



Journal of Advanced Guidance and Counseling

Vol. 4 No. 2 (2023), 129-140

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21580/jagc.2023.4.2.18494>

[Journal Homepage](#)

Increase students' self-acceptance through cognitive restructuring techniques in group counseling

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Article Information:

Received:

8 November 2023

Revised:

19 November 2023

Accepted:

31 December 2023

Keywords:

Group counseling, cognitive restructuring techniques, self-acceptance.

Abstract

Purpose – Psychological problems that occur can be caused by the inability to understand and accept themselves properly. The purpose of this study is to describe descriptively the strategy of increasing students' self-acceptance through group counseling with cognitive restructuring techniques.

Method - Using a qualitative approach, with observation and interviews as data collection techniques. Subjects were selected using purposive sampling method with a total of 8 students. Analysis was carried out using the interaction method.

Result - The results showed that the researcher as the key instrument applied group counseling through cognitive restructuring techniques consisting of six stages: rationalization strategies; identifying negative thoughts; introducing and practicing positive thoughts; diverting negative thoughts to positive thoughts; practice strengthening self-statements (homework); reflection and follow-up. Group counseling seeks to build connections based on trust, eliminate worries, and anxiety and increase the active involvement of the client from one stage to the next.

Implication – The implications of this study indicate that cognitive restructuring techniques has an impact on the development of guidance and counseling programs in educational units and can be used as an effort to increase santri self-acceptance. This technique can be used by teachers as caregivers in developing students' self-acceptance in achieving adolescent well-being.

Originality - This study strengthens adolescent competence through group counseling that is able to form self-acceptance in students.

For citation: Filda, W., & Hikmah, N. (2023). Increase students' self-acceptance through cognitive restructuring techniques in group counseling. *Journal of Advanced Guidance and Counseling*. 4(2). 129-140. <https://doi.org/10.21580/jagc.2023.4.2.18494>.

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Keywords:

Konseling kelompok, teknik restrukturisasi kognitif, penerimaan diri.

Abstrak

Tujuan – Masalah psikologis yang terjadi dapat disebabkan oleh ketidakmampuan untuk memahami dan menerima diri sendiri dengan baik. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menggambarkan secara deskriptif strategi peningkatan penerimaan diri siswa melalui konseling kelompok dengan teknik restrukturisasi kognitif

Metode - Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, dengan observasi dan wawancara sebagai teknik pengumpulan data. Subjek dipilih dengan menggunakan metode purposive sampling dengan jumlah 8 orang mahasiswa. Analisis dilakukan dengan menggunakan metode interaksi.

Hasil - Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa peneliti sebagai instrumen kunci menerapkan konseling kelompok melalui teknik restrukturisasi kognitif yang terdiri dari enam tahap: strategi rasionalisasi; mengidentifikasi pikiran negatif; mengenalkan dan melatih pikiran positif; mengalihkan pikiran negatif ke pikiran positif; berlatih memperkuat pernyataan diri (PR); refleksi dan tindak lanjut. Konseling kelompok berusaha membangun hubungan berdasarkan kepercayaan, menghilangkan kekhawatiran, dan kecemasan, serta meningkatkan keterlibatan aktif klien dari satu tahap ke tahap berikutnya.

Implikasi – Implikasi dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa teknik restrukturisasi kognitif berdampak pada pengembangan program bimbingan dan konseling di satuan pendidikan dan dapat digunakan sebagai salah satu upaya untuk meningkatkan penerimaan diri santri. Teknik ini dapat digunakan oleh guru sebagai pengasuh dalam mengembangkan penerimaan diri dan well-being santri.

Originalitas – Penelitian ini memperkuat kompetensi remaja melalui konseling kelompok dengan teknik restrukturisasi kognitif yang mampu membentuk penerimaan diri pada siswa.

Introduction

Early adolescence is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood and encompasses all the experiences experienced to prepare for adulthood. Behaviour in adolescence may change as a result of this development. Each individual has the capacity to understand his or her own reality, and this capacity helps individuals to more easily accept themselves themselves .

Hurlock (Rahayu & Ahyani, 2017) Hurlock (Rahayu & Ahyani, 2017) explains that a person who accepts himself is aware of his abilities and is able to realistically assess his limitations without reproaching himself and not blaming the situation

Increase students's self-acceptance through cognitive...

and others for his shortcomings. According to Shepard (Restin Dwi Puspita, 2018: 18) self-acceptance is characterised by self-understanding, realistic, subjective, and awareness of strengths and weaknesses. Berger (Rizqi, M., Akrom, A., & Rosdiana, 2022) defines self-acceptance as an evaluation of individuals who are not affected by their environment, self-confidence, responsibility, accepting objective criticism and believing that they are above par with others.

