

## Increasing self-esteem of high school students through narrative counseling

**Najma Sana Nadhirah Hilman**

Guidance and Counseling, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Indonesia

Email: [najmasanan@upi.edu](mailto:najmasanan@upi.edu)

**Anne Hafina**

Guidance and Counseling, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Indonesia

Email: [annehafina@upi.edu](mailto:annehafina@upi.edu)

**Ilfiandra**

Guidance and Counseling, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Indonesia

Email: [ilfiandra@upi.edu](mailto:ilfiandra@upi.edu)

Coresspondent Author: [najmasanan@upi.edu](mailto:najmasanan@upi.edu)

(received: 01-08-2023; revised: 07-12-2023; published: 17-12-2023)

**Abstract:** This research aims to show that narrative counseling can increase adolescents' self-esteem. The research approach used is mixed-method with an embedded design. The instrument is based on the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (CSEI) which measures four aspects of self-esteem. The research subjects in this study were 3 high school adolescents in class XI. The results of the research showed that there was a change in self-esteem in the three teenagers, which was indicated by receiving sufficient recognition and feeling worthy, which means that narrative counseling can increase the self-esteem of adolescents who experience self-harm. However, of the three adolescents, one adolescent still committed self-harm with infrequent frequency even though his self-esteem was already in the medium category. This suggests that there are other variables that influence someone to do self-harm, such as self-concept. Apart from that, the factors influencing a person's self-esteem are different. Further analysis is needed regarding these factors.

**Keywords:** narrative counseling; self-esteem; adolescents.

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menunjukkan konseling naratif dapat meningkatkan harga diri remaja. Pendekatan penelitian yang digunakan ialah *mixed-method* dengan desain *the embedded-design*. Instrumen didasarkan pada *Coopersmith Self Esteem Inventory* (CSEI) yang mengukur empat aspek harga diri. Subjek penelitian dalam penelitian ini ialah 3 remaja SMA kelas XI. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan terjadinya perubahan harga diri pada ketiga remaja yang ditunjukkan dengan cukup adanya pengakuan yang diterima dan cukup merasa berharga, yang artinya konseling naratif dapat meningkatkan harga diri remaja dengan pengalaman *self-harm*. Namun, dari ketiga remaja, pasca diberikan konseling naratif terdapat satu remaja yang masih melakukan *self-harm* dengan frekuensi jarang walau harga diri sudah berada dalam kategori sedang. Artinya terdapat variabel lain yang mempengaruhi seseorang melakukan *self-harm* seperti konsep diri. Selain itu, faktor yang mempengaruhi harga diri seseorang pun berbeda-beda. Maka dibutuhkan analisis lebih lanjut terkait faktor tersebut.

**Kata kunci:** konseling naratif; harga diri; remaja.

Copyright © 2023 Universitas Negeri Makassar. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

## INTRODUCTION

Problems during adolescence are called the "storm and stress" period, characterized by conflict with parents, bad habits, and mood disruptions (Claes et al., 2018). Adolescents also experience other problems, including self-confidence problems and emotional problems (Fitri et al., 2018); (Lestarina, 2022); (Nurrahma, 2023). Emotional problems can affect a person's self-esteem, and how they regulate their emotions.

Self-esteem is the result of judgments made by individuals about their abilities. It is about how they and the people around them treat themselves. These judgments also take the form of people attitude of acceptance or rejection, approval or disapproval, which show how much they believe they are capable.

Individuals with high self-esteem will express feelings that they are "good enough" (Moksnes & Reidunsdatter, 2019). They will feel that they are valuable people who can respect and admire themselves, and do not expect others to admire them. Individuals with high self-esteem will also be able to control themselves (Nofitriani, 2020) and increase their resilience, so that they will have the ability to face and solve the problems they experience effectively (Budiyanto, 2021).

Individuals with low self-esteem will think that they are worthless. Individuals with low self-esteem usually experience failure in achieving satisfaction, lack confidence in their ability to overcome problems, have difficulty controlling their emotions, and tend to blame themselves (Ramba, 2022), have a negative evaluation of themselves (Febrina et al., 2018) indicated by attitudes of avoiding taking risks and choosing to protect themselves from problems (Ardaningrum & Savira, 2022) so that in life they tend to have feelings of insecurity. Adolescents with low self-esteem tend to engage in avoidance as a symptom of depression because they are unable to face their life problems.

