

## Research Article

# Effectiveness of Group Counseling Improvement of Body Image in Princess Adolescents in the Middle School

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**Abstract: Background:** The phenomenon that occurs in teenagers currently is more attention to appearance, for example how to dress, make up, style hair and behave. Teenagers need to be seen as good looking people that can attract the attention of others, especially peers. Moreover, teenagers believe that self-appearance play an important role in social acceptance particularly acceptance from peers. This situation impacts on eliminate body image on female teenagers and finally lead to low self-esteem feelings. In fact, counseling in group is trusted to increase the body image in young females become more positive. **Methods:** In this study, quasy experiment was employed. The number of samples in this study was determined using power analysis adduced by Cohen (1992). Based on his explanation, it can be inferred that in this study a total sample of 64 young women was taken for each group (intervention group and control group) with a total sample was 128 women. The data instrument used for measuring body image was the Body Appreciation Scale (BAS). Meanwhile, counseling given to the intervention group used a Cognitive Behavior Group Counseling approach including 6 sessions. The measurements of body image were carried out 3 times that were before counseling, 1 week after counseling and 2 weeks after counseling. Finally, the data were analyzed by using the two mean difference test. **Results:** The results showed that cognitive behavior group counseling was proven effective in increasing body image in young women becoming more positive. **Conclusions:** Cognitive behavior group counseling is an effective instrument in developing a positive body image.

**Keywords:** Cognitive Behavioral, Group Counseling, Body Image, Female Teenagers, Middle School.

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## INTRODUCTION

Teenagers are individuals selected between 10-19 years old (WHO, 2015). Adolescence or commonly known as puberty is the process of sustainable growth and development, which is a transition from childhood to early adulthood, where biological, psychological, and social changes gradually. The gap between these developments can trigger some psychosocial problems, one of them is a disturbance in body image (Ministry of Health, 2014). Adolescence is a unique transition period and it is characterized by a variety of physical, transition and psychological changes. The current problems in adolescents are depression which is a major cause of illness and disability among adolescents and self-destruction is a cause of death in adolescents aged 15 to 19 years (WHO, 2017).

Adolescence is a period of rapid growth, inconsistent change and great varied between individuals. In general, the characteristics of adolescent growths and developments are: 1) physical growths and hormones developments: bones, muscles, brain, sexual characteristics and posture; 2) ability to think abstractly; 3) social and emotional development, including awareness of others, a sense of justice, social awareness, goals, personal identity, peer ties and emotions that often come suddenly (Arnett, 2014).

One of the phenomenons in adolescents currently is a significant change. Teenagers, especially young women have more attention to appearance, for example how to dress up, make up, hair style and behave. Teenagers want to look attractive that can

attract the attention of others, especially peers. Teenagers believe that self-appearance plays an important role in social acceptance especially acceptance from peers (Rosenberg, 2015).

The number of teenagers, range the age between 10 and 19 years in the world is around 1.2 billion people or 1 in 6 world population. More than 1.1 million of 10-19 years old teenagers recovered from died in 2016 or more than 3000 people for every day. Most of the causes of adolescent death can be prevented or treated (WHO, 2017). The adolescent health problems presently pay serious attention are mental health and psychosocial problems, yet most of the mental health problems in adolescents are not approved and are not intended (Anderson, 2018).

One of the mental and psychosocial problems that are regularly faced by adolescents in the world, especially young women, is the body image problem. This problem raises low self-esteem feelings which have become an important issue. Furthermore, it affects most teenagers since it has a negative impact. Paxton, Neumark-Sztainer, Hannan and Eisenberg (2016) reported that 24%-46% of female teenagers expressed their dissatisfaction on body shape (body dissatisfaction). Body image disorders in female teenagers can cause low self-esteem feelings because the body image is very essential as a self-identity for young women. The ideal body shape and attractive appearance according to them is the primary estimation of their friends and others to them (Clay, Vignoles & Dittmar, 2015).

Dissatisfaction with body shape (body dissatisfaction) which causes body image disruption in female adolescent generally occurs due to the body shape factors that are not ideal according to the teenagers' views today. It could happen due to the obesity (overweight) or aesthetic factors (beauty). This condition can trigger isolation, ridicule, and bullying by peers towards female teenagers who have an ideal body shape among teenagers today. Overweight and bullying have increased and become an important public health problem among the adolescent populations around the world. Bullying is described as a series of negative behaviors (verbal and non-verbal) that repeatedly happen towards someone with the intention of embarrassing and hurting one's feelings (Wilson, Viswanathan, Rousson & Bovet, 2013).