Self-acceptance is influential in the process of living life and as a characteristic of self-actualisation. A person who is able to accept himself well, will see himself honestly in the aspects of thoughts, feelings and behaviour. (Rahayu & Ahyani, 2017). However, not all individuals are able to achieve this competence. Research results (Refnadi et al., 2021) on self-acceptance in senior high school students in Indonesia, found that 45.4% of students had poor self-acceptance and only 18.3% had strong self-acceptance. Acceptance of poor self-esteem is, of course, driven by various factors, including a lack of confidence in one's potential, talents, and physical attributes, especially in young women. The lack of self-acceptance of teenage girls is also shown by the findings of the 2019 Zap Beauty Index poll, which found that 53.4% of women aged 23 and under lack confidence in terms of physical assets alongside trustworthiness and responsibility. (Rizqi, M., Akrom, A., & Rosdiana, 2022)..

Psychological problems can be caused by the inability to properly understand one's own reality. Adolescents who do not accept themselves are more likely to suffer from depression. In order for counsellors to understand their own reality, self-acceptance must be improved early on. Because humans are unique, optimal, and capable of developing good thoughts and actions towards being able to embrace oneself more and more understanding about oneself.

Santrock in (Nurimbawan, 2019) said that early adolescence (14-15 years) is categorised as a transitional phase of cognitive development from childhood. Typically the condition of adolescents becomes impatient and the newly discovered ideal standards are confused by the many ideal standards adopted. This condition causes confusion and confusion in specifying something. This results in

many negative thoughts that cause emotional distress, anxiety, fear of expressing opinions and *overthinking*.

According to Hurlock (Rahayu & Ahyani, 2017) the factors that influence self-acceptance in individuals are: self-understanding, realistic expectations, social support, absence of severe emotional distress, identification with people who have good self-adjustment, having the ability to see oneself (self-concept), and good education in childhood. Bastaman (2007) explains the indicators that cause a lack of self-acceptance due to a lack of self-understanding, not having social knowledge about oneself, not understanding what life is and when facing problems always thinking negatively.

Bernard (Fitri et al, 2015) explains simply that self-acceptance has 2 aspects, namely: self-awareness to appreciate the positive character possessed and remain proud to accept himself as he is. This means that individuals dare to take responsibility and be open to accepting criticism objectively, accepting shortcomings and not feeling inferior and rejected by others. Meanwhile, Jersild (Permatasari & Gamayanti, 2016), explains that the characteristics of self-acceptance are: 1. individuals are able to accept themselves, have realistic expectations and respect themselves. 2. Having self-confidence and standards without being fixated on the standards and opinions of others. 3. Realising one's strengths and assets and feeling free to do what one wants. 4. recognising one's limitations without judging oneself, and 5. not seeing oneself negatively/irrationally.

Based on the individual's inability and lack of desire to live with all its qualities can be interpreted as a lack of self-acceptance. Negative judgement of oneself

Causing adolescents to have a negative self-concept. Negative self-concept can interfere with psychological health. In line with research from (Rahmi & Aisah, 2021) (Gunarsa, 2008) and also (Ahla, 2014) which states that low self-acceptance can cause mental disorders such as: anxiety, depression, low happiness. Therefore, it is important for individuals to recognise and accept themselves as a whole and be able to function as a *fully functioning person*.

Increase students's self-acceptance through cognitive...

According to research (Fajri et al., 2019) stated that one idea to improve the progress of low self-acceptance can be done through group guidance. This can be indicated by changes in self-acceptance behaviour that occur in students after participating in group guidance for SMA Negeri 3 Kotabumi students. In line with research (Apriatama, et al, 2022) which states that cognitive restructuring techniques have an impact on changes in student self-acceptance. Connolly (Noviandari & Kawakib, 2016) claims that cognitive restructuring teaches clients to think differently and change negative views about everything. To do this, Connolly argues that fundamental thinking must be eliminated and can be replaced with more reasonable, realistic, and optimistic thinking. Due to the lack of self-acceptance can be influenced by a person's mindset, then therefore the most important aspect is the mind, here the researcher uses a cognitive restructuring technique approach is to build rational or positive thinking with either .

This research is interesting to study because there are indications that some female students at Pesantren Nurul Islam North Aceh still have low self-acceptance. This condition is considered quite worrying for each individual. This is because researchers assume that the problem of low self-acceptance can have an impact on the mental health and fighting power of santri. Group counselling services help students develop themselves, master life skills, build positive habits in order to create independent and optimally developed individuals. Therefore, this study applies a cognitive behavioural counselling approach using cognitive restructuring techniques aimed at improving the mindset of students from irrational to rational thinking. So that students are more free to interact with others and feel not low if they are among other groups. In its implementation, the cognitive behavioural counselling approach not only directs what the counselee should do, but also explains and directs how to do it.

