

## The Effectiveness of Group Counseling with Cognitive Restructuring Technique to Improve Students' Emotion Regulation and Self-Esteem

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### Abstract

Students' ability to manage emotion is crucial to achieve academic success at school. Thus, the present research attempted to improve emotion regulation and self-esteem through the group counseling with cognitive restructuring technique. 28 Junior High School students chosen using purposive sampling technique were involved in a series of experiment in pretest and posttest control group design. Emotion regulation and self-esteem scales were employed to collect the data. After the analysis of repeated mixed manova test, it was noticed that the cognitive restructuring technique was effective to improve emotion regulation and self-esteem. It clarifies the effectiveness of CBT to improve emotion regulation and self-esteem.

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## INTRODUCTION

Emotion is related to typical feeling and thoughts, psychological and biological state, and a series of tendency to do something Goleman (2004). Emotion needs to be managed by doing the right action and accepting the consequences of such emotional action Firdja (in Alfian, 2014). It is what so called as emotion regulation. This ability is principal for one's emotion development. Xu, et al (2019) mentions that good emotion regulation owned by someone will affect his achievement and task accomplishment.

A person who has high level of emotion regulation will do more positive things in his life. As stated by Kurniasih (2013), one's emotion regulation makes them accept and respect himself, tend to show up positive sides and be eager to accept difficulties they face. In the same way, with good emotion regulation comes good self-esteem (Farkhaeni, 2011).

In school environment, students who are in the developmental phase surely have pretty high curiosity, while at the same time face academic tasks, so they may show inability to control emotion. On top of that, the way students regulate their emotion should be taken into account because it influences learning process and achievement. Hence, a suitable intervention is necessary to equip students with good emotion regulation which in turn will result in the good self-esteem.

Bernstein, et al (2021) has succeeded to prove that CBT in a group setting is effective to improve emotion regulation and reduce mental health issues of adolescents. Further, a group counseling with cognitive restructuring technique has previously been done and proved effective to improve discipline, self-esteem, image, reduce academic anxiety, academic stress, academic procrastination, and intimidation. (Hasibuan, et al, 2018; Mafirja, 2018; Saputra, 2017; Sulistiya, 2017). However, another research by Moltrecht, et al (2021) concludes that CBT is less effective to improve emotion regulation.

Regarding the above gap found in the findings of Bernstein, et al (2021) which contradict to Moltrecht, et al (2021), this research tried to examine the contribution of cognitive restructuring to improve emotion regulation and self-esteem. In addition, of the recommendation from Gomez, et al (2018), the researchers made an attempt to measure self-esteem as an outcome of the intervention of cognitive restructuring in line with changes in students' emotion regulation. In this way, the findings of this research can be used as a guide to improve secondary students' emotion regulation and self-esteem.

## METHODS

There were 28 of 85 students of SMP Ashabul Kahfi, Pontianak, covering 12 male students and 16 female students who became the subjects of this research. These samples were then divided into two groups, including experimental group and control group. Of this method, the present research used quantitative approach with experimental design of pretest-posttest control group design with repeated measurement. To sample the subjects, the researchers used purposive sampling technique.

Students' emotion regulation data were examined using emotion regulation questionnaire (ERQ) designed by Gross & John (2003). It has 10 items with two indicators (cognitive appraisal and expression suppression) with a likert scale (1=totally disagree – 7= totally agree). Then, self-esteem was assessed using state self-esteem scale (SSES) developed by Heatherton & Polivy (1991). This scale has 20 items compressing 3 indicators (performance, social, appearance) with the favourable items of (1= totally inappropriate – 5=totally appropriate). Meanwhile, for the unfavourable items, it has (5= very inappropriate – 1 = very appropriate). In terms of reliability, the ERQ scale gained the cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.813, while SSES gained 0.904.