The results of the Intercensal Population Survey in 2015 in Indonesia showed that the youth population reached 42,061.2 million or 16.5 percent of the total population of Indonesia. The problems had by the adolescents in Indonesia were quite complex, ranging from the problems of achievement in school, relationships, appearance, liking the opposite sex and so on. These kind of things can influence on the behavior and health status of adolescents themselves.

A research related to adolescent satisfaction with body shape which was conducted by Latiff, Muhammad and Rahman (2017) concluded that overweight and obese students have dissatisfaction with higher body image and female students have higher body image dissatisfaction. Other studies on adolescent satisfaction with body shape as conducted by Duchesne *et al.*, (2017) shows that the female teenagers dissatisfied with their body image compared to male teenagers. In addition, the female teenagers have lower self-esteem, symptoms of anxiety and depression associated with dissatisfaction with body image.

Dealing with the previous studies, it can be stated that body shape and appearance commonly is very important for teenagers. Meanwhile, the current technological developments let teenagers quickly and easily to obtain information from electronic media and social media about appearance, style trends and ideal body shape especially for girls. This condition makes teenagers to attempt so that their appearance can match and appropriate with the development of the current trends. It will affect their body image which directly will affect the self-esteem of these young women (Clay *et al.*, 2015).

There are several techniques to improve the body image of female teenagers. Paolini (2016) stated that counseling activities in schools play an important role to solve the body image problems as a preventive measure. Furthermore Marjo, Mamesah and Nurjanah (2017) in their research showed the results that group guidance services had an effect on improving the body image for the students in class XI at MAN 3 Jakarta.

Additionally, counseling was employed in the research of Akliman and Eryilmaz (2017) which found that there was a significant increase in body image and positive coping strategies in female teenagers. Faraji, Mahdavi, Samkhaniyan, Asadi and Dezhkam (2015) in their research also stated that group counseling with cognitive behavioral approaches significantly contributed to body image in the female teenagers.

Regarding with the previous research, Navidian, Moudi and Esmaealzade (2017) showed the results of group counseling with cognitive behavioral approaches effectively improved body image. Irani *et al.*, (2018) also concluded that group counseling has proven to be effective in increasing rational acceptance of body image to be more positive in female teenagers. Townsend (2013) showed that group counseling proved effective in increasing self-esteem (including body image) in the female teenagers. Furthermore Nicolino, Martz and Curtin (2011) found the result that counseling with cognitive behavioral approaches proved effective for improving body image in female students.

Based on the results explanation of the above research, it can be concluded that group counseling is the right technique to improve body image especially for the teenagers. There are several factors that affect body image. Paxton and Heinicke (2018) stated there are four dimensions of body image, including dimensions, cognitive dimensions, emotional dimensions and behavioral dimensions.

The conditions of dissatisfaction with body image that occur in adolescents can be prevented through group counseling activities. Group counseling conducted on female adolescents with self-confidence and low self-esteem problems is able to increase self-esteem and restore self-confidence of them in social relationships with peers (Corey, 2015). Furthermore, Corey (2012) said that among of many group counseling techniques, the counseling technique with cognitive behavioral approach (cognitive behavior counseling) is a technique which suits for adolescents. Based on the current situation, it can be stated that counseling with a cognitive behavioral approach can increase happiness by modifying emotions, behaviors and non-functioning thoughts which focus on solutions.

The number of young citizens in Lhokseumawe, North Aceh in 2016 was 37,205 people including 18,261 people (49.08%) were young women (DHO, 2017). Lhokseumawe city as one of the modern cities in Aceh Province is an area whose population, especially adolescents, always take apart on the current style trends including appearance and body shape. Overall, the number of adolescents in Aceh Province is 1,595,116 people (Pusdatin, 2017).

In Malahayati (2017) research, it was stated that the social and cultural conditions of the people in Lhokseumawe were mostly seen to be influenced by urban cultural conditions. The condition of urban social culture is also practiced by the youth groups who look to keep their appearance fashionable and keep pursuing the current trends. This condition makes the adolescents in Lhokseumawe, especially young women very concerned about their physical appearance, so that body image is essential as self-identity for them. Feeling dissatisfied with body shape will easily influence self-esteem in young women in Lhokseumawe. Low self-esteem caused by disruption of body image due to dissatisfaction with body shape (body dissatisfaction) or due to bullying from peers can be a serious psychological problem for the teenagers. This condition must gain serious attention and require proper treatment so that it does not have a long-term impact on the mental health conditions for young women later.

