Solution-focused group counseling: A solution to enhance students' self-confidence

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Abstract: Self-confidence plays a pivotal role in developing an individual's potentials. Solution-focused counseling approach views an individual as the only expert for his/her own life, and only they themselves are capable of making the best decision. This study aimed to assess the effectiveness of solution-focused group counseling sessions in enhancing students' self-confidence. To this end, a pretest-posttest control group experimental study was conducted, involving twelve students of Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 3 Langkat, who were assigned into two groups of six participants each. Data collected from self-confidence scale were analyzed using Wilcoxon Sign Test by identifying the difference in average improvement of self-confidence. The experimental group exhibited a significance value of 0.002 (< 0.005), indicating that the solution-focused group counseling could improve students' self-confidence.
Keywords: Group Counseling; Self-Confidence; Solution-focused Group Counseling.

Introduction

During adolescence, individuals encounter a multitude of challenges and problems, such as bullying, physical and social issues, and various stresses that directly impact their self-confidence (Ayu & Muhid, 2022; P. Sari et al., 2020). This developmental stage requires individuals to successfully fulfill their tasks and responsibilities. Adolescents who effectively navigate these tasks often find it easier to cope with the challenges they face. Conversely, those who struggle to complete their developmental tasks may experience difficulty in achieving happiness and may even encounter rejection from their social environment.

Self-confidence plays pivotal role during adolescence, as it has been associated with higher academic achievement (Amalia, 2019; Rohmat & Lestari, 2019). Self-confidence is regarded as a vital component for leading a successful and optimistic life. Individuals with a sufficient level of confidence are more likely to pursue their desires and take responsibility for their actions (Nasution & Thamrin, 2022; Sharot & Sunstein, 2020). They also tend to respect others, be inspired to make progress, and capable of acknowledging their weaknesses.

Adolescents who lack of self-confidence tend to exhibit behaviors reflecting their incapability, such as lack of skills, doubt, and lack of courage to voice their ideas (Aliansyah et al., 2017; Amri, 2018). Without adequate support from their environment, these individuals are likely to become withdrawn and avoid situations that may trigger debate. Additionally, they may engage in fewer group activities. Studies conducted by Rahman et al., (2022) and Irani and Laksana (2018) indicate that adolescents with low self-confidence often display closed personalities, experience higher levels of frustration when facing challenges, struggle with social interactions, and find it difficult to accept themselves. The lack of confidence can stem from a lack of autonomy, which becomes evident during discussions. In contrast, confident individuals tend to actively voice their ideas based on their own beliefs rather than simply imitating others' opinions.

A preliminary study conducted at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 3 Langkat revealed that students still lack confidence when interacting with others. They hesitate to express their ideas in front of the class, display a lack of open-mindedness when addressing problems,

avoid performing in front of their peers, and struggle with decision-making. This condition required immediate responses as it potentially hampers students' learning process and social relationship.

Group counseling is one of the counseling services that have been reported to effectively improve students' self-confidence. It provides individuals with opportunities to respond to problems presented by other group members. Participation in group activities can contribute to students' improvement in self-confidence (Mao et al., 2022; Newman & Ford, 2021; Wijayanti, 2020).

previous research has established a link between group counseling and the solution-focused brief counseling (SFBC) approach. This approach focuses on helping individuals achieve their goals by maximizing their potential (Julita et al., 2019). It has been reported to effectively improve individuals' self-control (Julita et al., 2019; Wuisang et al., 2021), while also reducing procrastination and anxiety (Fadhli & Siregar, 2020; Pratini & Afifah, 2018). Considering that most individuals in this era value efficiency and effectiveness in any life aspect, SFBC is considered suitable for most school and community contexts due to its time effectiveness and applicability.

The primary objective of Solution-Focused Brief Counseling (SFBC) is to address difficulties by focusing on students' potentials and strengths. This approach emphasizes active student participation in problem-solving or engaging in discussions that generate potential solutions, rather than solely focusing on the problems themselves (Indriani & Haryadi, 2022; Pangestuti, 2018). Previous studies have demonstrated various benefits of SFBC, such as addressing students' absenteeism (Setyowati & Indah Pratiwi, 2019) and improving students' self-control and self-esteem (Julita et al., 2019). Through group interactions and mutual support, members are able to improve their potentials and self-awareness. This study mainly aims to find out the effectiveness of solution-focused group counseling in improving adolescents' self-confidence.

