

HEALING WORDS WITH MEANING: THE IMPACT OF EXISTENTIAL–HUMANISTIC GROUP COUNSELING ON VERBAL BULLYING SURVIVORS

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of the existential–humanistic approach in supporting the psychological recovery of verbal bullying victims in Islamic boarding schools. Verbal bullying can cause detrimental psychological impacts, such as decreased self-confidence, heightened anxiety, difficulty concentrating, declining academic performance, loss of interest in previous activities, and a reduction in previously positive social relationships, all of which hinder the emotional and academic development of students. Therefore, an intervention is needed to help victims of verbal bullying. The general objective of this study is to determine the extent to which group counseling using the existential–humanistic approach can improve the psychological condition of student victims of verbal bullying. The specific objectives are to measure changes in anxiety levels, concentration difficulties, academic performance, interest in activities, social relationships, and self-esteem after participating in group counseling sessions. This study employs a One Group Pre-Test Post-Test design, in which respondents are assessed before and after the group counseling intervention. Data will be collected using questionnaires measuring anxiety, depression, and self-esteem, and will then be analyzed to determine significant differences. The expected outcome of this study is to prove the effectiveness of group counseling with the existential–humanistic technique in reducing psychological disturbances among student victims of verbal bullying. The findings are anticipated to provide practical contributions to the development of counseling programs in Islamic boarding schools to support students' mental well-being.

Keywords: Anxiety; Existential–Humanistic Counseling; Islamic Boarding Schools; Self-Esteem; Verbal Bullying

INTRODUCTION

There is a frequent occurrence of violence cases in our social and school environments, which we learn about through information from platforms like Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, television, magazines, and other social media. There are some forms of aggressive or violent behavior that commonly occur in madrasah environments, but have not received special attention from the madrasah authorities, one of which is bullying. This behavior is not unfamiliar to society and is usually prone to occur among teenagers, both as victims and as bullies. According to Sarwono, adolescence is a development in human beings that has three aspects, namely biological, psychological, and socio-economic, with an age range of 10-20 years. Adolescence is an individual who is developing when they begin to show secondary sexual signs until they reach sexual maturity, an individual who experiences psychological development from childhood to adulthood, and an individual who undergoes a transition from full social and economic dependence on the situation to greater independence. At this time, there is a high risk of delinquency and violence among adolescents, both as victims and as perpetrators of violent acts. One of them is bullying.

According to Schott in Darmayanti (Darmayanti & Situmorang, 2019), bullying is an aggressive act, both physical and verbal, carried out by individuals and groups to hurt the hearts and feelings of others. The categories of bullying include 5 (five) categories, namely Physical, Verbal, Direct Non-verbal Behavior, Indirect Non-verbal Behavior, and Sexual Harassment. According to Isnayanti (Isnayanti, 2020), it is said that verbal bullying is an act of violence or harassment using negative words that are inappropriate such as mocking, scolding, teasing, cursing, giving unwanted nicknames to someone, which can disturb the comfort of a person's life. Indeed, verbal bullying behavior has a very harmful

impact on all parties because bullying is an extremely aggressive act that can repeatedly hurt others. However, this act of bullying is a very heinous act that is forbidden by religion and the state. Bullying often occurs among the community, especially among adolescents who are in school or university. It is difficult for us to avoid it, because of the lack of self-awareness from each individual that bullying is something bad that can cause harm to both the perpetrator and the victim of bullying.