Based on the description above, it can be stated that the problems of body image disturbances in young adolescents can be overcome by the increasing the youth's positive perception of themselves through sharing experiences with friends who obtain the same

problem during group counseling activities. Community nurses can play a role in overcoming the problem of body image disorders in female adolescents as counselors in group counseling activities. The purpose of this study was to analyze the effectiveness of group counseling on improving body image in female teenagers at Lhokseumawe State High School.

## METHOD

In this study, quasy experiment was employed. The number of samples in this study was determined using power analysis adduced by Cohen (1992). Based on his explanation, it can be inferred that in this study a total sample of 64 young women was taken for each group (intervention group and control group) with a total sample was 128 women. The data instrument used for measuring body image was the Body Appreciation Scale (BAS) from Tylka (2013). Meanwhile, counseling given to the intervention group used a Cognitive Behavior Group Counseling approach including 6 sessions. The measurements of body image were carried out 3 times that were before counseling, 1 week after counseling and 2 weeks after counseling. Finally, the data were analyzed by using the two mean difference test.

### Participants

A total of 128 students from 14 grade XII studying at the city of Lhokseumawe were included. With inclusion and exclusion criteria for prospective respondents. All respondents were asked to fill out a questionnaire about the characteristics of the respondent's data, body image measurement Stunkard Figure Rating Scale and Body Appreciation Scale (BAS) and Cognitive Behavior Group Counseling Module that researchers adopted from Corey (2012).

### Settings

Data was collected from 19 July 2017 to December 2019 in Lokseumawe City. The ethics committee of Syiah Kuala University, approved the study. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants. Counseling given to the intervention group used a Cognitive Behavior Group Counseling approach of 6 sessions. The intervention group was divided into 3 groups, each stage carried out for 2 hours. Body image measurements were carried out 3 times, namely before counseling, 1 week after counseling and 2 weeks after counseling. Analysis using the two mean difference test.

### Socio demographic variables

The first part of the questionnaire consisted of socio-demographic information; age, class, parental education, parental employment and family income.

### Body Appreciation Scale (BAS)

Statements about body image from cognitive aspects use the Body Appreciation Scale (BAS) adopted

from Tylka (2013). BAS consists of 13 statement items in the form of scales.

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**Cognitive Behavior Group Counseling**

Cognitive Behavior Group Counseling Module that researchers adopted from Corey (2012).

**Data analysis**

Demographic variables were investigated by descriptive analyses. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov was

used to inspect the distribution of the data. Correlations between numerical variables were tested using the Pearson correlation coefficient test in items that were normally distributed, or differences in mean body image of young women between before and after group counseling in the intervention group. If the data is normally distributed, the paired t test is used. If the data is not normally distributed, the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test is used and Difference in mean body image between the intervention group and the control group. If the data is normally distributed, then the Independentt Test is used. If the data are not normally distributed, the Mann Whitney U Test is used.

**RESULTS**

**Table 1** Respondents Characteristics

Variable	Group	Group	Statistical Value	P Value
	Intervention	Control		
	n = 64 f (%)	n = 64 f (%)		
Age Female Teenagers				
15 Year	46 (35.9)	43 (33.6)	1.258	0.264
16 Year	16 (12.5)	18 (14.1)		
17 Year	2 (1.6)	3 (2.3)		
Class				
XII Science	54 (42.1)	48 (37.6)	15.171	0.000
XII Social Studies	10 (7.8)	16 (12.5)		
Occupation Parent				
Housewife	7 (5.4)	8 (6.3)	0.151	0.699
Private Employees	19 (14.8)	20 (15.6)		
Government Employees	26 (20.3)	25 (19.5)		
Laborers	12 (9.7)	11 (8.2)		
Parent Education Level				
Not School	0 (0.0)	1 (0.7)	0.665	0.416
Primary School	1 (0.7)	2 (1.6)		
Secondary School	5 (3.9)	3 (2.3)		
High School	29 (22.7)	24 (18.7)		
Collage and Above	29 (22.7)	34 (26.7)		
Monthly Parent Income				
Rp 500.000 – Rp 1.000.000	11 (8,2)	15 (12.2)	0.443	0.507
Rp 1.000.000 – Rp 2.000.000	25 (19.5)	28 (21.9)		
≥ Rp 2.000.000	28 (21.8)	21 (16.4)		

Table 1 Show that the dominant adolescents were 16 years old (69.5%), declared homogeneous with a value of  $P=0.264 > 0.005$ , XII science (79.7%), declared not homogeneous with a value of  $P = 0.000 < 0.005$ , the occupation parents of Government Employees (30.6%), declared homogeneous with a

value of  $P = 0.699 > 0.005$ , parent education level Collage and Above (49.4%), declared homogeneous with a value of  $P = 0.416 > 0.005$  and Monthly parent income of Rp 1.000.000-2.000.000 (41.4%), were declared homogeneous with a value of  $P = 0.507 > 0.005$ .