Increasing self-esteem can be done in several ways. Studies in the field of Guidance and Counseling examining adolescents' self-esteem and interventions are widely carried out including group guidance (Sarwan, 2018). Group counseling services are believed capable of increasing adolescent self-esteem (Yunita, 2020). Other researches included group counseling using assertive training techniques (Rusmana et al., 2020); cognitive behavioral play therapy (Aren & Duamit, 2020); cognitive behavioral therapy (Mahardika, 2023) in increasing individuals' self-

esteem.

Another effort that can be made to increase self-esteem is narrative counseling. Narrative counseling focuses on how individuals make meaning of their life story by creating a new story. There was a research that tested narrative counseling and showed that it is applicable in developing adolescents' self-concept (Haslinah et al., 2021).

Based on the discussion above, this research aims to increase high school students' self-esteem through narrative counseling. This was done because no previous research has discussed narrative counseling in detail to increase adolescent self-esteem. Hopefully, with narrative counseling, adolescents can recreate new stories that contain the meaning of life from the past saturated stories. Therefore, the new story will create a personal form of adolescents who are full of appreciation, recognition, self-acceptance, and self-recognition. That way they will be able to control themselves well and create good and positive personal conditions in solving all life's problems by continuing to rise and fight.

## METHODS

The research used a mixed-method approach with an embedded design, which collects quantitative data and qualitative data simultaneously or sequentially but still with one form of data that played a supporting role to the other forms of data. The research design used for quantitative data was single-subject research with an AB design starting with a baseline (A) and then followed by the intervention (B). Meanwhile, the research design used for qualitative data was a case study that aimed to explore a case over time in depth by involving various sources of information. Participants in this research were all class XI students of SMA Negeri 1 Bandung aged 15-17 years, while the subjects of this research were three adolescents.

The research process began with measuring self-esteem using a questionnaire to describe the general picture of self-esteem for class XI adolescents as a baseline condition. The questionnaire was based on the operational definition of self-esteem put forward by Coopersmith in his book "The Antecedents of Self Esteem" in 1967 with aspects of items taken from the Coopersmith Self Esteem Inventory (CSEI) which were translated and adapted to the subject

and research needs, but it still measured four aspects including aspects of power (power), significance (meaningfulness), virtue (virtue) and competence (ability). The scale used was a Likert scale.

After that, interviews and observations were conducted as supporting data to determine research samples who needed narrative counseling based on the negative self-esteem and experiences of self-harm. Narrative counseling intervention sessions were carried out for 5 sessions which referred to the 7 stages of narrative counseling. After that, data analysis was carried out using descriptive statistical methods to see the increase in self-esteem scores during baseline conditions compared to intervention conditions. Furthermore, interviews and observations were carried out to see the dynamics of adolescent self-esteem.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From 298 adolescents, was found that 40 students were included in the high category, which means that students had accepted themselves as they were because they felt that they were valuable. The majority of students have self-esteem in the medium category as many as 212 students, which means that the majority of students feel that they accept themselves as they are because they feel that they are valuable enough.

Meanwhile, there were 46 students in the low category, which means that students tend not to accept themselves as they are because they feel that they are worthless, have personal conditions that tend to be negative such as bad attitudes in interacting with other people, negative self-concept, and low resilience. Students with low self-esteem categories need others help to develop high self-esteem. Efforts made to increase adolescents' self-esteem included narrative counseling.

Narrative counseling is an effort to help students map their life problems and to separate themselves from those. The narrative counseling applied to the three students was based on 7 stages of narrative counseling. The first stage was to tell the story and listen to the problem-saturated. The stories told by the three students were stories full of sadness, despair, and even frustration they had suffered all along.