Cognitive restructuring techniques are part of the cognitive-behavioural approach. Cognitive-behavioural focuses on activities that aim to change destructive thought patterns and behaviours. (Noviandari & Kawakib, 2016).. Cognitive restructuring is one of the strategies developed by Ellis that aims to eliminate disturbances in clients caused by negative / irrational thoughts and beliefs and replace them with constructive positive thoughts. (Nadia, 2022).

Cognitive restructuring is a technique that creates new habits of thinking, feeling, and acting in clients by identifying problematic habits, labelling, and replacing negative responses or negative or irrational reactions or self-perceptions. The basic principle of cognitive restructuring is that individuals must be able to know how to think and know the impact on others before they can change their own behaviour. Individuals need to interrupt the explicit nature of their behaviour so that they can evaluate their behaviour in various situations to create change. (Choerunnisa, 2014).

Cognitive restructuring strategies are based on two assumptions, namely: 1. Irrational thoughts and false cognitions create self-destructive behaviour (deliberate behaviour that has a negative impact). 2. Thoughts and judgements about oneself can be changed through changing perspectives and personal perceptions. (Noviandari & Kawakib, 2016).. Cormier and Cormier in (Noviandari & Kawakib, 2016) summarised the stages of applying cognitive restructuring techniques into six stages: (Noviandari & Kawakib, 2016: 79-80)

1. Rationale: objectives and brief overview of the procedure. This stage contains an explanation of the objectives, a brief overview of the procedure to be implemented, and a discussion of positive and negative self-talk.
2. Identify the counselee's thoughts in problem situations. Analyse the counselee's thoughts in stressful or anxiety-provoking situations.
3. Introduce and practice adaptive thinking (*coping thought*). Shifting attention from the counsellor's *self-destructive* thoughts to other more *constructive* thoughts (*non-self-destructive thoughts*). This constructive thinking is called *coping thought*.
4. Moving from negative thoughts to Coping Thought (CT). At this stage, this move can be done in two ways, namely given the method exemplified by the counsellor and trained by the counselee himself.
5. Introduction and training of positive reinforcement.
6. Homework evaluation and follow-up

To improve the ability of santri self-acceptance, a group counselling approach with cognitive restructuring techniques can be used so that santri can change negative thoughts into positive thoughts, help them change their perspective on

Increase students's self-acceptance through cognitive...

their strengths and weaknesses and build motivation for change through counselling activities that are followed .

Research Methods

The type of research used is qualitative research, conducted at Nurul Islam Integrated Islamic Boarding School, Meurah Mulia District, North Aceh. The service model was provided in the form of group counselling to 8 santriwati who were selected by *purposive sampling*. Interview and observation methods used to collect pre-action data are one component of data collection tools that assess the success or failure of a study and aim to show the condition of improvement before and after action. Data analysis is a technique that describes systematic efforts to identify themes and make applicable hypotheses (ideas) offered by the data. (Moleong, 2017).

Results and Discussion

Based on the results of interviews conducted, researchers found that there are students who have low self-acceptance. Self-acceptance of students at Pesantren Nurul Islam is shown through several behaviours such as: feeling that other people are much better than themselves, feeling inferior, insecure when they are with other people. So 8 students with indications of low self-acceptance were selected and given group counselling interventions in 3 meeting sessions.

The purpose of providing group counselling services is to solve a problem that will be discussed together, exchange opinions, and to take a solution to a problem discussed.

The stages of group counselling are carried out in four phases; namely the initial stage, the transition stage, the work stage and the final stage.

1. Initial Stage; the researcher as the key instrument acts as a group leader for the students as group members, leading them in prayer, introductions, and explanation of the group counselling goals, objectives, standards, and contract. Group counselling seeks to build connections based on trust, eliminating worries, and anxieties.
2. Transition stage; When the first phase is completed, the transition stage which is finalising the tasks to be completed to the following

phase, determining what group members are ready to do, and increasing members to get involved, the group leader leads the working stage as the researcher encourages each participant to discuss the problems that cause low in their self-acceptance. Each group member was invited to express their feelings towards the problem they were facing.

3. Work stage or core stage; In addition, the group leader combines the approach with cognitive restructuring techniques consisting of six stages: rationalisation strategies, identifying the counsellor's negative thoughts, introducing and rehearsing positive thoughts, moving from self-blame thoughts to positive thoughts, practicing strengthening self-statements, homework, and follow-up.
4. End Stage; at this point, the group leader invites group members to share their understanding, emotions, and plans for following the group counselling session. The group leader asks for feedback and ideas from the members on how the group counselling process has gone. The information presented above can be used to assess, the researcher acting as the group facilitator. In addition, the group leader plans the following meeting to assess the progress or challenges something occurred in relation to the given task. The group leader closes the meeting with a group prayer as a final step.

