes towards problems, and feelings of satisfaction (Sugiyono, 2005).

The group counseling carried out in this study employed the SFBT approach. Zhang, Yan, Du, and Liu study (2014) investigated the effectiveness of SFBT and found that group works using SFBT can improve post-traumatic patients after giving birth or called as Post-Traumatic Grown (PTG). Another study conducted by Franklin, Moore, and Hopson (2008) supports that SFBT is effective in reducing classroom-related behavioral problems.

Bond, Woods, Humphrey, Symes, and Green study (2013) states that students who joined the experimental class experience significant improvement compared to the comparison group. It proves that SFBT generally has positive results for children and adolescents who have internalized behavior such as anxiety and depression. Another study by Alrajhi, and

Aldhafri (2015) reveal the effectiveness of peers in improving Omani students' self-concepts in learning English

Lindfors, Knekt, Virtala, and Laaksonen study (2012) compared the effectiveness of two SFBT short-term individual psychotherapists on self-concepts (Benjamin, 2000) for three years of follow-up. During the first year, the self-concepts improved better in SFBT about self-directed Affiliation and Autonomy. This shows that SFBT can provide an increase in self-concepts in the long term. The duration of therapy sessions can improve the improvement of self-concepts during and after the session.

Based on the study above findings, it proves that group counseling has been carried out to improve one's self-concepts. Therefore, this study was conducted to examine the effectiveness of SFBT group counseling to improve students' self-concepts.

METHODS

This study used One Group Pre-test – Post-test design by involving eight research subjects chosen from 314 students of SMAN 1 Lemahabang, Cirebon Regency. The participants were selected based on the low-level category of self-concepts with male and female gender ranging from 15-17 years old age.

The instrument used in this study was the Tennessee Self Concept Scale questionnaire developed by Fitts (1965) consisting of 100 items with six scaling levels. The result of product moment Pearson of this instrument confirmed that the overall validity ranged from 3.09 – 7.33. Meanwhile, the Cronbach Alpha test results showed that this scale had the reliability value of 0.8129.

This study began with pre-test and followed by five times SFBT group counseling assistance with 90 minutes time allotment for each session. After that, the participants were assigned to do post-test to determine changes in self-concept after SFBT counseling treatment was carried out.

The data analysis in this study was done using the wilcoxon test. The wilcoxon test is a

technique used to test the difference in the average value of the results between the initial rating scale and the final rating scale.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Students' self-concepts gained improvement in each aspect after receiving SFBT group counseling. Further, the calculation of the data before and after the treatment of SFBT group counseling is presented in the following table 1.

According to table 1, it was known that there was an improvement in overall students' self-concepts seen from pre-test (M = 225.0; SD = 4.14) and post-test (M = 398.5; SD = 13.84; $z = 2.52$, $p < 0.01$). These data showed an improvement in post-test results. The improvement occurred in every aspect of self-concepts, namely individual's physical, ethical, moral, personal, family, social, and self-criticism.

Table 1. The Results of The Pre-test, Post-test and Wilcoxon Analysis of Self-concepts

Self-concepts aspects	Pre-test		Post-test		z	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Individual's physical	41.75	3.95	71.50	5.31	3.33	< 0.01
Ethical moral	38.37	5.37	72.75	6.84	3.56	< 0.01
Personal	45.12	7.06	79.25	5.09	3.52	< 0.01
Family	40.75	7.42	69.87	3.56	3.14	< 0.01
Social	38.00	2.77	68.87	5.56	3.42	< 0.01
Self-criticism	23.12	3.83	40.00	1.85	2.27	< 0.01
Total	225.0	4.14	398.5	13.84	2.52	< 0.01

On individual's physical aspect, the pre-test analysis results were (M = 41.75; SD = 3.95), and post-test were (M = 71.50; SD = 5.31; $z = 3.33$, $p < 0.01$). This showed the post-test results showed improvement when compared to the pre-test results. Meanwhile the moral aspects of ethics the pre-test results were (M = 38.37; SD = 5.37), and post-test were (M = 72.75; SD = 6.84; $z = 3.56$, $p < 0.01$). This meant that the pre-test results got improvement seen from the results of the post-test. In addition, the personal aspect obtained pre-test results of (M = 45.12; SD = 7.06), and post-test results of (M = 79.25; SD = 5.09; $z = 3.52$, $p < 0.01$). All data showed that the post-test results were higher than the pre-test results.

Furthermore, the family aspect gained the pre-test results of (M = 40.75; SD = 7.42), and post-test results of (M = 69.87; SD = 3.56; $z = 3.14$, $p < 0.01$). The results showed higher post-test results compared to the pre-test. Whereas, the social aspect obtained pre-test results of (M = 38.00; SD = 2.77), and post-test results of (M = 68.87; SD = 5.56; $z = 3.42$, $p < 0.01$).

These results showed that post-test results were higher than the pre-test. Next, on the aspect of self-criticism, the pre-test results were

(M = 23.12; SD = 3.83), and post-test results were (M = 40.00; SD = 1.85; $z = 2.27$, $p < 0.01$). These results showed the post-test results got an improvement from the results of a pre-test.

