The Influence of Individual Counseling Services with REBT Approach to Overcome Social Anxiety in Adolescents at SMPIT Al-Ulum Medan

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to measure the effect of individual counseling services using Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) to overcome adolescent social anxiety at SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan. The type of research used is quasi-experiment. The number of samples used was 10 students who were divided into an experimental class and a control class. The sample used is a non-probability sampling sample using a purposive sampling technique. Data collection was done using a social anxiety psychological scale. Data analysis was carried out using the t-test. This analysis method is to measure the average value of the control class and the experimental class. Based on the paired sample t-Test, it shows that the pair 1 output in the control class obtained a tcount value of 3.604 with a Sig value. (2-tailed) of 0.023 > 0.005 meaning Ho is accepted and Ha is rejected. While the pair 2 output in the experimental class obtained a tcount value of 15.235 with a Sig value. (2-tailed) of 0.000 < 0.005, it means that Ha is accepted and Ho is rejected. This shows that the experimental class using individual counseling services with the Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) approach is effective for overcoming adolescent social anxiety at Al-Ulum Integrated Islamic Junior High School Medan.

Keywords: Individual Counseling; REBT; Anxiety; Social; Adolescents

Abstrak

Tujuan penelitian ini untuk mengukur pengaruh layanan konseling individual *Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy* (REBT) untuk mengatasi kecemasan sosial remaja di SMP Islam A-Ulum Terpadu Medan. Jenis penelitian yang digunakan *quasi eksperiment* . Jumlah sampel yang digunakan sebanyak 10 siswa yang masuk ke dalam kelas eksperimen dan kelas kontrol. Sampel yang digunakan adalah sampel *non-probability sampling* dengan menggunakan teknik *purposive sampling*. Pengumpulan data yang digunakan skala psikologis kecemasan sosial. Analisis data dilakukan dengan menggunakan uji-t (t-Test). Metode analisis ini untuk mengukur nilai rata-rata kelas kontrol dan kelas eksperimen. Berdasarkan uji *paired sample t-Test* memperlihatkan bahwa *output pair* 1 pada kelas kontrol didapatkan nilai t_{hitung} 3,604 dengan nilai Sig. (2-tailed) sebesar 0,023 > 0,005, artinya Ho diterima dan Ha ditolak. Sedangkan *output pair* 2 pada kelas eksperimen didapatkan nilai t_{hitung} 15,235 dengan nilai Sig. (2-tailed) sebesar 0,000 < 0,005, maka berarti Ha diterima dan Ho ditolak. Hal ini menunjukkan kelas eksperimen menggunakan layanan konseling individual dengan pendekatan *Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy* (REBT) efektif untuk mengatasi kecemasan sosial remaja di SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan.

Kata kunci: Konseling Individual; REBT; Kecemasan; Sosial; Remaja

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INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a phase of life where individuals start to recognize various emotions and thoughts. Unconsciously, adolescents experience emotional changes and anxiety disorders that can affect their mental health. They are unable to think clearly at this time due to many emotional impulses leading to inappropriate behavior and behavioral disorders (Pairunan & A. S, 2023). One of the psychological disorders experienced by adolescents is social anxiety.

According to La Greca and Lopez, social anxiety is the feeling of fear, worry, or anxiety related to social environments and the fear of being judged by others. Anxiety is caused by unpleasant events, hostility, or unique encounters with peers that may limit social relationships. Furthermore, Mahmudah (Almizri & Karneli, 2021) explains that physical symptoms such as tension and worry about the future are signs of anxious thinking patterns. Moreover, anxiety is considered a hindrance to learning that can impair cognitive function performance. It makes sense that people with social anxiety would feel uncomfortable and even fearful of doing something embarrassing if they give a wrong impression or receive harsh criticism from others.

