

Research Article



THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HYPNOTHERAPY-BASED EMOTIONAL FREEDOM TECHNIQUES ON INCREASING SELF-ESTEEM IN ADOLESCENTS EXPERIENCING BULLYING

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ABSTRACT

Background:

Bullying experienced by adolescents can have a negative impact, particularly on self-esteem, which can hinder their psychological and social development. One of the psychological interventions needed is the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT). This study aims to determine the effectiveness of EFT in improving self-esteem among adolescents who are victims of bullying.

Methods: The study employed an experimental design using a pre-test post-test control group approach. The subjects of the study were adolescents identified as experiencing bullying.

Results: The findings revealed a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group. In the experimental group, there was a significant increase in self-esteem following the EFT intervention, whereas the control group showed no change.

Conclusion: The Emotional Freedom Technique is effective in enhancing the self-esteem of adolescent victims of bullying. The results of this study are anticipated to serve as a practical and straightforward alternative psychological intervention that can be implemented by health professionals and school counselors to assist adolescents in overcoming the negative effects of bullying.

Keywords: *Bullying, Emotional Freedom Techniques, Self Esteem*

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a period of development characterized by the formation of self-concept and adjustment to the social environment. During this phase, adolescents are vulnerable to experiencing various psychosocial problems, one of which is bullying. Bullying is a form of violent behavior that continuously abuses power against someone perceived as weak and physically defenseless (1). Bullying is a global issue. According to the WHO (2020), an average of 37% of adolescent girls and 42% of adolescent boys are victims of bullying. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) states that bullying in schools occurs worldwide, with an estimated 245 million children experiencing bullying each year.

Cases of bullying in schools rank third among public complaints received by the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) in the education sector. Furthermore, the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) reported that throughout 2022, there were over 226 cases of physical and psychological violence, including bullying, which continues to rise to this day. The act of bullying that occurs in schools transforms the school environment from a fun place for students into a frightening one. Bullying behavior instills fear in the victims. Physical acts of bullying include kicking, slapping, and sexual harassment, while verbal bullying involves being insulted or ridiculed, leading victims to experience loneliness, depression, and suicidal thoughts. Additionally, other emotional disturbances may arise, such as anxiety, depression, and negative self-assessment (low self-esteem) (2).

Self-esteem is an assessment made of an individual in comparison to the

achievement of a predetermined self-ideal. Self-esteem can originate from oneself or from others, for example, in the form of recognition (Stuart, 2012). The decline in self-esteem that occurs in adolescents can affect the learning process. One of the approaches that has emerged to address the self-esteem issues of adolescent victims of bullying is the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) with emotion management. This method is a meridian-based psychological therapy that alleviates psychological and psychosomatic conditions by stimulating specific meridian points on the body (3). The Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) is also an energy therapy that is easy and affordable to practice, combining contemporary methods with ancient healing techniques. It offers a variety of benefits, one of which is facilitating the flow of energy in the human body.

With a smooth and directed flow of energy, individuals can relieve stress and reduce cortisol levels in the body in a relatively short time (4). The journal titled Clinical EFT as an Evidence-Based Practice for the Treatment of Psychological and Physiological Conditions explains that clinical EFT meets the standards set by the APA (American Psychological Association) as an effective therapy that can be applied to various psychological disorders. When EFT is combined with hypnotherapy, the effectiveness of the intervention is expected to increase. Hypnotherapy is a therapeutic technique that utilizes a state of deep relaxation (trance) to access the subconscious mind, allowing positive suggestions to be received more effectively.

The integration of EFT with hypnotherapy is believed to accelerate cognitive restructuring and enhance self-affirmation, thereby assisting adolescent

victims of bullying in rebuilding their confidence and improving their self-esteem. In his research, on students who are victims of verbal abuse found that the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) has a significant impact on self-compassion among these students. This is evident in the results, which indicate an increase in feelings of happiness and empathy, as well as an enhanced ability to manage stress and achieve self-acceptance among victims of verbal abuse (5). Additionally, another study conducted by Fitri et al. also found a positive influence of the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) on the improvement of self-esteem. (2020) (6), found that EFT can reduce anxiety levels in the elderly. The results of the study confirmed that the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) is an effective intervention that can enhance the self-esteem of adolescent victims of bullying

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This type of research is an experimental research with a case control study approach. This study will compare two groups, namely the case group and the control group. The case group will be given Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) therapy with hypnotherapy-based methods. Meanwhile, the control group was not given Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) therapy, but would be given Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) therapy after the series of research processes had been completed. The data processing analysis used in this study is using SPSS 20.