Bullying can occur anywhere, whether in school environments or in social settings. Even in boarding schools, where the nuance is the study of religion, which is known for its high religious values, bullying still often occurs. Not to mention at Pondok Pesantren Al-Qur'an Ibnu Katsir 1 Jember, which is an educational institution that focuses on its students to memorize the Quran 30 juz, be able to read books and attend S1 level courses. This can be known by researchers through observations of the students at Pondok Pesantren Ibnu Katsir 1 Jember, where bullying occurs in the form of verbal abuse towards some students, such as calling them by nicknames, mocking or teasing their speech, appearance, and this is confirmed by the researcher by conducting direct interviews with one of the *asatidz* who is a staff member. He acknowledges that the verbal bullying that occurs at Pondok Pesantren Ibnu Katsir 1 Jember is a form of verbal bullying, Alhamdulillah there have been no cases of bullying that have escalated to physical violence. Bentuk bullying yang biasa dilakukan terhadap sesama santri adalah bullying verbal, yaitu mengolok-olok penampilan atau fisik temannya, ada juga yang mengejek logat bicaranya di karenakan mahasiswa yang berasal dari berbagai daerah. Dia mentions several indicators of verbal bullying that can indicate the presence of verbal bullying, as presented by Kurnia et al. (2019), including: embarrassing in front of the public, which can be seen from students being embarrassed in front of the public, accusing, teasing, or mocking, which can be seen from students teasing or mocking others when they go forward for a speech, jeering, which can be seen from students imitating the tone of another student, calling by nickname, which can be seen from students calling some students by their nicknames, intimidation or threat, which can be seen from students being threatened until they feel uncomfortable, insulting or slandering, which can be seen from students making fun of or slandering other students, causing them to feel hurt.

Methods that can be used to help the psychological well-being of students who have experienced verbal bullying at Pondok Pesantren Ibnu Katsir 1 Jember can be implemented by using existential-humanistic techniques. Existential-humanistic techniques are one approach within the field of counseling and psychotherapy that emphasizes human existential experience and understanding of the meaning of life, including the existential-humanistic approach. This approach focuses on human nature, including self-reflection, responsiveness to experiences, individual responsibility, the opportunity to make decisions, and essentially finding one's own existential meaning. Challenges faced by humans in modern life should encourage them to seek solutions through the counseling process. Counseling is defined as a face-to-face guidance activity between the counselor and the client who have special expertise in the field of counseling (Harita, 2022). As stated in the research conducted by Sumantri, counseling is a learning process for individuals to achieve self-actualization, understand themselves, and develop themselves so that they can determine attitudes and behaviors that can improve the quality of their lives (Sumantri & Ahmad, 2019). According to Wahyuni in (Miftachul 'Ilmi, 2022), in the counseling service activity, a certain approach is needed so that the counselor and the client can achieve their goals.

In the context of counseling services, there are various approaches that are implemented, one of which is the existential-humanistic approach aimed at building awareness in the individual being counseled so that they can develop self-awareness and be able to make independent and responsible decisions regarding the consequences of the decisions made (Pranajaya et al., 2020). In other research, it is also mentioned that this existential-humanistic approach is still often implemented in the counseling process and is considered effective for enhancing the meaning of life for an individual (Batubara, 2020). With this approach, one can gain a deep understanding of oneself, increase self-awareness, explore their potential, and develop responsibility for the decisions they make in their lives. As expressed by (Pranajaya et al., 2020) in their research that existential-humanistic counseling is based on the assumption of human beings that humans cannot escape from the freedom and responsibility that are interconnected as a central aspect of human existence. The existential-humanistic approach is one that helps the counselor in building awareness of the individual's existence, thereby encouraging individuals

to be open and acknowledge their abilities (Jannah et al., 2023). This study aims to identify the effect of group counseling with existential humanistic techniques to help psychic verbal victims of bullying in the Al-Quran Islamic Boarding School Ibnu Katsir 1 Jember Islamic Boarding School. Through this approach it is hoped that students can better understand so as to provide in-depth insights about how people function psychologically in everyday life.