The results indicate that SFBT group counseling was effective to fully improve Senior High School students' self-concepts and partially in each aspect of self-concepts. Moreover, the findings showed that the significant improvement in the aspect of self-concept took place on ethical moral, while the lowest improvement was on the family aspect.

By referring to the findings, the success of SFBT group counseling processes indicated that this approach was proven to assist improving students' self-concepts. This is in line with several studies related to the implementation of SFBT counseling. Sari (2016) carried out a study regarding the application of SFBT to reduce students' aggressive behaviors. She found that SFBT can reduce students' aggressive behaviors in school. In this case, aggressive behaviors are examples of negative self-concepts. Based on this study, the fact that SFBT approach can reduce aggressive behaviors is the same as how negative self-concept was suppressed by SFBT group counseling.

Another study comes from Mulawarman (2014), who utilized SFBT intervention to improve students' self-esteem. This study strengthens the assumption that self-esteem can be improved using SFBT. Next, Lone (2016) states that SFBT approach produces positive results on students during the intervention, and is proven effective to improve students' self-esteem as well as positive behaviors.

Nugroho, Puspita, and Mulawarman (2018) asset the effectiveness of SFBT concerning self-concepts. They found that SFBT approach can improve students' self-concepts. Through this approach, students can collaborate with counselors to focus on finding solutions, so they can make changes to themselves as individuals who have a positive self-concept.

A research conducted by Lindfors, Knekt, Virtala, and Laaksonen (2012) and Lorentzen, Fjeldstad, Ruud, Marble, Klungsoyr, Ulberg, and Høglend (2015) compared the effectiveness of two SFBT short-term individual psychotherapies on self-concept (Benjamin, 2000) during the three years of follow-up. During the first year, the self-concept improved better in SFBT. This shows that SFBT can provide an improvement in self-concept in the long term. The duration of therapy sessions can improve the improvement of self-concept during and after the session.

The results of the previous studies strengthen the assumption that SFBT could improve students' self-concepts. Lindfors, Knekt, Virtala, and Laaksonen study (2012) shows the long-term results of SFBT usage. Meanwhile, in this recent study, it was found that SFBT was also effective to improve students' self-concepts in the short-term. These short-term findings showed that the biggest improvement in the self-concepts aspects occurred in ethical-moral aspect. It was possible because the effectiveness of SFBT built on group settings that allowed group dynamics, each group member could give feedback to explore SFBT so that they were open to each other and deserved to have positive self-concepts.

In this study, the counselor explored students' skill by giving a task to tell their strengths and weaknesses. By this task, once the students could understand their conscious and

unconscious strengths and weaknesses, it was hoped that they knew their self-image, and were able to know their potentials to overcome negative self-concepts and create positive behavior. For more, the counselor should encourage clients to create a picture of what they expect so that the potential that students have can function properly, and be able to emphasize the problem at hand (Corey, 2012).

The counselor helped to make students aware and maximize their potentials. Also, he helped to explore the students' potential by giving motivation and feedbacks during SFBT group counseling processes. The groups characterized by high enthusiasm, dynamic, harmonious relationships, good cooperation, and mutual trust among its members would make it easier to exchange the experiences of each member. Thus, students could find out the sources of potentials that they already have, such as resilience in dealing with criticism and suggestions, courage in trying new things, being confident in their abilities, and being sensitive to the environment. It is a feature to foster a positive self-concept.

The students could briefly help to complete their development tasks by getting support from counselors and peers. This study showed an effective improvement on students' self-concepts; as a result, they could immediately adjust to achieve maximum learning outcomes. Based on the results of the study, opinions, and results of previous studies, it can be concluded that SFBT group counseling of SFBT was effective to improve students' self-concept.

Following the findings, counselors are suggested to provide SFBT group counseling. It is because several things that strengthen the effectiveness of SFBT are in line with assumptions according to Bannink concept (2007). In the SFBT approach, counselors will convince students whose self-concept is less positive to be able to change to be more positive; students with low self-concept are invited to make changes to themselves to be more positive. To do so, the students can interpret changes within themselves, although it is still a little. Then, the counselors make sure that students can change their negative self-concept to be positive, students

are directed to focus on the goal to make themselves have a positive self-concept, and the real condition of the counselor can help students to change their self-concept.

The results of this study proved that SFBT group counseling was effective to improve Senior High School students' self-concepts. However, the researchers believed that this study had some limitations, namely, this study did not provide time for observation after giving SFBT group counseling intervention so that student behavior was not monitored. Also, the research subjects only came from high school students of class XI.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study prove that SFBT group counseling is effective to fully improve the students' self-concepts and partially in each aspect of self-concepts. It also shows that the most significant improvement of takes place on the ethical-moral aspect, while the lowest improvement goes to the family aspect.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that guidance and counseling teachers in schools use SFBT group counseling to improve students' self-concept. The future researchers are suggested to have broader subjects, such as involving elementary school, junior high school, or vocational high school students.