RESULTS

Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age (Year Old)		
15 year old	1	1,10%
16 year old	61	67,03%
17 year old	22	24,18%
18 year old	7	7,69%
Gender		
Male	29	31,9%
Famale	62	68,1%
Class		
XI	75	82,4%
XII	16	17,6%

Based on the results of the above research, it was found that most of the respondents were at the age of 16 years, namely 61 (67.03%) respondents, most of them were women, namely 36 (68.1%), and most were students of class XI, namely 75 (82.4%)

Self-Esteem of Adolescent Bullying Victims

Table.2. Self-Esteem of Adolescent Bullying Victims

Self Esteem	Pre-test		Post-test	
	Frequency (f)	Precentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Low	36	(78,26%)	0	0%
Normal/High	10	(21,74%)	46	46%

Based on table 2. It was found that adolescent self-esteem in the experimental group before being given Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) therapy was obtained by respondents with low self-

esteem as many as 36 (78.26%) respondents and normal/high self-esteem as many as 10 (21.74%) respondents. After being given Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) therapy, it was found that the respondents' self-esteem in the low category was 0 (0%) respondents, while the normal/high category was 46 (100%) respondents. The results of the statistical test The results of the Mann-Whitney test in the posttest showed a p value of < 0.001 , so there was a significant difference between the experimental and control groups.

Table 3. Self Esteem of the control group adolescents

Self Esteem	Pre-test		Post-test	
	Frequency (f)	Precentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Precentage (%)
Low	45	(100%)	37	82,22%
Normal/High	0	(0%)	8	17,78%

Based on table 3. It was found that adolescent self-esteem in the control group before being given Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) therapy was obtained by respondents with low self-esteem as many as 45 (100%) respondents and normal/high self-esteem as many as 0 (0%) respondents. After being given Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) therapy, respondents in the low category were 37 (82.22%) respondents, while the normal/high category was 8 (17.78%) respondents.

Table 4. Analysis of Differences in Adolescent Self-Esteem of Bullying Victims in the experimental and control groups (N = 91)

Varabel	Pre-test			Post-test			P value	Z
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD		
Eksperimen Group	46	65.52	8.469	46	56.07	5.662	<0.001	-0.120
Control Group	45	26.04	1.121	45	41.31	6.895	0.904	-7.174

The results of the Mann-Whitney test in the pretest showed $p = 0.904 (>0.05)$, so there was no significant difference between the experimental and control groups under the initial condition. Thus, both groups were in equal condition before being given treatment. The results of the Mann-Whitney test in the posttest showed a $p <$ value of 0.001, so there was a significant difference between the experimental and control groups. The mean rank value of the experimental group (65.52) was higher than that of the control (26.04). This proves that the treatment given to the experimental group had a positive effect and significantly increased the self-esteem of adolescent victims of bullying compared to the control group.

DISCUSSION

Based on the results of research conducted on 46 respondents in the experimental group at SMA Negeri 16 Makassar and SMA Negeri 20 Makassar, prior to the implementation of the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) intervention, it was found that 36 respondents (78.26%) had low self-esteem, while 10 respondents (21.74%) had normal/high self-esteem. After the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) intervention, the results showed that there were 0 respondents (0%) in the low self-

esteem category, and 46 respondents (100%) fell into the normal/high self-esteem category. The results of the Mann-Whitney test in the posttest showed a p-value of < 0.001 .

The findings from the statistical analysis indicate a significant difference between the experimental groups. The results of this study align with the perspective of humanistic psychology, which emphasizes the importance of self-esteem as a crucial aspect of mental health. According to Rogers' (1940) theory, individuals with healthy self-esteem are able to accept themselves positively, making them more adaptive in facing challenges. The findings of this study are also consistent with previous research. Study (5), conducted on students who are victims of verbal abuse, found that the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) has a positive influence on self-compassion among these students. This is evident in the results, which indicate an increase in happiness and empathy, as well as an enhanced ability to manage stress and achieve self-acceptance among victims of verbal abuse. Study (6) demonstrates that EFT helps to reduce anxiety levels in victims of bullying, while Study (7) confirms that EFT can improve emotional regulation and decrease fear. These similarities in results reinforce the empirical evidence that EFT can be used effectively in the context of psychological interventions for adolescents. The increase in self-esteem observed in the respondents of this study is grounded in the fundamental principles of the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), which combines meridian point stimulation with verbal affirmation and relaxation techniques. According to the theory developed by Gery Craig, the channeling of negative energy through tapping on the body's meridian

points can alleviate the disturbances that occur. Energy in the body, along with negative experiences and emotional trauma from bullying, can disrupt the flow of energy. When this disruption is released through gentle tapping on the meridian points, individuals experience emotional release and improved psychological balance. This process contributes to strengthening self-image and enhancing self-esteem. In addition to its physical and emotional effects, EFT can also help boost self-esteem.