Social anxiety aspects are divided into three categories: a) Fear of Negative Evaluation, b) Social Avoidance and Distress in New Situations, and c) Social Avoidance and Distress in General Situations. Fear of Negative Evaluation reflects fear and concern about negative evaluations from others (Greca & Lopez, 1998). This feeling arises because of the perception that others are observing and correcting their behavior and movements and expressing negative opinions about them. Fear of Negative Evaluation is the feeling of fear of being evaluated negatively, avoiding situations related to such evaluations, or expecting to be evaluated negatively by others (Shabani, 2012). For instance, feeling nervous about receiving criticism when speaking in front of others.

Social Avoidance and Distress New Situations refer to anxiety and discomfort when interacting with strangers or in new social environments. La Greca and Lopez claim this state arises when individuals experience anxiety while speaking and are unsure of the cause. Individuals may feel embarrassed at close distances, anxious when meeting new people, avoid social situations, avoid eye contact, and experience anxiety when performing in front of others. For instance, feeling anxious about trying new things in front of new people and fearing starting a conversation with strangers.

Social Avoidance and Distress in General refer to withdrawal from social interactions and anxiety in general situations, whether alone or with familiar people. This condition occurs when an individual's ability to build relationships is compromised. Individuals may hesitate to invite others to participate in activities with them in class because they fear rejection. For example, students may feel hesitant to invite others to join in activities with them in class because they fear rejection.

In reality, some students face psychological challenges in the form of social anxiety, especially in SMP Islam Terpadu Al-Ulum Medan. Social anxiety manifests as restlessness, trembling, difficulty speaking, and a desire to isolate themselves due to a lack of confidence in fully participating in the educational process. Students need to be more active to realize their potential. Since schools play an essential role in social development by creating individuals who can adapt effectively to their environment (Hasbullah, 2013).

Individual counseling is a process where a counselor assists students or clients to reach their maximum potential, solve their problems, and make constructive adjustments (Andriati, 2023). To support individual counseling services, the REBT approach is needed. Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy or REBT is a cognitive-behavioral approach that highlights the relationship between emotions, behavior, and cognition (Seplyana D. , 2019). The purpose of REBT is to eradicate harmful emotional disturbances like anger, guilt, fear, hatred, and anxiety that cause irrational thinking. It also enhances people's capacity and self-esteem, teaching them to face life's challenges rationally (Faziah, 2018)

The aim of this study is to directly demonstrate how Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) techniques used in individual counseling sessions at SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan can effectively overcome adolescent social anxiety. This research can serve as an alternative to address social anxiety in schools.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a quantitative research methodology with a quasi-experimental method. The quasi-experimental method is used because there are control and experimental classes in the research design (Sugiyono, 2010). The Non-equivalent Control Group Design is the experimental strategy used in this study. Pretests and posttests were given to both classes, but treatment was only provided to the experimental class. Posttests were conducted to ensure whether the research subjects received treatment or not, while the control class did not receive treatment with the Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy approach.

The population of this study consists of 53 eighth-grade students at SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan. From this total number of students, a research sample was determined that met the criteria of students experiencing social anxiety problems. Ten students were divided into two classes: five students in class VIII D served as the experimental class and received individual counseling services with the REBT approach, and five students in class VIII E served as the control class and received individual counseling services. The sample used is non-probability sampling using a purposive sampling technique.

According to (Sugiyono, 2012), purposive sampling is a method for selecting samples while considering certain factors. A similar statement is made by (Mulyatiningsi, 2011), who says that purposive sampling is used when the research target sample has predetermined characteristics.

The data collection method used in this study was a questionnaire with a Likert scale format. The instrument used was derived from previous research by Devi Wahyu Kristanti (2021). The questionnaire was then adapted to the research problem and tested for validity and reliability. This questionnaire uses content validity, where item testing is measured based on logic and reasoning to assess the scale used according to the actual measurement goals and support the theory. Testing was done through expert judgment, requiring approval and consideration from the supervising lecturer. The reliability coefficient is expressed between 0 and 100. A reliability coefficient value close to 100 indicates high reliability, while a value close to 0 indicates low dependability of the measurement tool. A Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.730 was found. Using SPSS software, the t-test is the data analysis method applied to this study.