Several stages were carried out during this experimental research, namely grouping students into two, including experimental group

which was treated using group counseling with cognitive restructuring technique and control group which was treated using conventional counseling. All groups took pretest prior to the intervention and were given five meetings of counseling session. In details, the experimental group went through some procedures. In the first session, there were rationale, brief explanation of goals and overview. In the second session there was identification of counselees thought when dealing with problem. In the third session there were introduction and practice of coping thought (CT). In the fourth session there was restructuring negative thoughts to coping thoughts. The last session dealt with introduction and practice of positive

reinforcement. After these five sessions were over, both groups took posttest.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data description showed that the standard deviation mean of students' emotion regulation increased from the pretest (M = 25.07: SD = 1.979), to (M = 50.35: SD = 3.295) in the posttest, and follow up phase (M = 53.14; SD = 3.799). Similarly, self-esteem score got increased from (M= 41.14: SD= 1.657) in the pretest, to (M= 72.64: SD= 5.637) in the posttest, and follow up (M= 76.64: SD= 5.838). All these results are presented in the following table

**Table 1.** Data Description

Variable	Measurement	Group	Experimental	Control	Kontrol
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Emotion regulation	Pretest	25.07	1.979	25.78	2.224
	Posttest	50.35	3.295	31.78	4.774
	Follow up	53.14	3.799	33.50	4.910
<i>self-esteem</i>	Pretest	41.14	1.657	41.50	1.556
	Posttest	72.64	5.637	44.42	1.827
	Follow up	76.64	5.838	47.50	1.951

Mixed manova was the test used to analyze the above data. It was similar to that of the effectiveness of the group counseling with cognitive restructuring technique to improve emotion regulation, and self-esteem of the

students. In table 2, the mixed manova test proved the improvement gained from the implementation of cognitive restructuring intervention of emotion regulation and self-esteem

**Table 2.** The Outcome Gained from Repeated Measure Mixed Manova Test

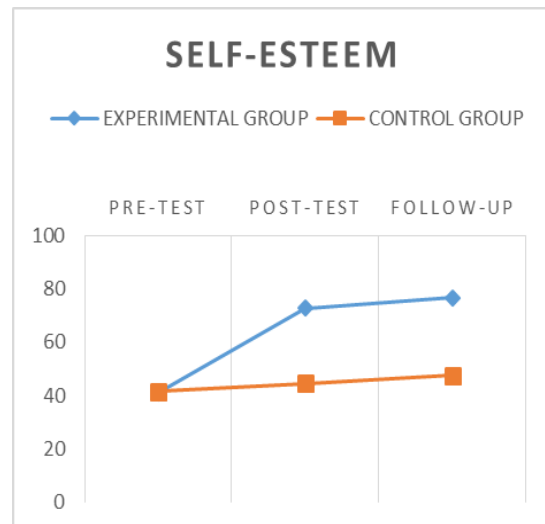
Effect	Vt	F	P
Group	Emotion regulation	128.202	< 0.01
	Self-esteem	294.355	< 0.01
Time	Emotion regulation	355.874	< 0.01
	Self-esteem	517.151	< 0.01
Group*time	Emotion regulation	122.935	< 0.01
	Self-esteem	295.059	< 0.01

**Table 3.** The Paired Comparison of Emotion Regulation and Self-Esteem

Time	Mean Difference	Standard Deviation	Sig
<b>Emotion Regulation</b>			
Pretest-posttest	-15.643	.834	< 0.01
Pretest-follow up	-17.893	.895	< 0.01
Posttest-follow up	-2.250	.321	< 0.01
<b>Self-esteem</b>			
Pretest-posttest	-17.214	.807	< 0.01
Pretest-follow up	-20.750	.806	< 0.01
Posttest-follow up	-3.536	.357	< 0.01

