REBT COUNSELING REDUCES ANXIETY IN BULLIED TEENAGERS AT MTSN X BEKASI

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ABSTRACT

Bullying remains a prevalent issue among adolescents in schools, often without adequate counseling or intervention programs in place to mitigate the physical and psychological impacts. This study aims to assess the efficacy of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) counseling in reducing anxiety among bullied adolescents. Conducted as a quasi-experimental pre-post test with a control group design, the study targeted students in grades VII and VIII at MTSN X Bekasi. Fifty students were selected for both the intervention and control groups. The intervention group received group counseling utilizing the REBT method, while the control group received no treatment. Data analysis involved Dependent Samples Test and Independent Samples Test. Results indicated a significant decrease in anxiety levels among adolescents who underwent REBT intervention, with a reduction of -10.46 (p-value <0.05). The effectiveness of REBT counseling was evident in the significant decrease in anxiety levels (p-value <0.001), contrasting with the control group, where anxiety levels remained relatively unchanged (p-value 0.209). These findings underscore the effectiveness of REBT counseling in alleviating anxiety among bullied adolescents. It emphasizes the importance of implementing REBT-based counseling interventions in schools through collaborative efforts among stakeholders.

Keywords: adolescents; anxiety; rational emotive behavior therapy (REBT)

INTRODUCTION

One of the problems among adolescents, according to Fuhrmann, is aggressive behavior, with bullying being a common manifestation. Bullying can be defined as the act of harming others verbally, physically, or psychologically to assert dominance, causing trauma and feelings of distress in the victim (Firmawati & Sudirman, 2021). Bullying victims are typically students, and at the secondary level, the victims of this violence include the parents and families of the victims. Bullying affects bystanders such as peers in the classroom or other students in the school who are aware of the bullying (Smith & Brain, 2000).Adolescents represent the largest population in the world, totaling 2 billion individuals or 18% of the world's population. In Indonesia, with a population of 270,203,917, adolescents constitute 17%, or 46 million of the country's population (UNICEF, 2021). Data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) indicates that from 2016 to 2020, the KPAI recorded 917 complaints related to bullying. This figure is part of the total complaints in the education sector, which amounted to 3,194 cases, with 82% involving violence, including bullying (KPAI, 2021). The majority of bullying cases occurred in large cities, particularly in the Jabodetabek and Bandung regions, totaling 916 cases (61.7%). Based on complaint locations and media

monitoring from 2011 to 2016, specifically in Bekasi City, there were 46 victims and 93 perpetrators (Riskinanti et al., 2019).

The factors causing bullying behavior include individual factors such as experiences, violence, perceptions, gender, age, psychological control, and substance use. Family factors include parenting styles, family support, and parental stress. Peer factors include support. School factors include school type. The last factor is internet use, including intensity and ethical media competence (Dewi et al., 2020). Psychologically, victims will experience psychological distress, such as high levels of anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts. The most common impact of bullying is anxiety (Zakiyah, 2017). Anxiety is confusion, worrying about something that will happen with unclear causes and associated with feelings of uncertainty and helplessness. Symptoms of social anxiety can also be a cause for more severe psychopathology, including severe depression and chronic social anxiety disorders that often start in adolescence and continue into adulthood (Fang et al., 2022). In Indonesia, the prevalence of anxiety disorders in 2013 showed that 6% of individuals aged 15 and above, or about 14 million people in Indonesia, experienced emotional mental disorders manifested by symptoms of anxiety and depression (Nurhayati & Lauren, 2020).

Adolescents who are victims of bullying may experience feelings of fear, anxiety, anger, helplessness, loneliness, and a desire to commit suicide (Pujiati & Noviandari, 2018). One counseling service that can be applied to address these issues is Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) counseling, which is active-directive in reducing anxiety in adolescents affected by bullying. Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) is a therapeutic process that can improve and change a person's irrational and illogical perceptions, thoughts, beliefs, and views into rational and logical ones. This is supported by the findings of Artarika's research (2020) on the use of REBT techniques in reducing social anxiety in bullying victims, showing that counseling using REBT techniques can be used to reduce social anxiety and change irrational thoughts into rational ones, thereby promoting self-development (Artarika, 2020). Based on research findings on the application of REBT counseling in reducing social anxiety in adolescents (Sari & Ariani, 2021) Government programs in accordance with the provisions of Ministerial Regulation No. 111 of 2014 regarding guidance and counseling in primary and secondary education are an integral part of the overall implementation of education. Guidance and counseling aim to help students develop their potential or achieve developmental tasks (Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia Nomor 111 Tahun 2014 Tentang Bimbingan Dan Konseling Pada Pendidikan Dasar Dan Pendidikan Menengah, 2014). The role of nurses as counselors will help find a way out or help determine decisions in this case regarding anxiety due to bullying in adolescents.

Preliminary study results revealed that 6 out of 10 adolescents experienced physical, verbal, or psychological bullying, leading to feelings of sadness, disappointment, and anxiety. This study aims to assess the efficacy of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) counseling in reducing anxiety among bullied adolescents. It is hoped that these findings will support the provision of counseling services for adolescents, helping them accept themselves, actualize their potential, evaluate themselves positively, and interact more effectively with their environment and peers.