By tapping on the 12 meridian points of the body, it can clear the energy system that has become blocked due to traumatic experiences, which can lead to low self-esteem. EFT, supplemented with education, modifies students' cognition and emotions, thereby helping to enhance their confidence (5). The implementation of research involving EFT therapy interventions aims to release excessive negative emotions. According to most schools of psychotherapy, the emotional dimension of the body's energy system can be disrupted due to psychological disorders or emotional inhibitions, which may manifest as memories (either conscious or subconscious) of past trauma that are frequently recalled. This can trigger various psychological disorders and disturbances in the body's energy system, ultimately leading to emotional disorders (6). In adolescents who experience bullying, self-esteem often declines due to negative treatment from their peers.

Victims of bullying frequently have a low self-image, feel worthless, and struggle to develop confidence. Based on the results of the screening conducted on the respondents, the types of bullying behaviors identified were diverse (verbal, physical, and social bullying). Through EFT, adolescents are trained to recognize, accept, and

ultimately release negative emotions. This process helps them rebuild a positive self-image and enhances their sense of competence. EFT serves as a medium to facilitate the process of self-acceptance through mechanisms of emotional relaxation and cognitive restructuring. Additionally, EFT has advantages over other psychological interventions, as this technique is straightforward, does not require special equipment, and can be learned and practiced independently. For teenage victims of bullying, these skills can be a valuable resource for navigating stressful situations in the future. In other words, EFT not only enhances self-esteem but also strengthens resilience (8).

From a neuropsychological perspective, EFT is believed to function by influencing the limbic system, which plays a crucial role in emotion processing. A tap at a specific point can decrease the activation of the amygdala associated with fear and trauma (5). By reducing the intensity of negative emotions, adolescents are more likely to develop positive perceptions of themselves. This explanation supports the research finding that EFT contributes to increased self-esteem through physiological and psychological pathways (9). In this study, results were also obtained from the control group, indicating that prior to receiving Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) therapy, all 45 respondents (100%) in the control group exhibited low self-esteem, while none (0%) had normal or high self-esteem. After receiving Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) therapy, it was found that 37 respondents (82.22%) fell into the low self-esteem category, while 8 respondents (17.78%) were categorized as having normal/high self-esteem.

These results indicate that the increase in self-esteem among adolescent victims of bullying is influenced by several factors. This aligns with Rosenberg's theory (1965), which posits that self-esteem is an individual's evaluation of themselves, shaped by social experiences, environmental acceptance, and interactions with others. Changes in self-esteem can also be influenced by the psychological effects of the research itself (Hawthorne effect), which occurs when respondents feel valued for being part of the study, leading to a sense of appreciation that can enhance self-esteem (10). Additionally, the adaptation process can result in an increase in self-esteem even without direct intervention.

This psychological adaptation aligns with Santrock's (2012) perspective, which emphasizes that adolescents possess self-adjustment mechanisms to cope with environmental pressures. However, the increase in self-esteem in the control group was relatively smaller compared to the experimental group that received EFT. This underscores that EFT has a more significant impact on enhancing the self-esteem of adolescent victims of bullying than merely relying on external factors or natural adaptation. Therefore, the results of this study affirm that EFT is an effective intervention for improving the self-esteem of adolescent victims of bullying. This technique can serve as a practical, cost-effective, and efficient alternative for psychological intervention. Despite its limitations, these findings make a significant contribution to efforts aimed at preventing and addressing the psychological impact of bullying, while also creating opportunities for further and more in-depth research.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) are effective in enhancing the self-esteem of adolescents who have experienced bullying. The results indicate a significant difference in self-esteem between the experimental group that received the EFT intervention and the control group. The increase in self-esteem observed in the experimental group suggests that EFT may be one of the effective interventions for helping adolescents who face bullying to improve their self-esteem.

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