

Cognitive Behavioral Group Counseling with Cognitive Restructuring Technique for Improving Senior High School Student's Self-compassion

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to see the effectiveness of group counseling in improving 10th-grade students' self-compassion in SMA Bina Ummat Yogyakarta using Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) with Cognitive restructuring technique. Applying Randomized Pretest-Posttest control group design, fourteen students were recruited and assigned randomly into two groups: experimental and control groups. _ The result of repeated-measures MIX MANOVA showed that cognitive-behavioral group counseling with cognitive restructuring technique improved students' self-compassion ($F(2) = 140.856, p < 0.05$). A significant difference in group effect on self-compassion was noticed ($F(10.640) = 14.882, p < 0.05$). Time interaction with group was also found to affect self-compassion ($F(8.741) = 16.886, p < 0.05$). This result indicated that Cognitive behavioral group counseling with cognitive restructuring may effectively improve students' self-compassion. This study's result could be used as one of the alternatives for school counselors when they aim to improve students' self-compassion using the cognitive restructuring technique.

Keywords: cognitive behavioral group counseling, cognitive restructuring, self-compassion.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding school is one of the means for preparing a high-quality generation. Unlike other educational institutions, an Islamic boarding school is unique due to its multicultural environment, as students from various family backgrounds, ethnicity, social and cultural backgrounds mingle and do daily activities together in one environment.

Such an environment demands students' readiness and confidence to achieve autonomy. They are required to physically and psychologically adjust themselves to the learning and interaction patterns in the boarding school. These demands potentially serve as stressors that cause ineptitude, inferiority, and insecurity that eventually lead to aggressive behaviors, bullying, hostility,

and withdrawals Syamsu (2011) Argues that students who are in the developmental stage will likely undergo processes that are not in line with their expectations and values they adhere to. In this regard, (Hudayana et al., 2020) report that new students are prone to various problems, including anxiety in learning new subjects. Students in Islamic boarding schools are reported to face various problems, including personal, social, academic, and self-adjustment problems (Hotifah, 2015). Furthermore, they are also prone to homesickness (Yasmin et al., 2017).

To cope with these issues, they need to develop resilience through self-compassion and self-esteem. (Allen & Leary, 2010) Self-compassion could be seen as one of the coping strategies. When individuals are aware of their feelings when facing a problem, they would likely be able to give themselves more compassion and accept the problems as a part of their life. Self-compassion may serve as an adaptation strategy through which individuals minimize negative emotions and reinforce positive ones (Akin, 2010). (Miyagawa et al., 2018) Assert that students with a high self-compassion will likely better realize when they should release their unachieved goals and set a more meaningful alternative goal, in addition to controlling negative emotional reactions. According to (Marshall et al., 2015), students with higher self-compassion will likely have better self-management and acceptance. Thus preventing them from self-harm behaviors. Students with lower self-compassion and self-esteem are at risk of committing self-harm behaviors (Hurla, 2012).

Group counseling is one of the interventions that could be applied to improve students' self-compassion. It provides students with experiences to develop their thinking processes, belief, attitude, and healthy behaviors through group dynamics (Myrick, 2011). In this regard, cognitive behavior therapy is one of the applicable techniques to overcome fear and anxiety while improving students' autonomy amid difficult situations (Ghasemi et al., 2018). The main concept of cognitive-behavior therapy

(CBT) (Kasandra Oemarjoedi, 2003) involves students challenging negative thoughts and emotion by presenting evidence that are in contrast with their thought and beliefs. One's cognitive process may be manifested in their behavior, and CBT is helpful for directing counselee's cognitive process toward more meaningful and rational thought.

It is necessary to develop students' self-compassion through cognitive restructuring, which may develop their social and personal aspects and prevent misbehaviors. This study attempted to focus on applying a group CBT with cognitive restructuring technique to improve students' self-compassion.

It primarily aims to help students improve their self-compassion through group counseling services with cognitive restructuring technique.

METHODOLOGY

This experimental study applied a randomized pretest-posttest control group design. The participants were fourteen students with low self-compassion and self-esteem levels, recruited using a purposive sampling technique from a total of 78 students. They were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups comprising seven students each. The experimental group was involved in a CBT with cognitive restructuring technique.

Data were collected using a 26-item self-compassion scale, which was adapted based on aspects of self-compassion proposed by (K. D. Neff, 2003). The scale was tested and showed that all twenty-six items were valid with an alpha coefficient of $r_{xy} = 0.001-0.05$ and $\alpha = 0,827$, indicating very strong reliability.

This study consisted of four stages. In the first stage, participants were pre-tested to measure their self-compassion before receiving an intervention. In the second stage, the experimental group was involved in a CBT with cognitive restructuring technique for four meetings. In the next step, participants were post-tested to see the difference in their self-compassion level after receiving the intervention. In the last stage, participants in the experimental group were followed-up to

find out their self-compassion two weeks after the posttest took place.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data description shows participants' improved self-compassion, presented as a mean score followed by the standard deviation. During the pretest, they exhibited a mean score of 48.29 (SD = 2.43), while during the posttest and follow-up stages, they showed a mean score of 76.86 (SD = 12.05) and 79.14 (SD = 10.43), respectively. Participants in the control group also exhibited improved self-compassion. Their pretest result showed a mean score of 50.71 (SD=2.43), while their pretest and follow-up test result showed a mean score of 70.71 (SD=8.08) and 50.71 (SD = 8.20), respectively. Table 1 below details the data description.

