

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PEER GROUP COGNITIVE BEHAVIOR COUNSELING ON BODY IMAGE IMPROVEMENT IN FEMALE ADOLESCENT

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ABSTRACT

Greater attention to appearance, clothing, grooming, hairstyle, and behavior is a phenomenon that occurs among adolescents. Adolescents believe that self-appearance is very important for social acceptance, especially acceptance from peers. Furthermore, adolescents want to always look attractive to others, especially peers. This phenomenon can cause body image disorder and low self-esteem especially among female adolescents. It is believed that group counseling can improve the body image of female adolescent to be more positive. This research aims to determine the effect of counseling methods with a cognitive behavioral approach on improving body image in female adolescent. This study used a quasi-experimental design. The sample was identified by using power analysis, the number of sample in this study was 128 female adolescents which included two groups namely intervention group and control group, composed of 64 respondents in each group. The data was collected by using the Body Appreciation Scale (BAS) questionnaire to measure body image variable. The Cognitive Behavior Group Counseling approach was used to provide counseling to the intervention group for six sessions. Body image measurements were carried out three times, namely before counseling, a week after counseling, and two weeks after counseling. The data analysis was carried out using a two-mean difference test. The result showed that cognitive behavior group counseling was effective in improving the body image of female adolescent to be more positive (p value = $0,000 < 0,05$). It is concluded that cognitive behavior group counseling is an effective intervention to help female adolescent in building a positive body image.

Keywords: *group-counseling; cognitive-behavior; body-image; female-adolescents*

INTRODUCTION

Adolescent are people in the age range of 10 to 19 years. Adolescence, also known as puberty, is an ongoing process of growth and development in which biological, psychological, and social changes occur during the transition from childhood to young adulthood. Adolescence is a period of rapid growth, with changes that are inconsistent and vary widely between individuals. In general, the characteristics of adolescent growth and development include: 1) physical growth and hormonal development: bones, muscles, brain, sexual characteristics, and posture; 2) ability to

think abstractly; and 3) social and emotional development, including awareness of others, sense of justice, social awareness, goals, personal identity, peer ties, and emotions that often arise suddenly (Arnett, 2019).

The significant changes of adolescents can cause many problems especially among female adolescents such as paying more attention to appearance, including clothing style, make-up, hairstyle and behavior. Teenagers always want to appear in a way that can attract the attention of others, especially their peers. Adolescents believe that self-appearance is very important for social

acceptance, especially from peers (Rosenberg, 2019).

Then, psychosocial disorders, such as body image disorders, can arise as a result of these developmental differences. Various physical, emotional and psychological changes also occur during adolescence, which is a unique transition period.

Moreover, the process of adolescent development can impact on adolescent mental health. Currently, one of the mental problems among adolescents is depression, it is the third leading cause of illness and disability among adolescents aged 15 to 19 years, and suicide is the third leading cause of death among adolescents (WHO, 2017).

Body image problem is also one of the mental and psychosocial problems faced by teenagers in the world, especially among female adolescents. The body image disorders cause feelings of low self-esteem, which has become a significant problem and affects most female adolescent with negative effects (Paxton & Heinicke, 2018).

According to Paxton et al. (2016), 24% to 46% of female adolescents expressed dissatisfaction with their body shape. Body image is very important as a self-identity for young women, body image disorders can cause feelings of low self-esteem. According to Clay et al. (2019), ideal body shape and attractive appearance are how young women assess themselves.

According to modern teenagers, body shape factors that are not ideal are the main cause of body shape dissatisfaction which causes body image disorders in female adolescents. This can be caused by obesity (too fat) or aesthetic (beauty) problems. This condition can cause isolation, ridicule and harassment by peers towards the female adolescents who have a body shape that does not meet adolescent standards.

Indonesian teenagers also face many complex problems, ranging from academic achievement, relationships, appearance, and tendencies towards the opposite sex. These various things can influence adolescent behavior and health (Arnett, 2019).