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,742	,898	23

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Pretest Data of Adolescent Social Anxiety in Experimental and Control Classes

NO	Experimental Class			Control Class		
	Code Name	Score	Category	Code Name	Score	Category
1	DAM	66	Tinggi	NK	61	Tinggi
2	DP	61	Tinggi	SAN	70	Tinggi
3	IS	65	Tinggi	AQP	59	Tinggi
4	VAY	62	Tinggi	ZRR	60	Tinggi
5	DSH	66	Tinggi	MNA	61	Tinggi
Total	320			311		
Mean	64			62,2		

Table 1 summarizes the research findings conducted on students in class VIII-D and VIII-E at SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan. Adolescents in the experimental class obtained an average score of 64, while the control class obtained an average score of 62.2, both falling into the high category on the pretest for social anxiety.

Category	Interval	Frequency Experiment	Percentage	Frequency Control	Percentage
Very High	76-92	0	0	0	0
High	58-75	5	100%	5	100%
Low	40-57	0	0	0	0
Very Low	<39	0	0	0	0

The table above shows that the experimental class has 5 students in the high category, and the control class also has 5 students in the high category.

Table 2. Posttest Data of Adolescent Social Anxiety in Experimental and Control Classes

NO	Experimental Class			Control Class		
	Code Name	Score	Category	Code Name	Score	Category
1	DAM	40	Low	NK	57	Low
2	DP	42	Low	SAN	50	Low
3	IS	46	Low	AQP	53	Low
4	VAY	43	Low	ZRR	49	Low
5	DSH	44	Low	MNA	52	Low
Total	215			261		
Mean	43			52,2		

Treatment was given four times after the pretest. After receiving treatment, a posttest was administered to the students to ensure the level of social anxiety after the treatment. Based on the posttest results, the experimental class obtained an average score of 43 in the low category, while the control class obtained an average score of 52.2. (Table 2).

To ensure the validity of the research data, the pretest and posttest data were evaluated using homogeneity and normality tests. Ho is rejected if the population does not follow a normal distribution, indicated by a sig value less than 0.05. Conversely, Ho is accepted if the sig value is more than 0.05, indicating the population is normally distributed.

Table 3. Normality Test Results

Tests of Normality							
Kelas		Kolmogorov-Smirnova			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Pretest	Control	0,407	5	0,007	0,724	5	0,017
	Experiment	0,265	5	,200*	0,836	5	0,154
Postest	Control	0,199	5	,200*	0,941	5	0,67
	Experiment	0,127	5	,200*	0,999	5	1,000

The pretest and posttest scores of the experimental and control classes show significance according to the data processed using the Shapiro-Wilk normality test in Table 3 above. The control class obtained a sig value of 0.017 in the pretest with a sig value > 0.05 and 0.670 in the posttest with a sig value > 0.05. Meanwhile, the experimental class pretest and posttest are normally distributed, as shown by the sig pretest value of 0.154 > 0.05 and sig posttest value of 1.000 > 0.05.

Table 4. Homogeneity Test Results

Test of Homogeneity of Variance		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Social Anxiety Results	Based on Mean	,392	1	8	,549
	Based on Median	,327	1	8	,583
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	,327	1	7,147	,585
	Based on trimmed mean	,363	1	8	,564

The data analysis results in Table 4 show that there is homogeneity or equality between the posttest of the experimental class and the posttest of the control class, indicated by the Significance (Sig) value Based on Mean of 0.549 > 0.05.

Table 5. Linearity Test Results

ANOVA Table			Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Social Anxiety Results	Between Groups	(Combined)	1,833	6	,306	1,375	,428
		Linearity	,186	1	,186	,837	,428
		Deviation from Linearity	1,647	5	,329	1,483	,396
	Within Groups		,667	3	,222		
	Total		2,500	9			

Based on the provisions in the ANOVA table 5 above, if the deviation from linearity sig value > 0.05, it means the data has a linear relationship between variable X (Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy) and variable Y (Adolescent Social Anxiety). The linearity test value above results in a sig deviation from linearity value of 0.396, which means both variables have a linear relationship.