**Table 2** Distribution of Body Image Frequency in Female Teenagers Intervention and Control Groups (Pre Test) (n = 128)

No	Body Image	Group	
		Intervention f (%)	Control f (%)
1	Positive	18 (28.1)	27 (42.2)
2	Negative	46 (71.9)	37 (57.8)
	Total	64 (100.0)	64 (100.0)

Table 2 it can be concluded that there is a positive body image difference between the intervention group and the control group before (pre-test) group

counseling with a cognitive behavioural approach of 9 people (14.0%).

**Table 3** Distribution of Body Image Frequency in Female Teenagers Intervention and Control Groups After 1 Week (Post Test 1) (n = 128)

No	Body Image	Group	
		Intervention f (%)	Control f (%)
1	Positive	33 (51.6)	27 (42.2)
2	Negative	31 (48.4)	37 (57.8)
	Total	64 (100.0)	64 (100.0)

Table 3 it can be concluded that there was a significant increase in the body image value of female teenagers in the intervention group from measurement 1 (Pre Test) to measurement 2 (Post Test 1), namely 15 people (23.43%) after 1 week group counseling was

done with cognitive behavioural approaches and there was no significant increase in the body image value of female teenagers in the control group from measurement 2 Post Test 1).

**Table 4** Distribution of Body Image Frequency in Female Teenagers Intervention and Control Groups After 2 Week (Post Test 2) (n = 128).

No	Body Image	Group	
		Intervention f (%)	Control f (%)
1	Positive	35 (54.7)	27 (42.2)
2	Negative	29 (45.3)	37 (57.8)
	Total	64 (100.0)	64 (100.0)

Table 4 it can be concluded that there is a significant increase in the body image value of female teenagers in the intervention group from measurement 2 (post test 2) to measurement 3 (post test 2), namely 2 people (3.1%) after 2 week of group counseling with

cognitive behavioural approaches and there was no significant increase in the value of the body image of female teenagers in the control group from measurement 2 (post test 1) to measurement 3 (post test 2).

**Table 5** Differences in Body Image in Female Teenagers Intervention Groups Between Before (Pre Test) and After (Post Test 1) (n = 64)

Test Time	Intervention Groups n = 64		Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test
	MR	SR	
Pre Test – Post Test 1	32.50	2080.00	0.000

Based on table 5 the results of hypothesis testing obtained P value = 0.000 < 0.05 which means there is a significant difference in body image in female

teenagers intervention groups between before and after 1 week of group counseling with cognitive behavioral approaches.

**Table 6** Differences in Body Image in Female Teenagers Intervention Groups Between Post Test 1 and Post Test 2 (n = 64)

Test Time	Intervention Groups		Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test
	n = 64		
	MR	SR	
Post Test 1– Post Test 2	32.00	2016.00	0.000

Based on Table 6 the hypothesis test results obtained P value = 0.000 < 0.05 which means there is a significant difference in body image in young women in

the intervention group between after 1 week and after 2 weeks of group counseling with cognitive behavioral approaches.

**Table 7** Differences in Body Image in Female Teenagers Control Groups Between Before (Pre Test) and After (Post Test 1) (n = 64)

Test Time	Control Groups		Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test
	n = 64		
	MR	SR	
Pre Test – Post Test 1	1.50	3.00	0.157

Based on Table 7 the results of hypothesis testing obtained P value = 0.157 > 0.05 which means there is no difference in body image in young women in

the control group between before and after 1 week of group counseling with cognitive behavioral approaches.

**Table 8** Differences in Body Image in Female Teenagers Control Groups Between Post Test 1 and Post Test 2 (n = 64)

Test Time	Control Groups		Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test
	n = 64		
	MR	SR	
Post Test 1– Post Test 2	1.00	1.00	0.317

Based on Table 8 the results of hypothesis testing obtained P value = 0.317 > 0.05 which means there is no difference in body image in young women in

the control group between after 1 week and after 2 weeks of group counseling with cognitive behavioral approaches.