The second stage was naming and externalizing the problem, in which students were able to name it properly. In this case, student A named it names "pillow", student B "cellphone",

and student C "anti-hero". After giving a name to the problem, the next process was problem externalization, which was the separation of the problem from the individual because the problem was seen as outside the individual, not part of the soul, personality, and individual itself. Narrative counseling did not blame students for the problem, but focused on how students could discover their potential and skills. In this way, students did not see themselves as the source of the problem, but rather saw the problem from another point of view.

The third stage was the relative influence questioning as a detecting clue to competence, which aimed to lead students to recall what situations they felt problems did not come to them, and which situations made problems come to them. The counselor asked students to write down what kind of situation made problem come and what impact it had, as well as what kind of situation made the problem go away. From this stage, students learned what activities they had to do to prevent the problem from arising, which were then piloted over several days.

The fourth stage was deconstructions of unique outcomes. In this stage, counselors directed students to expand the circumstances and nature of unique outcomes. This was done by asking questions covering unique results in their feelings, actions, and thoughts in the past, present, and future.

The fifth stage was remembering alternative stories to prompt students to remember comfortable situations and people who made an impression on their hearts when they behaved well. This made students realize that the people around them are valuable.

The sixth stage was metaphors for re-authoring. This stage was the stage where students rewrote their life story into a newer, fresher, and more meaningful story. In the first and second counseling sessions, the counselor helped students deconstruct their problems. When the three students had obtained the meaning of their problems, they saw that there was another gap which enabled them to live without the shadow of the problem just by seeing a different point of view as a result of the externalization of the problem. In this moment, counselors provided appreciation and support to students so that students could be confident in the new stories they create. Thus, in the 3rd counseling session, the students started to have the intention to create a new story, and in the 4th counseling session, the students began to write down their new story. When a new story is discovered, this becomes a person's opportunity to

focus themselves better in the future. In writing a new story, all three students showed an improvement in their thinking and this became the strength they hoped for in creating their new life story.

The final stage was documenting the evidence as a therapeutic document. This therapeutic document is a manifestation of effectiveness regarding what has been done, what changes have been made, and will be made to save someone's life.

After being given narrative counseling intervention, the three students experienced changes in self-esteem which started from the low category (baseline), to the medium category (intervention). It was found that 15.4% or 46 students had low self-esteem. Of the 46 students, three students were determined as intervention subjects. Measurements were carried out using a self-esteem scale twice in two weeks. After that, intervention was carried out for one month, and post-intervention measurements were carried out to reveal the dynamics of students A, B, and C's self-esteem.

Student A had low self-esteem with a score of ( $X=98.5$ ) in the baseline condition, and experienced a change in score of  $+15.5$  after the intervention so that he is now in the medium category with a score of ( $X=114$ ). Student B had low self-esteem with a score of ( $X=92.5$ ) in the baseline condition, and experienced a change in score of  $+13.5$  after the intervention so that he is now in the medium category with a score of ( $X=106$ ). Student C had low self-esteem with a score of ( $X=97.5$ ) in the baseline condition, and experienced a change in score of  $+11.5$  after the intervention so that he is now in the medium category with a score of ( $X=109$ ). After the intervention, students had moderate self-esteem.

Self-esteem is individuals view or assessment of themselves or things related to them, such as recognition and respect. Changes in self-esteem in teenagers are something that is always highlighted, because this has quite a big impact on adolescents' lives. Self-esteem is also based on the idea of incongruity, meaning the difference between the desired or ideal self and the actual current self. Self-esteem has four aspects, namely power, significance, virtue, and competence.

The power aspect is an aspect of self-esteem where the ability of adolescents to influence and control other people and themselves

is demonstrated by appreciation and respect from other people. The three students have low self-esteem in the power aspect. Students A and C had a significant change in scores from the baseline to the post-condition after narrative counseling on the indicator of other people's assessment regarding the contribution of individual opinions or thoughts, meaning that this aspect has an influence on their authority. Adolescents who have this aspect will show an assertive attitude, which is an attitude where adolescents have the courage to express their disagreements and are capable of overcoming anxiety. This condition increases adolescents' self-acceptance (Husnah et al., 2022).