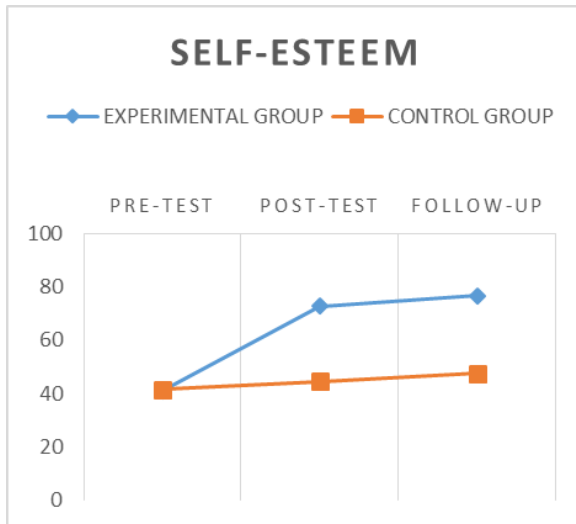
The findings of this research confirmed that time influenced the improvement of emotion regulation  $F(1.202, 31.261) = 355.87$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Meanwhile, the effect of time on self-esteem was  $(F(1.302, 33.853) = 517.151$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Moreover, the results presented in table 3 showed significant difference. First, the difference of emotion regulation between pretest and posttest was  $(MD = -15.643$   $p < 0.01$ ). Second, the difference between pretest-follow up was  $(MD = -17.893$   $p < 0.01$ ). Third, the difference between posttest-follow up was  $(MD = -2.250$   $p < 0.01$ ). Distinctive results of self-esteem was also obtained, namely between pretest and posttest  $(MD = -17.214$   $p < 0.01$ ) pretest and follow up  $(MD = -20.750$   $p < 0.01$ ) posttest and follow up  $(MD = -3.536$   $p < 0.01$ ). All indicated significant increase of score from time to time.

The interactional effect of time and intervention of cognitive restructuring on the improvement of students' emotion regulation was  $(F(1.202, 31.261) = 122.935$   $p < 0.01$ ). Compared to another group, figure 1 explained that the highest increase in self-esteem score in terms of interactional effect of cognitive restructuring occurred in the follow-up phase.



**Figure 1.** The level of emotion regulation of experimental group and control group in pretest, posttest, and follow-up

Furthermore, the interactional effect of time of the cognitive restructuring intervention on the increase in self-esteem score was  $(F(1.302, 33.853) = 295.059$   $p < 0.01$ ).



**Figure 2.** The level of self-esteem of experimental group and control group in pretest, posttest, and follow-up

The current investigation strived for clarifying the effectiveness of the CBT group counseling with cognitive restructuring technique to improve the emotion regulation and self-esteem of students. Moltrecht, et al. (2021) concludes that CBT is less effective to improve emotion regulation. In contrast, since the findings of this research found that the intervention worked effectively on the eighth graders of SMP Ashabul Kahf, these confirm Bernstein, et al's research (2021) that CBT is effective to improve emotion regulation. It can be seen from the improvement noticed in the experimental group in which all of its members gained significant improvement of emotion regulation and self-esteem compared to the other group.

Several previous researches are in line with the findings of this research with regard to the implementation of cognitive restructuring. According to Wolgast, et al (2013) cognitive restructuring can assist individuals to see their cognition inevitably, but as temporary answers to examine their logic and experience.

Implementing cognitive restructuring can also help individuals to understand cognitive distortion which causes them to self-criticize using negative assessment. Through this technique, individuals can change irrational

thoughts into the rational one McKay and Fanning (in Tarmizi, 2020). Cognitive restructuring was chosen with hope to assist students to achieve better emotional response by changing their habitual assessment habits in such a way that they are less deviant (Dombeck & Wells-Moran (in Erford, 2016).

Through the implementation of group counseling with cognitive restructuring technique, students are assisted to observe maladaptive thoughts and oppose their own self-defeating thoughts with coping thoughts, Dombeck & Wells-Moran (in Erford, 2016). In addition, a research by Gomez, et.al (2018) states that emotional regulation has a positive and significant correlation with self-esteem.

This research has proved that cognitive restructuring implementation is not only effective to improve emotion regulation, but also self-esteem. In this way, the group counseling with cognitive restructuring technique has been proved to effectively improve emotion regulation and self-esteem of the students. Unfortunately, there laid several limitations, namely this research did not cover class and educational level differences, so there has been no group counseling with cognitive restructuring technique to improve emotion regulation and self-esteem of students at different levels. Also, the researchers did not group the students based on gender to see its effect. Therefore, the future researchers are recommended to apply this intervention by grouping the subjects based on gender and more varied classes.

## CONCLUSION

In this research, the researchers have proved that the group counseling with cognitive restructuring technique is effective to improve the emotion regulation and self-esteem of SMP Ashabul Kahfi students in Pontianak. Through this medium, counselors or guidance and counseling teachers can implement this intervention to cope with problems dealing with emotion regulation and self-esteem experienced by students. Additionally, the future researches are expected to examine similar topic by

grouping the subjects based on gender and higher classes.

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