METHOD
The instrument used to measure the level of anxiety in this study was a questionnaire consisting of 14 items from the Hamilton Rating Scale for Anxiety (HARS), in line with other studies that utilized HARS as a tool to measure anxiety levels (Chrisnawati & Aldino, 2019;

Dede et al., 2022; Nurhayati & Lauren, 2020). The researcher selected respondents based on inclusion and exclusion criteria from student attendance data. This study involved a sample of 100 students, selected using purposive sampling technique, consisting of 50 students for the intervention group and 50 students for the control group. The researcher met with the targeted respondents who met the inclusion criteria and provided explanations about the purpose, procedures, and benefits of REBT counseling. After providing clear information, the targeted respondents were asked to sign an informed consent form. Respondents were then given the HARS questionnaire to measure their level of anxiety. The pre-test was conducted during the initial screening when identifying potential respondents who met the inclusion criteria. The researcher utilized the REBT counseling guide with three stages: introduction, core activities, and closing evaluation. Group REBT counseling was conducted for each class during a break period for about 20-30 minutes, divided into two cycles: cycle 1 and cycle 2. The post-test stage was conducted to determine the difference in anxiety levels among respondents after the intervention, tested using the HARS questionnaire. The questionnaire sheet was also given to the control group. The normality test conducted on the intervention group and control group yielded p-values ranging from 0.842 to 0.906. Therefore, all data are normally distributed and meet the normality test requirements.

Data analysis was performed using a computer system. The data analysis included univariate analysis and bivariate analysis. Univariate analysis in this study consisted of frequency distribution and percentages for each variable, including class, gender, parental influence, and social media influence. Meanwhile, bivariate analysis was conducted to analyze the difference in anxiety between the intervention and control groups using dependent t-tests and independent t-tests. This research has received ethical approval from the Nursing Research Ethics Committee, Faculty of Nursing, Universitas Muhammadiyah Jakarta with Number 0537/F.9-UMJ/V/2023.

RESULTS
The research findings on respondent characteristics based on class show that out of 100 respondents, the majority of the intervention group were in grade VII, comprising 29 students (58.0%), while the majority of the control group were in grade VIII, totaling 26 students (52.0%). Regarding respondent characteristics based on gender, the majority in the intervention group were female, with 28 students (56.0%), whereas in the control group, the majority were male, with 27 students (54%). Based on parental influence, in the intervention group, the highest number of students with parental influence was 38 students (76%), while in the control group, the highest number with parental influence was 31 students (62%). Regarding social media influence, the highest number in the intervention group was 39 students (78%), while in the control group, there were 34 students (68%) influenced by social media.

The analysis of the difference in anxiety levels between the control group and the intervention group showed that the anxiety level of adolescents receiving REBT intervention decreased significantly by -10.46 with a p-value <0.001. Meanwhile, in the control group that did not receive REBT intervention, there was no significant change. The observed change was 3.44 with a p-value of 0.209. Based on the data above, it can be concluded that there was a significant change in anxiety levels before and after the REBT intervention in the intervention group.

Table 1.
Characteristics of adolescent intervention and control group respondents (n=100)

Characteristics	Intervention group		Control group		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Class						
VII	29	58.0	24	48.0	53	53.0
VIII	21	42.0	26	52.0	47	47.0
Sex						
Boys	22	44.0	27	54.0	49	49.0
Girls	28	56.0	23	46.0	51	51.0
Parental influence						
Yes	38	76.0	31	62.0	69	69.0
No	12	24.0	19	38.0	31	31.0
Social media influence						
Yes	39	78.0	34	68.0	73	73.0
No	11	22.0	16	32.0	27	27.0

Table 2.
Test results of differences in anxiety levels of the control group and the counseling intervention group using the REBT method

Group	Anxiety	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean		Difference Mean±SD	Min-Max	95% CI	p-value
		f	%	f	%	Pre-test	Post-test				
Intervention	Very severe	30	60.0	5	10.0	38.78	28.32	-10.46±-0.4576	3-52	6.739-14.181	<0.001
	Severe	14	28.0	3	6.0						
	Moderate	5	10.0	7	14.0						
	Mild anxiety	1	2.0	18	36.0						
	No anxiety	0	0.0	17	34.0						
Control	Very severe	10	20.0	8	16.0	24.36	27.80	3.44±-0.1556	3-49	-1.962-8.841	0.209
	Severe	14	28.0	19	38.0						
	Moderate	5	10.0	20	40.0						
	Mild anxiety	10	20.0	2	4.0						
	No anxiety	11	22.0	1	2.0						

Changes in adolescent anxiety levels before and after receiving Counseling intervention with the REBT Method. The level of anxiety in adolescents before undergoing Counseling intervention with the REBT Method yielded a p-value > 0.05, thus it can be concluded that the level of anxiety in adolescents before intervention did not differ significantly. After the REBT intervention in the intervention group, the test results indicated that after the intervention, the level of adolescent anxiety differed significantly.

