



THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GROUP COUNSELING (SUPPORT GROUP TECHNIQUE) IN IMPROVING SELF-ESTEEM BETWEEN ADOLESCENT WITH BULLYING BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT

Bullying remains a major challenge in Indonesian schools, including Pringsewu, with negative impacts on adolescents' mental health, academic performance, and social well-being. If not addressed, it may disrupt emotional development and cause long-term trauma. Low self-esteem is often linked to vulnerability, making adolescents prone to becoming either victims or perpetrators. This study aims to explore how enhancing self-esteem can serve as an effective strategy for bullying prevention. A quantitative quasi-experimental design was applied using a pre-test and post-test with a control group. The sample included 100 students from Senior High School State One of Ambarawa, Pringsewu Regency, divided into 50 participants in the intervention group and 50 in the control group. Data were analyzed using paired samples T-test. Results showed a significant improvement in self-esteem within the intervention group ($p = .000 \leq 0.05$), demonstrating the effectiveness of support group counseling. The control group also showed significance ($p = .017$) but with weaker impact. These findings highlight that group counseling can effectively strengthen self-esteem, thereby reducing vulnerability to bullying behaviors. In conclusion, support group techniques and similar counseling approaches can play an important role in creating supportive school environments, enhancing resilience, and mitigating bullying among adolescents.

Keywords: adolescent; behavior; bullying; self-esteem; support group technique

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INTRODUCTION

Bullying is a serious issue that can negatively affect adolescents' psychological, social, and academic development. In Lampung Province, including Pringsewu Regency, child abuse and violence remain major concerns. Data from the Women Empowerment and Child Protection Agency of Lampung Province showed 296 cases of violence against women and children in the first half of 2024, with three cases occurring in Pringsewu. Although this number is relatively small compared to other regions, it is essential to remain vigilant and proactive in preventing all forms of violence, including bullying. In 2024, Lampung Province recorded a total of 614 cases of violence against women and children, with the majority occurring within households (Rilis ID, 2024). As we know, the impact of bullying can be severe, leading to low self-esteem, excessive anxiety, and even suicidal ideation. One prevention effort that can be implemented is group counseling, which allows members to support each other and build self-esteem. Previous research has shown that group counseling (support group technique) can enhance self-esteem in bullying victims. Victims who previously isolated themselves and were afraid to socialize became more confident and capable of interacting with their environment (Musyarofah, F., & Juandi, W., 2021).

Peer relationships closely correlate with low self-esteem and internalizing symptoms in adolescents, according to other studies. Self-esteem has been proven to be a significant mediator in this relationship. Therefore, anti-bullying intervention programs in schools should focus on strategies that improve self-esteem to mitigate the psychological impact on victims (Mullan et al., 2023).

Additional research shows that self-esteem development can be implemented by teachers with specific training. Such interventions show promise in school settings to support emotional resilience and the psychological development of children (Epel, N., Zohar et al., 2021). Furthermore, research related to cognitive-behavioral group counseling has proven effective in addressing bullying behavior and building empathy among adolescents (Abdul Rahman, A.M., 2020). These findings form the basis for conducting this study on the effectiveness of group counseling (support group technique) in improving self-esteem in adolescent bullying behavior.

METHOD

This study is quantitative research using a quasi-experimental approach (pre-test and post-test with a control group design). The research sample included adolescents from Senior High School State One of Ambarawa in Pringsewu Regency, Lampung. The intervention group, consisting of 50 participants, received educational sessions on how to improve self-esteem and continuous guidance both in person and in small groups via WhatsApp group discussions, where participants shared personal issues and received motivation from both researchers and peers. Meanwhile, the control group, also consisting of 50 participants, only received general warnings not to engage in bullying, without any motivational support or self-esteem-building activities. The statistical test used in this research was the paired samples t-test.

RESULT

Table 1.

The Improvement of Self Esteem on Adolescents Bullying Behavior toward Intervention Group

	Paired Samples Test					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Paired Differences							
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		Mean	Lower	Upper				
Pretes_Self_Esteem- Postest_Self Esteem	-12.020	13.218	1.869	-15.776	-8.264	-6.430	49	.000

The pre-test and post-test results analyzed using the Paired Samples t-test showed a p-value of $0.000 \leq 0.05$, indicating a significant correlation between group counseling (support group technique) and self-esteem improvement in adolescent bullying behavior.