Table 1.
Data Description

		Experimental	Control
Pretest	M	48.29	50.71
	SD	2.43	2.43
Post-test	M	76.86	70.71
	SD	12.05	8.08
Follow-up	M	79.14	72.71
	SD	10.43	8.20

Data in this study were analyzed using the repeated measure MIX MANOVA. It specifically aimed to see the effectiveness of group Cognitive-Behavior counseling with cognitive restructuring technique in improving students' self-compassion, as indicated by the pretest, posttest, and follow up test results.

Table 2.
*Repeated Measure MIX MANOVA
Analysis Result*

<i>Self Compassion</i>			
Effect	F	Df	P
Time	140.856	2	<0.05
Group	14.882	10.640	<0.05
Time*group	16.886	8.741	<0.05

The analysis result indicate that the time affected participants' self-compassion improvement ($F(2) = 140.856, p < 0.05$). A significant difference was noticed in the group effect on self-compassion ($F(10.640) =$

14.882, $p < 0.05$). Interaction time with group was also found to affect self-compassion ($F(8.741) = 16.886, p < 0.05$). Therefore, it could be concluded that the cognitive-behavioral group counseling with the cognitive restructuring technique effectively improved students' self-compassion.

Table 3.
Pairwise Comparison

Time	<i>Self compassion</i>		P
	MD	SE	
T1-T2	24.286	2.688	<0.05
T1-T3	26.429	2.546	<0.05
T2-T3	2.143	0.523	<0.05

The time effect comparison in the experimental group exhibited an improvement in T1-T2, T1-T3, and T2-T3, indicating an improvement in every stage. The result shows that the experimental group exhibits a more significant improvement of self-compassion during the posttest than the control group, as presented in Figure 1.

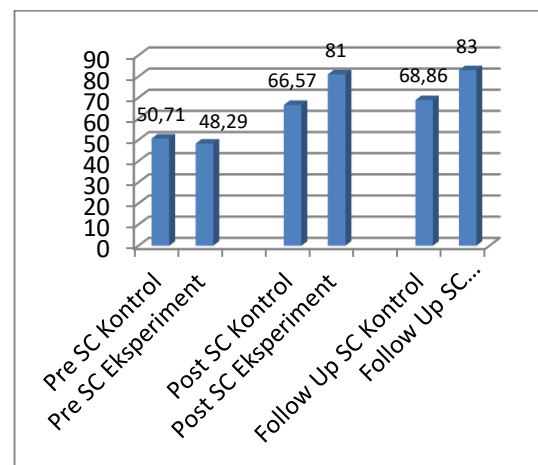


Figure 1.
Self Compassion

As shown in Figure 1, cognitive-behavioral group counseling with the cognitive restructuring technique effectively improve students' self-compassion. The experimental groups exhibited a significant improvement from pretest to posttest stages. An improvement was also noticed during the follow-up test, although it was not significant. This trend demonstrated the improvement of self-compassion among participants.

Hasmarlin and Hirmaningsih (2019) and Marshall et al. (2015) show that students with higher self-compassion may have better self-management and acceptance, which prevent them from committing harmful behaviors.

Self-compassion is known to be associated with emotional intelligence (K. Neff, 2003). Self-compassion comprises three aspects: self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness, which are the opposites of self-judgment, self-pity, and overidentification. The link between self-compassion and emotional intelligence has been reported by Barnard and Curry (2011), who stated that individuals with a high self-compassion level are capable of managing their negative emotions and possess better self-acceptance. Smeets et al. (2014) assert that self-compassion training may improve one's psychological function, such as self-compassion, self-care, self-efficacy, and optimism. One's self-compassion may be improved through cognitive-behavioral group counseling with the cognitive restructuring technique. The cognitive-behavioral therapy is designed to help individuals modify their behaviors and cognitive aspects. It consists of a set of specific procedures that focus on one's cognition (Matson & Ollendick, 1988). It could be adjusted to clients' education level, income, age, and cultural background (Beck & Weisher, as cited in Glading, 2012).

Ilkhchi et al. (2011) viewed cognitive restructuring as a learning process through which an individual identifies the effect of changes in his/her behavioral and cognitive aspects. A previous study has reported that group counseling with a spiritual cognitive restructuring could improve students' self-compassion. (Polla, 2015) Applied a cognitive-behavioral group therapy to improve self-compassion among students in professional psychology department. Although the study reports an improvement, its module needs to be revised to provide a session of self-awareness. The cognitive-behavioral group therapy is expected to help students maintain their mindfulness by evaluating their reactions and learning process.

This study contributes to school counseling services as a part of character education. Counselors play important roles in guiding and developing adolescents' self-compassion and forgiveness, two important aspects of individuals' characters. Students' adequate understanding of a good character is expected to behave appropriately according to the character.

This study shows that the cognitive restructuring technique is applicable for improve students' self-compassion.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, this study concludes that the cognitive-behavioral group counseling with cognitive restructuring technique is effective in improving self-compassion among 10th-grade students in SMA Bina Ummat, Yogyakarta. Therefore, school counselors are recommended to apply a cognitive-behavioral group counseling with cognitive restructuring in order to improve students' self-compassion. The result of this study could be used as a reference for selecting and designing an intervention in the guidance and counseling services at the school context. Future studies on self-compassion and self-esteem are suggested to broaden their scope to improve the generalizability of the result.

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