According to research conducted by Latiff et al. (2017), a study of adolescents' satisfaction with their body image showed that female students were more dissatisfied with their body image because of overweight or obese.

Duchesne et al. (2017), additional research on adolescent satisfaction with body shape, found that adolescent girls were dissatisfied with their body shape compared to adolescent boys; they also experience lower self-esteem, symptoms of anxiety, and depression related to their dissatisfaction with their body shape.

From the two studies above, it is clear that appearance and overall body shape are very important for female adolescents. With today's technological advances, teenagers can quickly and easily get information about appearance, style trends and ideal body shape, especially for teenage girls. This condition will encourage young women to make every effort to appear in accordance with current trends. This will affect their body image, which will affect the self-esteem of adolescent girls (Clay et al., 2019).

There are several ways to improve the body image of female adolescents. Paolini (2016) stated that school counseling is very important to deal with body image problems as a prevention. Furthermore, Marjo et al. (2017) showed in their research that group tutoring services influence students' body image.

Akliman and Eryılmaz's (2017) research also used counseling, which showed that adolescent girls' body image and positive

coping strategies improved significantly. Faraji et al. (2015) also found in their research that group counseling with a cognitive behavioral approach significantly improved the body image of adolescent girls.

In their study, Navidian et al. (2017) shows that group counseling with an effective cognitive behavioral approach can increase rational acceptance of one's body in young women. Irani et al. (2018) also found that group counseling proved effective in increasing rational acceptance of one's body in adolescent girls.

Based on the research findings mentioned above, it can be concluded that group counseling is the best method for improving one's self-image, especially for young women. Body image is influenced by many things. According to Paxton and Heinicke (2018), body image has three dimensions: cognitive dimensions, emotional dimensions, and behavioral dimensions.

Based on the description above, it can be seen that the problem of body image disorders in teenage girls can be overcome by increasing their positive perceptions of themselves through sharing experiences with friends who have the same problems in the form of group counseling activities. Community nurses can play a role in overcoming the problem of body image disorders in young women as counselors in group counseling activities. The aim of this research was to analyze the effectiveness of group counseling in improving body image in adolescent girls.

RESEARCH METHODS

It was a quasi-experimental study with used power analysis to calculate the number of samples. The sample for each group (intervention and control group) consisted of

64 female adolescents, with a total of 128 samples. The data of body image was collected using the Body Appreciation Scale (BAS). The Group Counseling Cognitive Behavioral Approach was used during six counseling sessions for the intervention group. Body image measurements were taken three times: before counseling, one week after counseling, and two weeks after counseling. Analysis was carried out using t-test to identify the difference between two means (intervention and control group).

This research has been approved for its implementation by the Health Research Ethics Commission (KEPK) of the Aceh Ministry of Health Polytechnic through ethical clearance letter number LB.02.03/042/2024 dated 30 May 2024.

RESULTS

The results of research data analysis can be seen as follows:

Table 1. Differences in Body Image Before Group Counseling (Pre test) (n=128)

Group	N	Mean	Mean Difference	P Value
Intervention	64	17,52	1,59	0,304
Control	64	19,11		

Table 1 shows that in the pre-test measurements, the intervention group got a large mean body image score of 17.52 and the control group 19.11, which resulted in a large mean difference of 1.59. The results of t-test showed a significant value (P value) of 0.304 which was greater than 0.05, which indicated that H_0 was accepted, indicating that there was no difference in body image between the intervention and control groups before group counseling.

Table 2. Differences in Body Image After Group Counseling (Post test 1)

(n=128)

Group	n	Mean	Mean Difference	P Value
Intervention	64	28,56	9,42	0,0001
Control	64	19,14		

In post-test 1, table 2 shows that the mean body image score for the intervention group was 28.56 and the control group was 19.14, resulting in an average difference of 9.42. The results of t-test obtained a significant value (P Value) of $0.0001 < 0.05$, so H_0 was rejected. This shows that there is a difference in body image between the intervention group and the control group after one week of group cognitive behavioral counseling.