Table 2.

The Improvement of Self Esteem on Adolescents Bullying Behavior toward Control Group

	Paired Samples Test					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Paired Differences							
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		Mean	Lower	Upper				
Pretest_kontrol- Postest_kontrol	-8.44000	24.17467	3.41881	-15.31037	-1.56963	-2.469	49	.017

Considering the above pretest and posttest results, a p-value of $0.017 \leq 0.05$ was calculated using the paired samples T-test statistical test. The result indicates that the prohibition technique and the improvement of bullying behavior among adolescents' self-esteem have been significantly correlated.

DISCUSSION

Improvement of Self-Esteem in Adolescent Bullying Behavior in the Intervention Group

Based on statistical analysis using the paired samples T-Test, a p-value of $.000 \leq 0.05$ was obtained, indicating that group counseling (support group technique) significantly improves self-esteem in adolescents. Group counseling using the support group approach is a technique that can be implemented to provide emotional and social support to teenagers. This therapy may include support from peers or counselors, enabling participants to mutually support, strengthen, and offer practical solutions when facing bullying incidents. Various strategies can be used to enhance self-

esteem through the support group technique, including several types of peer support. A study by Mandalika et al. (2024) revealed that peer social support significantly affects the increase in self-esteem among students, with a significance value of $0.07 < 0.05$. The R-squared value was 0.200, indicating that peer social support contributed to 20% of the change in self-esteem, while the remaining 80% was influenced by other variables not examined in the study. Other research also shows that self-esteem is linked to aggressive verbal behavior in students, where excessively high self-esteem may lead to narcissistic tendencies, causing individuals to constantly seek perfection in the eyes of their peers. Peer interaction plays a crucial role in shaping a student's personality, developing identity, and improving interpersonal communication skills (Fitri R.P. & Putri N.A., 2025). Research by Rifqoh et al. (2024), through interviews and questionnaires, identified several types of peer social support emotional, informational, esteem-based, and instrumental which were found to be effective in increasing students' self-esteem.

During adolescence, most time is spent with peers, unlike childhood, where most time is spent with family. This shift makes peer groups one of the most influential factors in adolescent life. In social interactions, teenagers typically form peer groups, which significantly influence behavior, including dress styles, speech, substance use, social conduct, acceptance of violence, criminal behavior, and antisocial tendencies. Peer groups can therefore have both positive and negative impacts on adolescent development (Nurul Asyia A.D., et al., 2023). A study by Yudiono & Sulistyono (2020) found that students' affective factors were the most dominant in forming self-esteem, especially in the context of facing exams. Other influential factors included cognitive abilities, personal development, learning environment, and students' ability to interact with peers and teachers.

Improvement of Self-Esteem in Adolescent Bullying Behavior in the Control Group

Statistical analysis using the paired samples T-test stated that a p-value of $.017 \leq 0.05$, indicating a significant correlation between variables. Findings in the control group suggest that providing prohibitions or warnings by counselors may also contribute to improved self-esteem in adolescents. However, numerous other strategies can be more effective in boosting self-esteem beyond simply issuing prohibitions or punishments. These include assertive training, motivational interviewing techniques, and Cognitive Behavioral Group Therapy. A study by Mullan et al. (2023) showed a link between peer treatment, psychological issues, and low self-esteem, with an indirect effect of peer interactions on internalizing symptoms and self-worth. Similarly, Cognitive behavioral group therapy was shown to significantly improve self-esteem in children regardless of the working alliance between the children and their group leaders (Naomi E., et al., 2021). This aligns with research by Ananda et al. (2022), which concluded that there is a significant difference in students' self-esteem levels before and after group counseling sessions. Their findings confirmed the effectiveness of assertive training techniques in increasing adolescent self-esteem. Other studies also support the use of motivational interviewing techniques in group counseling as a means of improving self-esteem and compassion in bullying victims (Fauzi I., et al., 2022). Research by Musyarofah & Juandi (2021) showed that assertive training techniques were moderately effective, scoring 61st in the first cycle reflection and improving to 89th in the second cycle, indicating a substantial increase.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the implementation of group counseling techniques, such as the Support Group Technique, along with other methods including behavioral prohibitions, can effectively improve self-esteem in adolescents as part of efforts to address bullying behavior.

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