Therefore, to verify the hypothesis of this study, a paired samples t-test can be used. This test is conducted to test the difference in average scores between the experimental class and the control class before and after treatment to determine the treatment's effectiveness. If the significance score is less than the 5% significance level (significance < 0.05), then the data requirements are considered significant. SPSS was used to calculate the results of each test. The paired sample t-test findings for the experimental and control classes are shown in (Table 6) below.

Table 6. Paired Sample t-Test Results

Paired Samples Test		Paired Differences					T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	PretestKontrol – PostestKontrol	10,000	6,205	2,775	2,296	17,704	3,604	4	,023

| Pair 2 | PretestEksperimen – PosttestEksperimen | 21,000 | 3,082 | 1,378 | 17,173 | 24,827 | 15,235 | 4 | ,000 |

Based on the results in Table 6 above, the output pair 1 has a tcount value of 3.604 with a Sig value of 0.023 (2-tailed) > 0.005. The result can be said that there is little or no difference in the average social anxiety markers of the control class adolescents between the pretest and posttest. Ho is accepted, and Ha is rejected. Meanwhile, output pair 2 has a Sig value of 0.000 and a tcount value of 15.235. It can be said that there is a significant difference between the average indicators of social anxiety in adolescents in the pretest and posttest (2-tailed) is 0.000 < 0.005, which means Ha is accepted and Ho is rejected in the experimental class. After applying individual counseling using the Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy method to adolescent social anxiety, the significant improvement in the experimental class shows a clear difference. Meanwhile, there is no significant difference between the control class without the Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy approach. Accordingly, the experimental class at SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan succeeded in alleviating adolescent social anxiety.

Table 7. Independent Samples Test

Independent Samples Test									
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
									Lower	Upper
Social Anxiety Results	Equal variances assumed	,392	,549	5,366	8	,001	9,200	1,715	5,246	13,154
	Equal variances not assumed			5,366	7,258	,001	9,200	1,715	5,175	13,225

To determine whether there is a difference in the average social anxiety of adolescents in the control class compared to the experimental class, we must establish the research hypothesis. Based on the output in Table 7 above, the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances sig value is 0.549 > 0.05, meaning the variance data between the control class and the experimental class is homogeneous or equal.

The table "independent samples test" in the "Equal variances assumed" section shows a sig (2-tailed) value of 0.001 < 0.05. It can be concluded that Ha is accepted and Ho is rejected based on the criteria of the Independent Sample t-Test, meaning there is a significant (actual) difference between the average results of the experimental class and the control class.

DISCUSSION

Overall, compared to the control class that did not receive treatment, this study tested the hypothesis that individual counseling services with the Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) approach effectively address adolescent social anxiety at SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan and the hypothesis can be accepted. This is consistent with the research by Artarika (2020), which investigated the effectiveness of REBT techniques in reducing social anxiety in

bullying victims. The results of her research showed that social anxiety can be reduced, and irrational thinking can be replaced with rational thinking through counseling with the REBT approach, allowing individuals to develop.

According to the findings of the research by (Sari W. , 2021), adolescents at the Tunas Harapan Bangsa orphanage experienced a decrease in social anxiety with counseling using the Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) approach. The high anxiety level in the first cycle decreased to a low average category in the second cycle. The reduction in social anxiety indicates that the client's interaction with others has become more confident.

Albert Ellis created the Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) approach in 1955. It is a cognitive treatment that focuses on the complex relationship between a person's beliefs, feelings, and behaviors (Ulfah M. , 2022). This approach is based on the idea that a person's emotions and behavior are directly influenced by their interpretation of an event.

Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) is based on the premise that humans have the capacity for both rational and irrational thinking from birth. One of the illogical beliefs in students' cognition is the lack of self-esteem and confidence in their capacity to do anything. This situation will affect students' emotions, which will be shown in abnormal behavior (Siregar, 2023).