REFERENCES

- Alrajhi, M. N., & Aldhafri, S. S. (2015). Peer tutoring effects on omani students' english self-concept. *International Education Studies*, 8(6), 184-193. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1067767>
- Bannink, F. P. (2007). Solution-focused brief therapy. *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy: On the Cutting Edge of Modern Developments in Psychotherapy*, 37(2), 87-94. Retrieved from <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10879-006-9040-y>
- Benjamin, L. (2000). *The sasb intrex and coding software*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah.
- Bidell, M. P., & Deacon, R. E. (2010). School counselors connecting the dots between disruptive classroom behavior and youth self-concept. *Journal of School Counseling*, 8(9), 2-30. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ885062>
- Bond, C., Woods, K., Humphrey, N., Symes, W., & Green, L. (2015). Effective counseling interventions with youth and families: a review of solution focused brief therapy. School counseling research brief 9.2. *Ronald H. Fredrickson Center for School Counseling Outcome Research & Evaluation*. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED558397>
- Corey, G. (2012). *Theory and practice of group counseling*. United Kingdom: Brooks/Cole.
- Fitts, W. H. (1965). *Tennessee self-concept scale manual*. Nashville: Counselor Recordings and Tests.
- Franklin, C., Moore, K., & Hopson, L. (2008). Effectiveness of Solution-Focused Brief Therapy in a School Setting. *Children & Schools*, 30(1), 15-26. Retrieved from <https://academic.oup.com/cs/article-abstract/30/1/15/391075>
- Gibson, R & Mitchell, M. (2011). *Bimbingan dan konseling*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Gladding, S. (2012). *Profesi konseling yang menyeluruh*. Jakarta: PT Indeks.
- Lindfors, O., Knekt, P., Virtala, E., & Laaksonen, M. A. (2012). The effectiveness of solution-focused therapy and short- and long-term psychodynamic psychotherapy on self-concept during a 3-year follow-up. *The Journal of nervous and mental disease*, 200(11), 946-953. Retrieved from <http://insights.ovid.com/pubmed?pmid=23124178>
- Lone, P. A. (2016). A study on relation between self concept and academic achievement among secondary school students of jammu district. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(31), 19-23. Retrieved from <https://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JEP/article/view/34085>
- Lorentzen, S., Fjeldstad, A., Ruud, T., Marble, A., Klungsøyr, O., Ulberg, R., & Høglend, P. A. (2015). The effectiveness of short- and long-term psychodynamic group psychotherapy on self-concept: three years follow-up of a randomized clinical trial. *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*, 65(3), 362-385. Retrieved from <https://guilfordjournals.com/doi/abs/10.1521/ijgp.2015.65.3.362>
- Mulawarman. (2014). Brief counseling in schools: a solution-focused brief counseling (sfbc) approach for school counselor in indonesia.

- Journal of Education and Practice*, 5(21), 68-72.
Retrieved from
<https://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JEP/article/view/14517>
- Nugroho, A. H., Puspita, D. A., & Mulawarman. (2018). Penerapan solution-focused brief counseling (sfbc) untuk meningkatkan konsep diri akademik siswa. *Bikotetik (Bimbingan dan Konseling: Teori dan Praktik)*, 2(1), 93-99. Retrieved from
<https://journal.unesa.ac.id/index.php/jbk/article/view/2221>
- Nurfitasari, N., Wibowo, M. E., & Sugiharto, D. Y. P. (2014). Implementasi layanan konseling kelompok di smpn se-kabupaten pati. *Indonesian Journal of Guidance and Counseling: Theory and Application*, 3(1). Retrieved from
<https://journal.unnes.ac.id/sju/index.php/jbk/article/view/3756>
- Rachmawati, U., Purwanto, E., & Awalya. (2018). Attribution retraining group counseling technique to reduce student's learned helplessness behavior. *Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling*, 7(2), 101-105. Retrieved from
<https://journal.unnes.ac.id/sju/index.php/jbk/article/view/23905>
- Saifullah. (2015). Hubungan konsep diri akademik dengan prestasi akademik. *LISAN AL-HAL: Jurnal Pengembangan Pemikiran Dan Kebudayaan*, 9(2), 249-258. Retrieved from
<https://journal.ibrahimiy.ac.id/index.php/lisanalhal/article/view/99>
- Sari, D. K. (2016). Solution focus brief group counseling: model konseling untuk mengurangi perilaku agresif siswa. *Proceedings. Seminar Nasional Konseling Krisis*. pp. 159-172. Retrieved from
<http://eprints.uad.ac.id/3894>
- Sugiyono. (2005). *Komunikasi antar pribadi*. Semarang: UNNES Press
- Winkel, W. S., & Hastuti, S. (2007). *Bimbingan dan Konseling di Institusi Pendidikan*. Yogyakarta: Media Abadi
- Zhang, W., Yan, T. T., Du, Y. S., & Liu, X. H. (2014). Brief report: effects of solution-focused brief therapy group-work on promoting post-traumatic growth of mothers who have a child with asd. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 44(8), 2052-2056. Retrieved from
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10803-014-2051-8>