

## The Effectiveness Of Group Counseling With A Religiously Integrated Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Approach To Improve Students' Self-Efficacy And Self-Regulation

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### Abstract

Low self-efficacy may affect students' academic performance realized in the practice of procrastination. In the same way, low self-regulation can make students difficult in regulating emotion and behavior, which for sure will affect their performance in learning process. Here, the students of Public Islamic Junior High School or MTs Negeri 1 Kudus were found to have low self-efficacy and self-regulation. Thus, the present student strived for examining the effectiveness of group counseling with religiously integrated cognitive behavioral therapy which focuses on Islamic beliefs, namely using shirah nabawiyah technique to improve students' self-efficacy and self-regulation. As many as 18 students involved as the subjects of this study were grouped into two and researched using randomized pretest posttest group design. The findings have proved that the group counseling with religiously integrated cognitive behavioral therapy approach is effective to improve students' self-efficacy and self-regulation. Further discussion of the implication and limitations can be found in the discussion chapter.

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## INTRODUCTION

Self-efficacy is one of the most influential aspects of self-knowledge in human life. It is students' beliefs in their own abilities to act on behalf of achieving the desired results. Beightol (2012) has proved that self-efficacy is the main variable to improve students' academics.

Another important self-ability is self-regulation. It helps students achieve academic achievement and regulate behavior. Unfortunately, there still found several students who have low level of self-efficacy and self-regulation. Those with low self-regulation sometimes will face difficulties in managing emotions and behavior. As a result, difficulties in learning will arise, and several social and cognitive skills needed to achieve academic achievement will be wasted (Blair, et al. 2010).

Students who have low self-efficacy tend to give up when facing difficulties in doing tasks and feel helpless to do those tasks well. Consequently, the results will less optimal (Rustam & Wahyuni, 2020). PISA (2019) shows that less than 50% of students in Indonesia only reached level 2 out of level 5 in reading, mathematics and science, indicating that students' abilities in Indonesia were very low. One of the causes is the low self-efficacy. (Rahmati, 2015)

It is generally believed that the difference in students' academic achievement is strongly related to self-regulation level (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2008). Self-regulation affects various dimensions of students' problems, such as the case in which students are less able to face learning failure; make effective decisions in improving learning achievement; deciding and achieving goals; and defend optimal learning performance in the long term (Baumeister et al., 2006).

By referring to the above description, self-efficacy basically has three aspects, namely magnitude (task difficulty level), generality, strength (belief), James Maddux (2014). Therefore, the abilities felt by individuals will matter to their involvement in achieving particular goals. (Maddux, n.d.)

There is a need for an intervention to improve students' self-efficacy and self-regulation. Here, counselors can implement many counseling techniques in counseling because according to Wibowo (2019) group counseling is aimed at fostering problem solving experienced by students. It is also a form of preventive and healing assistance to individuals in a group directed towards the provision of facilitation for individuals' development and growth (Kurnato, 2013).

A kind of group counseling therapy possible to improve students' self-efficacy and self-regulation is religiously integrated cognitive behavioral therapy. It is a therapy that combines behavioral therapy and cognitive therapy and accommodates religious values. Interestingly, the religion based CBT is the explicit use of client's religion tradition to become the fundamental basis to identify and modify useless thoughts and actions for later being used as problem solving. (Aouchekian et al., 2017)

Using the combination of religiously integrated cognitive behavioral therapy, Plumb, et al. (2011) claim this approach can improve coping skills of patients with generalized anxiety disorder. This theory suggests spiritual strategies for use in counseling and psychotherapy because this method has proved to improve relationships and health in clients. To encourage clients to worship and pray, talk about the order of the universe and God, it is very important to study the relationship between religious beliefs and individual psychological well-being. They conclude that psychological well-being is related to the deep religious beliefs of the individual. (Nurrulhidayah et al., 2018)

Religiously integrated cognitive behavioral therapy is the combination between behavioral therapy and belief factors (Amaliah, et al., 2015). In this present study, the beliefs used were those derived from Islamic values. By doing so, clients' mind that is initially maladaptive, unproductive, and undermined will be strengthened to have better cognitive process (Trimulyaningsih & Subandi, 2010).

A study by (Boolaghi, et al., 2016) with the topic of the effectiveness of religion-based

cognitive behavioral therapy for students' psychological well-being and resilience concludes that there is a significant difference between experimental and control group. Also, it has proved that the religion-based cognitive behavioral therapy is effective to increase students' psychological well-being and resilience.