According to Willis, REBT counseling helps clients overcome irrational attitudes, perceptions, ways of thinking, beliefs, and views to achieve optimal self-actualization, including controlling self-destructive emotional barriers such as fear, anxiety, guilt, anger, and worry. Prevention can be done through education and training that enables individuals to face life's realities rationally and strengthen self-confidence, values, and skills (Willis, 2014)

Counseling activities using the REBT approach to reduce adolescent social anxiety were conducted over four meetings. This was based on hypothesis testing by observing the results of the pretest and posttest differences, which showed that the pretest results were in the high category. Based on individual counseling with the REBT approach, the activities were tailored to the objectives and materials discussed, including: (1) The first session involved building rapport with the students to establish a good relationship during the counseling process. After seeing that the students felt comfortable, the researcher conducted the exploration stage by asking questions to gather information about the problems experienced by the students. (2) In the second session, addressing the students' thinking by the confrontation stage. After recognizing the problems, the researcher sought solutions by changing irrational thinking into rational thinking, emphasizing that what the students experienced and felt was a product of their own thoughts. The researcher provided assertive training exercises, encouraging and habituating students with desired behavior patterns, so they could express what was in their hearts to the public and become accustomed to speaking, with the hope that students would change for the better. To address behavior, the researcher also used reinforcement techniques to change irrational values and beliefs in students and replace them with more positive values. (3) The third session aimed to resolve anxiety problems arising from a lack of self-confidence due to negative thoughts about others' judgments. The researcher applied the Self Modeling technique, where the researcher acted as a role model, and the students tried to follow by introducing themselves in front of the class and sharing personal stories with those around them. This was to help students understand that as social beings, it is necessary to express themselves and voice their feelings. The researcher also used relaxation techniques, encouraging students to combat negative assumptions or perceptions and to say to themselves, "I believe I can." (4) The fourth session involved evaluation/follow-up. After the consultation process, the researcher asked about any changes that had occurred. The students reported that they had started to ask questions and communicate in public, even though they still felt sudden fear. The students also acknowledged that their anxiety was a form of negative thinking, and they had tried to change to develop themselves. The researcher held discussions to review the students' success after counseling and provided motivation to prevent social anxiety.

After individual counseling activities, a posttest was administered to measure the level of social anxiety after receiving treatment, and the posttest results were in the low category. Based on the research results, the researcher concluded that the experimental class using the REBT approach showed significant improvement, particularly in students not feeling anxious alone (not isolated), becoming more confident, and being able to solve their problems. Compared to the control class without the REBT approach, there was improvement but not maximally significant changes. Therefore, individual counseling with the REBT approach is effective in addressing adolescent social anxiety at SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan.

Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) conducted in individual counseling helps students not feel alone, be able to solve their problems, be more confident, contribute to others, and follow the researcher's instructions (Putri, 2019). REBT is a method that emphasizes cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects, making it an appropriate substitute for addressing anxiety (Fakhriyani, Sa'idah, & Annajih, 2021).

Although individual counseling services with the REBT approach can help adolescents at SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan overcome social anxiety, the researcher faced several challenges during the process. Specifically, the researcher found it very difficult to foster open communication and participation from the students in the first session. The students receiving counseling appeared withdrawn and were not fond of the practice.

However, by asking many questions, showing empathy, and building trust, the researcher could overcome this challenge. The goal was to help students feel more at ease and comfortable expressing their emotions. Additionally, the researcher tried to calm the students by providing praise, encouragement, and support when they began to speak about the issues they were facing

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the level of social anxiety before treatment (pretest) was in the high anxiety category. After treatment (posttest), the social anxiety condition was in the low category. The experimental class using the REBT approach showed significant improvement compared to the control class without the REBT approach, which showed improvement but not maximally significant changes. Individual counseling with the REBT approach is effective in addressing adolescent social anxiety at SMP Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan.

Guidance and counseling teachers in schools are required to be able to conduct individual counseling with the REBT approach as a means to improve services that meet the needs of individuals experiencing social anxiety.

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