A Study described that there is a relationship between self-acceptance and self-esteem (Oktaviani, 2019). Self-acceptance is indicated by the existence of confidence and the ability to deal with life, think positively, and not assume that other people reject their existence. In other words, self-acceptance is related to the social support received by the individual (Nugraha & Budiman, 2020). When someone gets social support from those around them, they will slowly adapt themselves to the existing situation as a form of overcoming life's problems so that they believe that they are capable and valuable.

The aspect of significance is an aspect of self-esteem which is related to an individual's meaningfulness in their environment. Students A and B experienced a significant increase in scores from the baseline condition to the condition after being given narrative counseling on acceptance indicators in the form of appreciation, attention, and concern that individuals received from other people. Students A and B have saturated stories that came from family backgrounds.

Student A has an intact family, while student B comes from a broken home. Broken home becomes an important variable that can influence adolescent self-esteem (Reskiana et al., 2022). The broken home background of adolescents also affects resilience which will affect one's self-esteem. (Mayfani et al., 2022); (Muhayati et al., 2022); (Lestari & Huwae, 2023). Adolescents with low resilience tend not to have the ability to solve life problems (Gunawan & Maramis, 2023). Adolescents with divorced parents tend to have low self-esteem, such as being lonely, unable to solve problems, and tend to avoid other people.

The virtue aspect is an aspect that explains

how individuals adhere to moral values, ethics, and rules that exist in society. When individuals show behavior that is expected and desired by society, then society will appreciate and respect these individuals with the label of good and exemplary individuals, resulting in high self-esteem. Student C tends to disobey the ethics, morals, and rules of the religion he adheres to. This was shown by the moment when there was thing or condition that made student C uncomfortable. Under such circumstance, he will blame himself and engage self-harm.

Adolescents who engage in self-harming behavior tend to feel they are worthless, proving that there is a relationship between self-esteem and self-injury behavior which could be caused by many factors. Other research also shows the influence of self-esteem on a person's tendency to engage in self-injury behavior, where the higher a person's self-esteem, the lower they are in committing self-injury behavior (Putri, 2020); (Purwandura et al., 2022).

The competence aspect is an aspect of self-esteem where there is the adolescent's ability to carry out tasks, and the adolescent's ability to solve a problem and make decisions. Adolescents' self-esteem will influence their achievement at school (Christy & Mythili, 2020); (Orth & Robins, 2022); (Shoaib, 2022). High self-esteem will make individuals more persistent in achieving their goals. Research finds a positive relationship linked to self-esteem, academic success and academic skills (Vacalares et al., 2023). Those concluded that three students experienced changes in self-esteem in the four aspects of self-esteem.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Narrative counseling is an effort to help students map their life problems so that they can separate themselves from their problems. Narrative counseling is also an effort to help students create new stories from saturated stories and give life meaning to them so that these new stories can form new individuals with full of appreciation, recognition, self-acceptance, and self-recognition. Thus, students will be able to control themselves better and create positive personal conditions in solving all life problems by continuing to rise and fight.

Overall, the seven stages of narrative counseling can be applied to all three students. However, implementation is quite difficult for student C. This happens because C tends to often do self-harm when he is in the counseling period.

So, every time a counseling session starts, C tends to always say that he just did self-harm yesterday. Apart from that, it is quite difficult to solve student C's negative assumptions which always lead to the assumption that C is not appreciated by his friends.

Nevertheless, all three students experienced changes in self-esteem scores and there were changes in the use of sentences during the counseling session. This shows that narrative counseling can increase high school students' self-esteem. Students are able to accept themselves as they are because they feel that they are useful and valuable. Students are also able to show positive behavior in the form of a good attitude in interacting with other people, as well as having a high self-concept and resilience.

This research provides a reference for schools, in relation to the narrative counseling which can be applied to personal domain designs with curative services. It is also able to overcome problems in the development aspect of emotional maturity by internalizing goals in the form of action. Narrative counseling can also be applied to teenagers with problems related to psychological well-being, for example students with low self-concept, difficulty expressing opinions, and lacking self-disclosure.