One of beliefs and Islamic values based on (Yusof, 2012) paper can be obtained from the motivation technique of Prophet Muhammad PBUH or shirah nabawiyah. Shirah nabawiyah is done by modeling Prophet Muhammad stories. It can be a way to provide students an ideal and noble figure to imitate in terms of aqidah, akhlak or moral, and spirit of worship. He also becomes the very first and the main model for all moslems. The shirah nabawiyah technique used in this study was based on the hadith emphasizing the use of positive words and avoiding negative words, criticism, reprimand, and punishment. (Yusoff, 2012)

Shirah nabawiyah aims to help connect or reconnect clients with people they choose to be their lives model. Besides, it assists clients learn to better fulfill their needs, such as the need to love and be loved, power or achievement, freedom or independence, and happiness. By having the belief in religion individuals' religiosity is expected to increase.

The above description is in line with Selvianti's study (2019) that as individuals' religiosity enhances due to participating in religious activities their positive behavior will appear. In other words, religiosity therapy will support and strengthen cognitive behavioral therapy if it is done continuously and sustainably. (Selvianti, 2019)

One strategy that can be implemented by counselors to increase self-efficacy and self-regulation of students is providing group services. The group service applied in this study was group counseling. A study by Aida and Habsy (2019) has confirmed that group counseling can foster empathy for all group members. Similarly, Johan & Awalya (2017) argue empathy is one of the important things that needs to be improved as the ability to feel or imagine other people's emotional feelings. According to Wibowo (2019) group

counseling can be used to assist individuals in completing developmental tasks in seven areas, namely psychosocial, vocational, cognitive, physical, sexual, moral, and affective.

The novelty of this study is in the way it demonstrated the effectiveness of the religiously integrated cognitive behavioral therapy approach by accommodating Islamic values based on shirah nabawiyah to increase students' self-efficacy and self-regulation through group counseling. For sure, the findings of it will enrich the literature on self-efficacy and self-regulation among students. . For this reason, the results of this study are expected to provide recommendations on group counseling using the religiously integrated cognitive behavioral therapy approach that focuses on Islamic religious beliefs, namely by using the shirah nabawiyah technique on students.

## METHODS

Purposive sampling technique was used to select 18 of 60 students of grade 8 of MTs Negeri 1 Kudus to be the subjects of this study. In the meantime, random assignment was employed to place nine students into one experimental group and one control group to be equal.

There were two scales to collect the data, namely self-efficacy and self-regulation scales. Those were adapted from the previously published articles and back-translated to achieve equivalence.

The self-efficacy scale in this study was derived from the one designed by James Maddux (2014) called General Self-Efficacy. It has twenty three items and three components, including magnitude (the level of task difficulty), generality, and strength (beliefs). Based on the reliability test, all items gained cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.92.

Students' self-regulation was measured using Scale Measuring Self-Regulation developed by James Maddux (2014). It has twenty two items and five components measuring standards and goals, self-observation, self-evaluation, self-reaction, and self-reflection. In terms of reliability

test, this instrument gained cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.86.

Several steps were carried out in this study. First, the researchers gave pretest of General Self-Efficacy

scale and Scale Measuring Self-Regulation to students. Second, interventions in form of

religiously integrated cognitive behavioral therapy with shirah nabawiyah was given for 10 sessions with 40-50 minutes time allotment. Third, posttest was conducted to see any changes or increase in students' self-efficacy and self-regulation. In details, all stages of the study are presented as follows:

**Table 1.** Guidelines for the Provision of Group Counseling with Religiously Integrated Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Approach to Increase Self-Efficacy and Self-Regulation

Sessions	Stages	Activities
1	Assessment	Clients were introduced to the basic format of the counseling to start building collaborative relationship
2	Behavioural Activation	Counselors strengthened clients' basic understanding
3	Identifying Unhelpful Thoughts	Clients were taught to identify their moods
4	Challenging Unhelpful Thoughts	Counselors helped clients to strengthen and improve their abilities
5	Dealing With Loss	Clients identified the loss they had
6	Coping With Spiritual Struggles and Negative Emotions	Clients discussed various spiritual conflicts as a results of their behaviour
7	Gratitude	Counselors helped clients to explore what it means to be a grateful person
8	Altruism and Generosity	Clients were introduced to the ideas of expressing gratitude to their religion
9	Stress-Related and Spiritual Growth	Clients were encouraged to view their religion
10	Hope and Relapse Prevention	In this last session, hopes were introduced as positive conditions resulted from the use of strategies

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data description, the initial condition of students' self-efficacy and self-regulation before receiving the treatments were low ( $M = 66.56$   $SD = 0.527$ ) and ( $M = 61.00$   $SD = 1.323$ ) respectively. After the treatment of the

group counseling with a religiously integrated cognitive behavioral therapy approach using shirah nabawiyah, the students' self-efficacy tended to increase at high level ( $M = 85.11$   $SD = 4,400$ ). The complete results are presented in table 2.