DISCUSSION
Based on the characteristics, the majority of respondents were in the seventh grade, totaling 53 students (106%). This finding is consistent with previous research, as bullying incidents in SMP Negeri 10 Malang mostly occur in the seventh grade. This is because seventh-grade students are in the process of adapting to their new friends (Camelya et al., 2021). According to Marzali, adaptation broadly refers to individuals' efforts to find suitable adaptation strategies through their actions, with the aim of managing available resources to overcome various challenges, considering the social, cultural, and ecological contexts of their living

environment (Marzali, 2003). Regarding the characteristic of gender, the majority of respondents were female, totaling 51 students (102%). This result is also consistent with previous research, which found that the average level of anxiety is higher in females than in males. Women tend to exhibit higher levels of anxiety compared to men due to different biological responses to stressors. Generally, adult males have stronger mental resilience to perceived threats compared to females (Mia & Novianti, 2021).

Regarding the characteristic of parental influence, the majority of respondents reported parental influence, totaling 69 students (138%). This finding is in line with previous research by Noer, which found a significant relationship between family support and anxiety levels. However, there is a difference from research conducted by Gunawan in Kupang, which reported no significant relationship between family support and anxiety. Families, especially parents, play a crucial role in shaping a child's character, actions, attitudes, and behaviors, thus influencing adolescents' involvement in cyberbullying (Gunawan et al., 2018). Regarding the characteristic of social media influence, the majority of respondents reported social media influence, totaling 73 students (146%). This aligns with previous research indicating that cyberbullying victims exhibit higher levels of social anxiety compared to adolescents not involved in cyberbullying (Fahlevi et al., 2020). Previous research indicates that cyberbullying indicators include fear, feeling hurt, anxiety, inferiority, depression, extreme anger, frustration, stress, loss of trust, withdrawal, and a desire for suicide and retaliation against threats (Satalina, 2014).

Furthermore, after the intervention in the intervention group, a decrease in anxiety levels can be observed. Based on the analysis results, it can be concluded that Counseling intervention with the REBT Method has been proven to reduce the level of anxiety in adolescents experiencing bullying. These research findings align with Syah's study, which demonstrates that group counseling programs using the Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) approach have been effective in reducing anxiety among bullying victims. This was evident from the decrease in anxiety scores measured using a bullying victim anxiety questionnaire. After undergoing two cycles of REBT, anxiety decreased on average to moderate anxiety (40%) (Syah, 2017). Furthermore, Syah conducted a similar study in a different location using a collaborative action research design, which showed similar results where REBT was proven to be effective and influential in reducing anxiety among bullying victims. Subjects felt less alone or isolated; their self-confidence increased, they had roles in relation to others, and they were able to observe and follow the instructions given by the researcher (Syah, 2020). Another study in line with this research is Ayu's study, which shows that after six counseling sessions using REBT techniques in addressing social anxiety among bullying victims, there was significant improvement in students (Melati et al., 2022).

REBT counseling as an assisting relationship where one party (counselor) aims to enhance the mental abilities and functions of the other party (client) to better cope with the problems/conflicts they face (Lubis, 2011). The REBT counseling process provided to respondents experiencing bullying aims to change irrational thoughts or burdens (problems) into rational ones or something light (not a problem) for adolescents (Sari & Ariani, 2021). Bullying among students has negative impacts on students' emotions and psyche and consequently on their academic performance. The high level of bullying among students, which triggers anxiety hindering their academic activities, is an indication of negligence of duties by school staff and management, including counselors. School counselors must rise and act if they are to help school authorities win the battle against bullying and crime in schools (Melati et al., 2022). The research conducted by Kurniawan and Sanyata shows that group

counseling using the REBT approach can increase prosocial behavior in students. This means that students who participate in group counseling with the REBT approach show an increase in prosocial actions, which are behaviors aimed at helping, sharing, or cooperating with others. As a result, students are more likely to show empathy, help their peers, and engage in positive social activities after receiving REBT counseling. Ultimately, this reduces instances of bullying by encouraging prosocial behavior among students (Kurniawan & Sanyata, 2021). Another study shows that REBT has proven to be an effective approach in group counseling for reducing bullying behavior among students with special needs in inclusive schools (Purwaningrum & Pamungkas, 2018).

School counselors should help create awareness about bullying so that students can distinguish between bullying and punishment. Counselors should also assist schools in producing stickers and leaflets appropriate for preventing bullying behavior in schools. Counselors can also help school authorities develop anti-bullying policies that must be actively implemented to prevent bullying. School counselors, with their wealth of experience, should help develop curricula on kindness and empathy suitable for elementary and high school students in bullying-endemic schools. Students should be taught to take lessons on kindness and empathy to absorb social values (Onyekuru & Ugwu, 2020).

CONCLUSION
Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that conducting Counseling intervention using the REBT method for 20-30 minutes per session, given twice a week to adolescents, can reduce the level of anxiety caused by bullying in MTSN X Bekasi. In the intervention group, characteristics of adolescents experiencing anxiety were typically found in grade VII, mostly female, influenced by parents, and influenced by social media. There was a significant change in anxiety levels after undergoing REBT between the control and intervention groups. Statistical tests indicate a significant difference between the control and intervention groups.

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