Table 3. Differences in Body Image After Group Counseling (Post Test 2)
(n=128)

Group	n	Mean	Mean Difference	P Value
Intervention	64	37,69	18,53	0,0001
Control	64	19,16		

Table 3 shows that in post-test 2, the average body image score for the intervention group was 37.69 and the control group was 19.16, so the average difference was 18.53. The results of the t-test show a significant value (P Value) of $0.0001 < 0.05$, so H_0 is rejected, which shows that there is a difference in body image between the intervention group and the control group after 2 weeks of group cognitive behavioral counseling.

DISCUSSIONS

This research was conducted to test how effective a group counseling program that uses a cognitive behavioral approach is on female adolescents' body image. The results showed that the program works well; in other words, a group counseling program

with a cognitive behavioral approach fosters positive body image of female adolescent.

The pre-test results showed that before the peer group cognitive behavior counseling, the body image of young women in the intervention group was not different from the control group. However, after 1 week and 2 weeks of peer group cognitive behavior counseling in the intervention group, a significant increase in body image was found compared to the control group who were not given peer group cognitive behavior counseling.

During puberty, adolescent girls experience many physical changes including reproductive ability, height growth, acne, weight gain, and appearance of primary and secondary sexual characteristics (Cash & Pruzinsky, 2019). If they have a positive body image, it is easier for them to cope with these changes in a healthy way. Otherwise, these changes can cause body image problems (Grogan, 2016).

Increasing positive body image (optimism, a flexible point of view, and a critical perspective towards media images regarding positive features of appreciation and hope) in young women is the goal of this group based cognitive behavioral counseling, on the principles of positive psychology (Clarkson, 2018).

In the context of this research, it can be considered a reflection of positive psychology. This is due to the fact that the female adolescents involved in this study saw positive experiences related to their bodies in the past through their group experiences and also received positive comments from others. This condition increases optimism and hope by setting goals for the future. It also controls automatic negative thoughts towards the body (Akliman & Eryilmaz, 2017).

Adolescent girls in the intervention group who had a significant difference between pre-test and post-test body image scores showed strengthening of individual positive aspects and had the ability to build a positive body image after cognitive behavioral group guidance. The body, according to positive psychology, is one of the pleasurable parts of life, which brings psychological well-being and pleasure. Among the things that fall into this category are taste, reading books, cooking, and exercising (Corey, 2018).

According to positive psychology, the body has the capacity for pleasure, desire and to trigger positive emotions. According to this theory, body positivity is expressed by five main mechanisms such as interpersonal touch, positive sexual behavior, physical activity, nutrition and physical pain (Fisher, 2019). Cognitive behavioral group counseling provides activities to improve healthy coping skills in young women with negative body image (Corey, 2017).

The results of this current study showed that cognitive behavioral group counseling conducted as a group proved to be more effective because young women in the intervention group increased their perception of their body image in a more positive direction. Positive cognitive behavior is the basis of this research. The results showed that favorable factors, such as optimistic thinking, increased self-esteem, greater use of coping strategies, and development of cognitive control, helped adolescent girls improve their abilities. It may result from the fact that this research activity was carried out in groups using a cognitive behavioral therapy approach.

In this research, group counseling cognitive behavioral activities were carried out by prioritizing gratitude, reasons for

happiness, praise and gratitude activities for young women who live with positive emotions (Paxton & Heinicke, 2018). Studies in the field of positive psychology show broadening of perspective, increasing capacity and adapting past negativity to more positive emotions, providing benefits that are expressed by young women in the form of positive feelings towards themselves (Irani et al., 2018).

CONCLUSION

According to this study, adolescent girls who had a negative body image in the intervention group showed a positive body image after receiving group cognitive guidance. Many factors influence the development of body image, so interventions are needed to change negative body image to positive. In this case, cognitive behavioral group counseling is an effective intervention for developing a positive body image among adolescents.

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