**Table 2.** The Results of Testing the Effectiveness of Group Counseling with a Religiously Integrated Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Approach to Increase Self-efficacy and Self-Regulation

Dependent Variables	Kel	Pre-test		Post-test		Z <sub>1</sub>
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Self-efficacy	Experimental	66.56	,527	85.11	4.400	-2.670*
	Control	65.55	,881	68.11	1.964	-1.669
	Z <sub>2</sub>					-3.637*
Self-regulation	Experimental	61.00	1.323	87.89	4.781	-2.677*
	Control		64.66 4.242		68.44 2.068	-1.825
	Z <sub>2</sub>					-3,625*

Notes: Z<sub>1</sub>=The results of Wilcoxon test; Z<sub>2</sub>= The results of Mann Whitney test  
p < 0.01

The above table 2. presents the results of data analysis from Wilcoxon and Mann Whitney tests. In Wilcoxon test, the group counseling with a religiously integrated cognitive behavioral therapy approach has been proved effective to increase self-efficacy ( $Z = -2.670$   $p < 0.01$ ) and self-regulation ( $Z = -2.677$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This result marked the successful and significant increase in self-efficacy after the students in the experimental group got this treatment. However, it did not happen in the control group that the students gained ( $Z = -1.669$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) for self-efficacy, while in self-regulation ( $Z = -1.825$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

Since the group counseling with a religiously integrated cognitive behavioral therapy was more effective than the one in control group, Mann Whitney test was carried out to reveal the difference in the effectiveness of this intervention in the way it increased the students' self-efficacy and self-regulation. Once the test was carried out, the researchers found this intervention worked better on self-regulation than self-efficacy with the value of ( $Z = -3.625$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and ( $Z = 3.637$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) respectively.

High self-efficacy and self-regulation lead to the increase in persistence in academic performance, and vice versa, low self-efficacy causes low academic performance and the ability to achieve future goals. In addition, self-regulation is an individual's process of activating and maintaining cognition, behavior, and effects

that are systematically oriented towards the achievement of their goals (McClelland, 2015).

This study analyzed the effectiveness of the religiously integrated cognitive behavioral therapy approach to increase self-efficacy and self-regulation. It aimed to get an idea of the extent to which group counseling intervention with the religiously integrated cognitive behavioral therapy approach was effective in increasing the students' self-efficacy and self-regulation.

During the implementation of the intervention, the researchers used the life story of Prophet Muhammad PBUH. An Islamic psychospiritual figure, Malik Badri, in his book entitled "Contemplation: An Islamic Psychospiritual Study" as quoted by Sabki, et al (2019) mentions that religiously integrated cognitive behavioral therapy in Islam focuses on internal cognition through contemplation of God and His creation. Yusof's research (2012) has proved that the motivational technique using shirah nabawiyah is effective to meet students' learning outcomes. Likewise, Mursyidah's research (2019) shows that shirah nabawiyah technique is effective to provide motivation for client's learning.

What distinguishes this study from studies by Koob & Love, (2010); Hosseini et al., (2017); (Conick et al., 2020); Aida & Habsy, (2019); in terms of cognitive behavior approach is that this

study added a religiously integrated cognitive behavioral therapy approach by focusing on Islamic religious beliefs and used the shirah nabawiyah technique. In addition, the previous research put self-efficacy as an independent variable of self-regulation. (Aouchekian et al., 2017); M, Sugiharto, & Purwanto, 2016; (Yusoff, 2012); Hosseini et al., 2017).

The implementation of the group counseling with the religiously integrated cognitive behavioral therapy approach in this study aimed to help students solve the problems they experienced and change false beliefs and negative thoughts into logical thinking by making them get closer to Islam. This study is in line with a study conducted by Lyons (2008) that cognitive therapy is strongly influenced by cultural background, beliefs and cultural values, while its performance is influenced by cultural background and beliefs of individuals.

Based on the current and previous studies findings, the implementation of the treatment to increase self-efficacy and self-regulation can be a reference for counselors to do the same thing to their counselees or students.

The findings of this study imply that a counselor may use the group counseling with a religiously integrated cognitive behavioral therapy approach to deal with students with low self-efficacy and self-regulation. It is because at the age of adolescents students tend to experience a lot of doubts. Moreover, this intervention can reinforce counselees' cognitive behavior of what they do. It can be explained that cognitive-behavioral therapy aims to provide a method of therapy to individuals through incorrect cognitive changes to positive cognitive so that it is hoped that new behaviors will emerge that are better than before. (Alimohammadi et al., 2018)

However, this study still has limitations, such as it only investigated one belief, namely Islam, the sample included were only grade eight from only one school, several difficulties found in the data collection due to the limitations during the pandemic, including the number of students who participated in filling out the pretest questionnaire.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of the group counseling with a religiously integrated cognitive behavioral therapy approach is effective to increase students' self-efficacy and self-regulation. In addition, self-regulation works with this treatment better than self-efficacy.

Counselors are suggested to use a religiously integrated cognitive behavioral therapy approach to investigate other religions than Islam. Also, it is recommended to cover larger sample because the problem of low self-efficacy and self-regulation must be experienced by individuals at all ages and genders.

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