METHOD

Research conducted currently using the type of research using experimental research methods. Conditions in experimental research are more controlled to find the influence of a certain treatment on other variables (Sugiyono, 2020). The type of experiment used is pre-experimental designs. This study uses one group pre-test post-test, the design of this study was conducted pre-test before being given treatment so that the results of the treatment can be known more accurately because the post-test results can be compared to the situation before being treated. The results of the two tests are compared to testing whether the treatment given is able to reduce verbal bullying behavior in the students who are examined. The illustration of the Post-Test Design One-Test Design pre-test is as follows:

Experimental Design Pattern: Pre-Test Post-Test Design

$O_1 \quad X \quad O_2$

information :

- O1 = Provision of pre-tests, namely measurement of the level of mahasantri verbal bullying behavior
- O2 = Post-test to re-measure the level of mahasantri verbal bullying behavior.
- X = *Treatment administration uses existential humanistic techniques.*

The reason why the author uses the design of this research is to compare and measure a decrease in the level of Verbal Mahasantri Bullying Behavior using the experimental group that will be carried out twice a test, namely pre-test and post-test then treatment is carried out using group counseling services using humanistic existential techniques. The results of the two tests are compared to testing whether the treatment given is able to reduce the level of the Bullying Verbal Verbal Mahasantri

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study aims to determine the effectiveness of group counseling with existential humanistic techniques to help psychic victims of verbal bullying victims, and can understand the steps of existential humanistic techniques to help psychic victims of verbal bullying. A) Pre-Test Implementation: Researchers use a classification system to assess the score that is considered high. This classification helps classify individuals into discrete groups step by step. And from the description above, a group or individual can be categorized low obtained from the formula $n < 153$, n is the score value and 153 is the lowest average score of 8 respondents, which means that the value of n must be smaller than the lowest score of 153. can 204. And it can be categorized as height obtained from the formula $n \geq 204$, n is the final score value and 204 is the average value of the score of 18 respondents, which means that the N value must be greater than the value of the rated score of the respondent's average of 204. From the table above, it can be seen that the process of memorizing the Quran by an individual, obtained from each student through a slow and high process, starts from 215, 227, 236, and 211. Therefore, from the survey results of the above Quran memorization process, there are 4 students who achieved high scores with initials MI, AN, AA, and WH. Some others fall into the moderate category with 11 students, and 3 students fall into the low category. From these 8 respondents, some answered statements covering whether they have self-burden in going through the boarding school programs, or experiencing obstacles in the memorization process, hence the researcher uses existential humanistic techniques to help the psychological victims of verbal bullying. B) Treatment: The type of treatment in this study is a humanistic existential technique to help psychic verbal victims of bullying which is carried out in four

stages. And in each meeting there are four stages Yanag Garus is carried out in approximately 30 minutes with stages with the RPL that has been determined. C) Implementation of post-test: In this study, the implementation of post-test was carried out right after the implementation of treatment, so there were 4 post-tests that were carried out. Santri were asked to fill in a verbal bullying questionnaire with the aim of finding out if there was a decline in helping the psychic victims of verbal bullying. The fourth results of the post-test can be seen in the following table.

Table 1. Post-Test

No.	Resp.	Pre-test		Post-test 1	
		Scor	Is	Scor	Is
1	RD	203	High	218	High
2	MH	202	High	177	Currently
3	NR	210	High	186	Currently
4	AL	204	High	149	Low
No.	Resp.	Pre-test		Post-test 2	
		Scor	Is	Scor	Is
1	RD	203	High	183	Currently
2	MH	202	High	200	Currently
3	NR	210	High	181	Currently
4	AL	204	High	196	Currently
No.	Resp.	Pre-test		Post-test 3	
		Scor	Ket	Scor	Ket
1	RD	203	High	142	Low
2	MH	202	High	145	Low
3	NR	210	High	94	Normal
4	AL	204	High	126	Low
No.	Resp.	Pre-test		Post-test 4	
		Scor	Is	Scor	Is
1	RD	203	High	75	Normal
2	MH	202	High	129	Low
3	NR	210	High	108	Low
4	AL	204	High	88	Normal

After a post-test, a significant difference will be seen regarding the picture of the psychological level of verbal bullying victims before and after treatment. The measurement results carried out during pre-test and psychic post-test of verbal bullying victims have decreased after being given group counseling services using the existential humanistic approach experienced by students can be seen in the table Judging from the results of pre-test and post-test comparisons that can be seen that from the data displayed above, there are significant differences between before and after being treated. This shows that the existential humanistic technique approach to help psychic verbal bullying victims is considered capable of reducing the behavior of the mahasantri verbal bullying.