**Table 9** Differences in Body Image in Young Women Between the Intervention Group and the Control Group Before and After Group Counseling with the Cognitive Behavior Approach In High School Lhokseumawe City (n = 64)

Test Time	Group Intervention		Group Control		Mann Whitney U Test
	n = 64		n = 64		
	MR	SR	MR	SR	
Pre Test	61.20	3916.50	67.80	4339.50	0.304
Post Test 1	92.54	5922.50	36.46	2333.50	0.000
Post Test 2	96.50	6176.00	32.50	2080.00	0.000

Table 9 shows that the results of differences in body image test for young women between the intervention group and the control group in the pre-test measurements, obtained P of 0.304 > 0.05, so that Ho is accepted which means that there is no difference in body image between the intervention group and the control group before counseling the cognitive behavioral approach group, in the post test 1 measurement, P was obtained 0.000 < 0.05, so Ha was accepted which meant that there was a difference in body image between the intervention group and the control group after 1 week of group counseling with the cognitive behavioral approach and in the post measurement test 2, P was obtained at 0.000 < 0.05, so Ha was accepted which meant that there was a

difference in body image between the intervention group and the control group after 2 weeks of group counseling with the cognitive behavioral approach.

## DISCUSSION

This study was conducted with the aim at testing the effectiveness of group counseling programs with cognitive behavioral approaches to the female teenagers' body image. The results of the study found that the program developed was effective. In other words, cognitive behavior group counseling created a positive body image in female adolescents. In this section, the research findings were discussed in the relevant literary framework.

The pre-test results showed that before cognitive behavior group counseling was implemented, the body image of the female teenagers in the intervention group was not different from the control group. However, after one week and two weeks cognitive behavior group counseling in the intervention group was conducted, it was found a significant increase in body image compared with the control group that were not given cognitive behavior group counseling.

Female teenagers encountered many physical changes during their puberty. Height growth, weight gain and acne, appearance of primary and secondary sexual characteristics and ability of reproductive capacity (Cash & Pruzinsky, 2014). Female adolescents having a positive body image make them easier to cope with these changes in a healthy manner, if not, this change becomes a risk factor for the emergence of body image problems in female teenagers (Grogan, 2016).

Based on the principles of positive psychology, the goal of cognitive behavior group counseling is to improve positive body image (optimism, flexible perspective, critical perspective on media images of positive features of appreciation and hope) in female teenagers (Clarkson, 2013). In the context of this research, it can be considered as a reflection of positive psychology. It occurred because the female teenagers in this study paid attention to the positive experiences in the past (related to their bodies) through group experiences. Furthermore, it took positive feedback that they are experiencing. This condition provides automatic control over negative thoughts towards the body and increases optimism and hope by setting goals for the future (Akliman & Eryılmaz, 2017).

The female adolescents in the intervention group who had significant differences between pre-test and post-test scores of body image showed a strengthening of positive aspects of individuals. It could be effective in creating positive body images after cognitive behavior group counseling. In positive psychology, the body is one of the pleasant aspects of life that causes well-being and a source of psychological pleasure. Tasting, reading books, cooking and doing sports includes in this category (Corey, 2015). According to positive psychology, the body has the ability for pleasure, desire and trigger the positive emotions. Based on this theory, a positive body is expressed by five main mechanisms such as interpersonal touch, positive sexual behavior, physical activity, nutrition and physical pain (Fisher, 2014). Cognitive behavior group counseling provides several activities to improve healthy coping skills in female teenagers with negative body images (Corey, 2012).

The results of this study in terms of cognitive behavioral group counseling, young women in the

intervention group showed an increase in the perception of body image in a more positive direction, when counseling was done in groups and it was proved more effective. This research was conducted in the context of positive cognitive behavior. According to the research findings, it was observed that the female teenagers expanded their capacity from positive factors such as broadening optimistic thinking, increasing self-esteem, expanding the use of coping strategies and making cognitive control. These results were caused by the activities used in this study were conducted in groups with the cognitive behavior therapy approach. In this study, the cognitive behavior group counseling activities carried out by promoting gratitude, reasons for happiness, praise and gratitude activities for young women who live with positive emotions (Paxton & Heinicke, 2018). Studies in the field of positive psychology show an expansion of perspectives, capacity building and adjustment of past negativity for more positive emotions, providing benefits expressed by female teenagers in the positive feelings form towards themselves (Irani *et al.*, 2018).

## CONCLUSION

Based on this study, it was found that adolescent girls with negative body image in the intervention group formed positive body image after cognitive behavior group counseling. Meanwhile, the development of body image was influenced by many factors. Therefore, it needs an instrument that will change negative body image into positive. In this context, it can be concluded that cognitive behavior group counseling is an effective instrument to develop a positive body image.

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