Method

The present study utilized a pretest-posttest control group design. The experimental group received a group guidance service using the Solution-Focused Brief Counseling (SFBC) approach, while the control group engaged in group counseling without a specific technique or approach. The participants consisted of twelve Islamic senior high school students who exhibited a low level of courage. They were selected through purposive sampling technique and assigned to two groups. The group counseling sessions were conducted over eight sessions. Data were collected using a self-confidence scale, which demonstrated a reliability score of 0.6. The collected data were analyzed using the Wilcoxon sign test to assess the differences in self-confidence between the experimental and control groups before and after engaging in the solution-focused group guidance.

Results and Discussion

Changes in mean score in experimental group were noticed and were presented in table 1.

Table 1. Mean difference of self-confidence pre-and post-intervention.

Group	Group	Post Intervention
Control Group	91.1667	88.1667
Experimental Group	85.0000	87.0000

As indicated in Table 1, both groups demonstrated a difference in self-confidence levels before and after receiving the intervention. The control group initially had higher self-confidence scores compared to the experimental group (91.1667 and 85.0000, respectively). However, following their engagement in the solution-focused group guidance, the experimental group showed an improvement in mean scores to 87.000, whereas the control group reported a decrease to 88.1667.

Table 2 Hypothesis Test Result

Group	Decrease	Increase	N	Z Score	Sig. 2 Tailed
Control	5	1	6	7.1156	0.248
Experimental Group	2	4	6	0.736	0.002

As shown in table2, five participants in the control group and two participants in the experimental group reported lower self-confidence after engaging in the group counseling. _ Meanwhile, one participants in the control group and four participants in the experimental group reported higher self-confidence. The experimental group exhibited a significance value of 0.002 (< 0.0005), indicating a change in participants' self-confidence after participating in the solution-focused group guidance sessions.

These results demonstrate an improvement in students' self-confidence following their engagement in the group counseling sessions. The improvement may be attributed to the students' active participation in the group activities, which helped them develop skills in responding to problems presented by other group members (Mao et al., 2022; Newman & Ford, 2021; Wijayanti, 2020). During the sessions, students openly shared their challenges related to self-confidence and received feedback and understanding from their peers. The sessions concluded with participants drawing conclusions, aiming to further enhance their confidence more optimally.

Engaging in the exchange of responses among group members provides an opportunity for each participant to learn from the feedback they receive. The solution-focused approach emphasizes the development of attitudes and behaviors that enhance self-confidence (Eryanti, 2020; Grant & Gerrard, 2020; S. P. Sari et al., 2020). Previous research have demonstrated that solution-focused group guidance effectively improves students' self-confidence by focusing on current problems rather than dwelling on past issues. (Eryanti, 2020; Niu et al., 2022; Sabella, 2021; Utami et al., 2020). In this study, group members concentrated on addressing their present challenges rather than being consumed by their past experiences. Whenever a group member discussed past problems, the group leader redirected the focus to the impact of those experiences on the present day. To adapt to the specific research context, the self-confidence scale used in this study was developed by the authors themselves.

Following their participation in the solution-focused group counseling, students reported lower anxiety levels and demonstrated increased self-confidence. This positive improvement can be attributed to various factors, such as the use of self-motivation materials, positive quotes, praise, tips for improving self-confidence, sharing experiences, problem-solving discussions, and mutual support among participants, which help prevent feelings of loneliness when facing difficulties. The benefits of group counseling in improving students' self-confidence and facilitating their personal development have been reported in other studies as well.(Herron et al., 2019; Pincus et al., 2020)

A study conducted by Setyowati and Indah Pratiwi (2019) reported that solution-focused group counseling effectively reduces students' misbehavior, including absenteeism and aggressiveness. Solution-focused group counseling provides students with guidance and opportunities to make optimal decisions.

The success and failure of the treatment is inseparable from the group counseling guidebook, in addition to other contributing factors like participants' physical condition, the group atmosphere, and the group leader's or the counselor's condition. Applying SFBC technique to the group counseling process is expected to help students find solutions for their problems. The result of this study could be used as the basis for school to provide a group counseling service using SFBC approach in order to help students solve their problems.

Conclusions and Suggestions

The result demonstrated that the solution-focused group counseling could improve students' self-confidence. Group counseling could be integrated with other approaches in order to enhance students' self-confidence. This result is expected to contribute to the field of guidance and counseling and becomes a reference for other researchers who work on different research designs.

School counselors must be able to provide services that are a place for students to hone their abilities, so as to increase student confidence. Schools should create programs that involve students in activities that can increase student confidence.

Acknowledgment

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