Reliability Test

Items from the questionnaire that are already valid because they use Gadzella's Student-Life Stress Inventory (SLSI) which amounted to 50 items and then tested reliability using SPSS 25.00 for Windows and the results of reliability tests can be described as follows:

ORIGINAL ARTICLES

Table 2. Reliability Test

		N	%
Cases	Valid	4	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	4	100,0

Table 3. Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha ^a	N of Items
-1,290	50

From the results of the table above, it can be seen that the value specified is 0.60 with a Cronbachs Alpha value of 0.955. Because the Cronbachs Alpha value is $0.955 > 0.60$, so as the basis for taking the Reliable Test above, it can be concluded that all items in the statement of the memorization process questionnaire totaling 50 items are reliable or consistent.

Hypothesis Testing

Research methods conducted by researchers are pre-experimentation with the research design of one group pre-test post-test. The final stage in a study is a hypothesis test conducted using statistics. The following are the results of the hypothesis test that is processed using the Wilcoxon test with the help of the SPSS VER application

Table 4. Wilcoxon test ranking (pre-test and post-test 1)

		Ranks		
		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
posttest - pretest	Negative Ranks	4 ^a	2,50	10,00
	Positive Ranks	0 ^b	,00	,00
	Ties	0 ^c		
	Total	4		
a. posttest1 < pretest				
b. posttest1 > pretest				
c. posttest1 = pretest				

In the ranking results the results show that between the pre-test and post-test there is a negative ranks value of 4 which shows that 4 students have decreased in verbal bullying from the pre-test value to the post-test value. The mean ranks or the average decline in the level is 10.00 while the number of ranking or sum of ranks is 10.00. At the positive ranks value of 0 shows that there is no increase in the level of memorization from the pre-test value to the post-test value.

Table 5. Results of Hypothesis Test (Pre-test and Post-test 1)

Test Statistics	
	posttest -pretest
Z	-1,826 ^b
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,068
a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test	
b. Based on positive ranks.	

The results of the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test, which is a non-parametric test suitable for comparing two related samples without assuming normal distribution (Field, 2018; Conover, 1999), indicate that

the Z value was -1.826 and the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) was 0.068 . The negative Z score reflects the direction of differences between pre-test and post-test scores, while the p-value greater than 0.05 suggests that there is no statistically significant difference at the 5% level. However, since the result is close to the threshold ($p < 0.10$), it can be interpreted as a trend toward significance (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2017), implying that the intervention may have had some effect even though the small sample size or variability limited statistical confirmation. Despite the lack of strong statistical significance, the findings remain meaningful in applied educational and counseling contexts, as small to moderate improvements can still justify the practical use of group counseling interventions, particularly when supported by qualitative evidence of positive student experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

CONCLUSION

This study shows that group counseling with existential–humanistic techniques has the potential to ease the psychological burden of verbal bullying victims in Islamic boarding schools. Although the statistical results did not meet the conventional standard of significance, the findings indicate a tendency toward improvement that suggests the intervention may positively influence students' well-being. This approach helps foster greater self-awareness, responsibility, and resilience, which are essential for recovery from the negative impacts of bullying. The practical contribution of this model is also important, as even small improvements can create a more supportive and healthier learning environment. Therefore, existential–humanistic group counseling can be viewed as a valuable alternative strategy for addressing the harmful effects of verbal bullying while supporting the holistic development of students in educational settings.

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