## REFERENCES

- Ardaningrum, D. Z & Savira, S. I. (2022). Hubungan antara harga diri dengan perilaku asertif mahasiswa selama masa pandemic. *Jurnal Penelitian Psikologi*, 9(7).
- Aren, M & Duamit, A. R. (2020). Effect of behavioral pay therapy (CBPT) techniques on low self-esteem among students. *KONSELOR*, 9(4), 132-139. <https://doi.org/10.24036/0202094111404-0-00>.
- Atayi, M., Razini, H.H. & Hatami, M. (2018). Effect of cognitive-behavioral play therapy in the self-esteem and social anxiety of students. *Journal of Research and Health*, 8(3), 278-285. DOI: 10.29252/jrh.8.3.278
- Budiyanto, A. (2022). Pengaruh *self-esteem*, *self-efficacy*, kepuasan kerja dan pengembangan karier terhadap kinerja karyawan pada PT Notekno Nusantara. *ESENSI: Jurnal Manajemen Bisnis*, 24(3) 297-315. <https://doi.org/10.55886/esensi.v24i3.412>
- Christy, X. I & Mythili, T. (2020). Self-esteem, Self-efficacy and Academic performance

- among Adolescents, *J. Indian Assoc. Child Adolesc Ment. Health*, 16(2), 123-135.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0973134220200209>
- Claes, M., Lacourse, E., dkk. (2018). Parental Control and Conflicts in Adolescence: A Cross-National Comparison of the United States, Canada, Mexico, France, and Italy. *Journal of Family Issues*, 39(16). DOI:10.1177/0192513X18800123
- Edmondson, A. J, Brennan, C & House, A. O. (2018). Using photo-elicitation to understand reasons for repeated self-harm: a qualitative study. *BMC Psychiatry*, 18(98).  
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-018-1681-3>
- Febrina, S. T., Suharso, P. L & Saleh, A. Y. (2018). *Self-esteem* remaja awal: temuan baseline dari rencana program, *self-instructional training* kompetensi diri. *Jurnal Psikologi Insight*, 2(1), 43-56.  
<https://doi.org/10.17509/indight.v2i.11922>
- Fitri, E., Zola, N., & Ifdil, I. (2018). Profil Kepercayaan Diri Remaja serta Faktor-Faktor yang Mempengaruhi. *JPPI (Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Indonesia)*, 4(1), 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.29210/02017182>
- Gunawan, E & Maramis, R. (2023). Resiliensi Remaja Korban Perceraian Orang Tua, *JIVA: Journal of Behaviour and Mental Health*, 4(1), 32-48.
- Haslinah & Pandang, A. (2020). The Implementation of Narrative Counseling to Improve Student's Self-Concept. *Jurnal Psikologi Pendidikan & Konseling*, 6(2), 26-34.
- Husnah, S., Wahyuni, E & Fridani, L. (2022). Gambaran Perilaku Asertif Siswa Sekolah Menengah Atas. *Edukatif: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan, Vol.4(1)*, 1370-1377. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31004/edukatif.v4i1.1858>
- Lestari, T.W.T & Huwae, A. (2023). Forgiveness and Resilience: A Case of Adolcents with Broken Home Divorce, *COUNSENEsia Indonesian Journal of Guidance and Counseling*, 4(1). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36728/cijgc.vi.2407>.
- Lestarina, N. N. W. (2022). Problem Emosi dan Perilaku Remaja Di Wilayah Gresik. *Jurnal Penelitian Kesehatan*, 12(2), 56-61.  
<https://doi.org/10.54040/jpk.v12i2.232>
- Mahardika, A. P. R. (2023). Peningkatan Harga Diri dengan *Cognitive Behavior Group Therapy*. *Jurnal PSIMAWA, Diskursus Ilmu Psikologi & Pendidikan*, 6(1), 11-18.  
<https://doi.org/10.36761/jp.v6i1.2792>
- Mandoa, F., Saud, H & Reba, Y. A. (2021). Penyesuaian Diri Akademik Mahasiswa Ditinjau Dari Regulasi Emosi dan *Self-Esteem*, 3(1), 119-127.  
<https://doi.org/10.26539/pcr.31595>
- Mayfani, S., Adiwinata, A. H & Nadhirah, N. A. (2022). Resilience and Self-esteem of Broken Home Teenagers. *JECO, Journal of Education and Counseling*, 3(1).
- Moksnes, U. K., & Reidunsdatter, R. J. (2019). Self-esteem and mental health in adolescents—level and stability during a school year. *Norsk Epidemiologi*, 28(8), 59-67. <https://doi.org/10.5324/nje.v28i1-2.3052>
- Muhayati, Fikri, M. Z & Juniarly, A. (2022). Hubungan Antara Harga Diri Dengan Resiliensi Pada Remaja Yang Orang Tuanya Bercerai. *Psychology Journal of Mental Health*, 4(1)
- Nofitriani, N. N. (2020). Hubungan antara Kontrol Diri dan Harga Diri Siswa Kelas XII SMAN 8 Bogor. *Jurnal IKRA-ITH Humaniora*, 4(1).
- Nugraha, N. N & Budiman, A. (2020). Hubungan dukungan sosial dan penerimaan diri remaja awal dengan orang tua bercerai, *Prosiding Psikologi*, 6(2).  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.29313/v6i2.22341>
- Nurrahma, I & Khoirunnisa, R. N. (2023). Kematangan Emosi Pada Remaja Korban Perceraian Orang Tua. *Jurnal Penelitian Psikologi*, 10(03), 609-627. P-ISSN: 2252-6129
- Oktaviani, M. A. (2019). Hubungan Penerimaan Diri dengan Harga Diri pada Remaja Pengguna Instagram. *PSIKOBORNEO: Jurnal Ilmiah Psikologi*, 7(4), 549-556.