Cognitive restructuring techniques are used to help counsees who have problems with thoughts, negative or irrational beliefs of the counselee will be replaced and removed with positive or rational thoughts and beliefs. As the stages of cognitive restructuring techniques as follows:

Table 1. Stages of Cognitive Restructuring Technique

No.	Core Stages	Description
1	Rational	The counsellor helps clients gain confidence or solidify their belief that "self-statements", whether good or negative comments, have an impact on future behaviour.
2	Identify Negative Thoughts	The counsellor has the client identify extra-counselling events and ideas by observing and documenting them as homework. The counsellor and client can distinguish between

Increase students’s self-acceptance through cognitive...

No.	Core Stages	Description
		destructive (negative) and enhancing (positive) ideas.
3	Identify Positive Thoughts	By using positive phrases in any circumstances that cause negative or illogical ideas to arise, the client is now able to shift the client's attention from negative thinking to positive thinking.
4	Positive Thought Building Exercise	The counsellor then coaches the client to switch from negative to positive thinking after the client has recognised the bad ideas and practised cognitive recognition and rehearsal alternatively.
5	Positive Reinforcement Exercise	The counsellor instructs the client on how to appreciate himself for his achievements
6	<i>Homework and Follow up</i>	The counsellor provides opportunities for the counselee to use cognitive restructuring in actual life by means of reinforcement and habituation.

When students participate in group counselling that includes cognitive restructuring, they are encouraged to recognise cognitive biases and replace negative (irrational) beliefs with constructive (rational) cognitive beliefs. The cognitive restructuring process provides an opportunity for the group leader (counsellor) and the client to jointly recognise illogical and behaviourally directed ideas and recognise constructive thoughts. In the application of cognitive restructuring techniques, Beck did interesting things, namely: 1. asking the counselee to close his eyes, 2. asking and training the counselee to imagine, 3. training the counselee to see himself from all sides and situations, which helps him to solve problems. It can be seen that the method presented by Beck is basically correcting the counsellor's deviant thinking with new ideas, namely *self-talk* and homework. (Nadia, 2022: 76)

Furthermore, an evaluation is conducted after the group members receive reinforcement from the counsellor as the group leader. Seeing how well the entire counselling procedure has been implemented by evaluating. Evaluation and subsequent actions based on the continued growth of the counsellor.

After the group counselling intervention is given with cognitive restructuring techniques, changes that occur in students from several visible behaviours include respecting other people's responses, daring to take challenges, not giving up easily, accepting the past and trying to improve and being able to motivate themselves. Although negative thoughts sometimes still reappear against self-acceptance, students feel and experience a shift in their perspective from negative to positive, believing and seeing everything positively. Thus, this process needs to be continuously trained by means of positive reinforcement through habituation and support.

The limitations of this study are the implementation of group counselling in a short time and inadequate counselling facilities and infrastructure. It is necessary to develop the skills of professional counsellors through training and special techniques. In addition, involving parents is considered important, parental support is needed to strengthen the personality and attitude of students. Parental support can be done during visits and through *whatsapps* groups as a means of communication to strengthen communication, information and *monitoring of* santri development.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, group counselling strategies through cognitive restructuring techniques have a positive impact on increasing the self-acceptance of santri at Pesantren Nurul Islam, Meurah Mulia District, North Aceh. Of the total 8 research subjects who were declared to have low self-acceptance were then used as research subjects and given group counselling interventions. After being given the intervention, there was an increase in self-acceptance in students marked by several behaviours that appeared such as self-understanding, respecting the opinions of others, accepting shortcomings and the past and having motivation to improve themselves so as not to give up easily.

Increase students's self-acceptance through cognitive...

Group counselling goes through four stages; namely the initial stage, the transitional stage and the final stage. The focus of the application of restructuring techniques is carried out with six stages, namely rationalisation strategies; identifying negative thoughts of the counselee; introducing and practicing positive thoughts; switching from self-blame thoughts to positive thoughts; practicing strengthening self-statements; practice through homework; and follow-up.

The researcher hopes that this strategy can be applied by caregivers as a psychological companion for students in increasing students' self-acceptance. Classroom teachers or caregivers can consult experts when they have obstacles or difficulties in solving problems. For researchers who will apply cognitive restructuring techniques to increase santri self-acceptance or optimal santri personality development, it is hoped that they can pay attention to the intensity of the treatment provided by conducting more than three meeting sessions to get maximum results.

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