- <http://dx.doi.org/10.30872/psikoborneo.v7i4.4832>
- Orth, U & Robins, R.W. (2022). Is High Self-Esteem Beneficial? Revisiting a Classic Question. *American Psychological Association*, 77(1), 5-17. <https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000922>
- Purwandura, A.A, Pertiwi, Y.W & Novitasari, F. (2022). Self Esteem dengan Kecenderungan Self Injury pada Mahasiswa yang Mengalami Putus Cinta. *Jurnal Social Philantropic*, Vol. 1(2), 9-15. <https://doi.org/10.31599/sp.v1i2.1810>
- Putri, N. R. (2020). Pengaruh Harga Diri terhadap Kecenderungan Perilaku *Self Injury* pada Siswa SMP Negeri di Kecamatan Tembalang.
- Ramba, R., Gismin, S.S & S Aditya, M. (2023). Pengaruh Regulasi Emosi terhadap Harga Diri pada Siswa SMA yang Menggunakan Media Sosial di Kota Makassar. *Jurnal Psikologi Karakter*, 3(1), 214-219. <https://doi.org/10.56326/jpk.v3i1.2103>
- Reskiana, I., Suwarjo, Asmen, F. (2021). The Effect of Broken Homes on Self-Esteem Among Adolescents in Suka Maju Village. *PSIKOPEDAGOGIA Jurnal Bimbingan dan Konseling*, 10(1), 42-26.
- Rusmana, N., Hafina, A, Siddik, R.R & Nur, L. (2020). Self-esteem development of vocational high school students in indonesia: does group counseling with assertive training technique help?, *Cakrawala Pendidikan*, 39(3). DOI 10.21831/cp.v39i3.31363
- Sarwan, A. (2018). Pengaruh Bimbingan Kelompok terhadap Harga Diri Remaja Kelas X SMAN 5 Tekangon Aceh Tengah. *Jurnal Diversita*, 4(1). DOI: 10.31289/diversita.v4i1.1603
- Shoaib, S. (2022). Self Esteem and Academic Performance of Adolescents, *Indian Journal of Economics and Business*, 21(1)
- Vacalares, S. T., Ocliaman, J., Maglangit, J. M & Ledesma, F.G.R. (2023). The Self-Esteem and Academic Performance in Purposive Communication Class at the Tertiary Level. *International Journal of research and Review*, 10(6). <https://doi.org/10.52403/ijrr.20230609>
- Yunita. (2020). Pentingnya Layanan Konseling Kelompok Terhadap Harga Diri Remaja. *Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan, Psikologi dan Kesehatan*, Vol. 1(3). <https://doi.org/10.51849/j-p3k.v1i3.51>