

# Improving High School Adolescents Optimism Through a Best Possible Self Intervention

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## ABSTRAK

Para remaja pasti akan menghadapi tantangan dan rintangan dalam perjalanan pendidikan mereka, sehingga pola pikir yang optimis sangat penting untuk pemecahan masalah yang positif. Teknik "Best Possible Self" merupakan strategi yang efektif untuk menumbuhkan optimisme. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengevaluasi keefektifan penerapan metode "Best Possible Self" dalam meningkatkan tingkat optimisme siswa. Menggunakan desain True Experimental dengan kelompok kontrol, penelitian ini melibatkan pretest dan posttest terhadap 16 siswa kelas XI di SMA Islam 3 Pakem, yang dipilih secara acak. Analisis data menggunakan uji sampel berpasangan dan uji t independen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan keberhasilan intervensi Best Possible Self, yang menunjukkan perbedaan yang signifikan antara kelompok eksperimen dan kontrol. Temuan ini memberikan manfaat bagi siswa dan pendidik dalam mengadopsi metode Best Possible Self sebagai alat untuk meningkatkan optimisme dan memperluas pemahaman dalam psikologi positif.

## ABSTRACT

Adolescents will inevitably face challenges and obstacles in their educational journey, so an optimistic mindset is essential for positive problem-solving. The "Best Possible Self" technique stands out as an effective strategy to foster optimism. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of applying the "Best Possible Self" method in increasing students' level of optimism. Using a True Experimental design with a control group, this study involved a pretest and posttest of 16 grade XI students at SMA Islam 3 Pakem, who were randomly selected. Data analysis used paired sample test and independent t-test. The results showed the success of the Best Possible Self intervention, which showed significant differences between the experimental and control groups. The findings provide benefits for students and educators in adopting the Best Possible Self method as a tool to increase optimism and expand understanding in positive psychology.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is an important phase in human life where individuals move from childhood to adulthood. At this stage, various fundamental transformations occur both physically and spiritually within a person. One of the most influential changes during this period is the growing awareness of potential, abilities and aspirations (Hardie & Turney, 2022). In adolescence, a person experiences very rapid changes in their life. Changes in the biological, cognitive, social, and emotional domains can produce transitional stages from childhood to adolescence (Hanik et al., 2023; Rincón Uribe et al., 2022). Therefore, in adolescence a person begins to radiate strong optimism, because at this time, confidence in personal capacity and potential emerges. Previous studies stated that one of the characteristics of Indonesia's young generation, including teenagers, that differentiates them from other adults is their level of hope or optimism. Young people tend to have higher levels of optimism than adults (Rohayati et al., 2023). Often, teenagers face the challenge of boredom when facing material that is considered difficult, so they feel less competent in understanding it. This can cause them to be reluctant to continue learning, and ultimately lose their positive enthusiasm. However, Optimism can grow and guide them in a more positive direction if teenagers have a strong interest in learning, maintain a positive attitude by avoiding negative

thoughts, have a good level of intelligence, and are wise in recognizing their own potential (Hapsari et al., 2020; McBeth et al., 2023). Optimism is the belief that everything will go well. It guides a person to believe in their potential with positive goals. Optimism allows a person to easily find solutions to problems because they have a positive mindset (Ratnawati et al., 2021). An optimistic attitude inspires someone to be enthusiastic in finding solutions to the problems they face, because they realize the potential they have. Optimistic people tend to have a positive perspective on life, believing that basically, life and all events have a positive side (Boselie et al., 2023). Optimism symbolizes hope, enthusiasm, encouragement and a positive attitude towards the future. On the other hand, optimism is different from pessimism. Optimism can be interpreted as a tendency to believe that good things will happen in the future. Optimistic individuals tend to view unfavorable events that happen to them as something that only affects certain aspects of their lives (Setriawati, 2021). When they are teenagers, students will develop critical thinking skills in acquiring and applying knowledge, so that they will judge wisely all the events they experience.

United Nations Children's Fund (2022) revealed that as many as 46 million teenagers in the world are experiencing lost opportunities to optimize their potential. Of this number, almost 25% of teenagers aged 15 to 19 years are unhappy at school, are lazy, and spend a lot of time playing games instead of studying. Education problems in Indonesia, especially high school (SMA) students, are the main causes of children losing up to 70% of their motivation to learn due to boredom, too much workload, less interesting learning methods, lack of interaction, competition in using facilities and fear of failing in exams. Therefore, a strong optimistic attitude is very important in motivating students to continue learning (Agustang et al., 2021; Rossa, 2020). In line with previous studies conducted in Jogjakarta, it shows that problems among high school students, 21% of 400 high school students, are lazy in studying because of long learning times, fear of failure in carrying out semester exams, and difficulty in understanding the lessons given. (Lubis et al., 2023; Widopuspito & Sutarman, 2023). From the problems above, it shows that there is a lack of optimism in students, even though this attitude of optimism can help students be successful in learning, so to foster an attitude of optimism in students, positive training is needed, one of which is Best Possible Self which is effective in increasing optimism (Peters et al., 2013).

Best possible self is a method in psychology that describes individuals as being in the best condition in the future. This involves the activity of writing down and imagining yourself in optimal conditions in the future (Heekerens & Eid, 2021). Best possible self intervention can have a good influence by using various methods including delivery methods, namely offline and online (Carrillo et al., 2019). Providing the best possible self both offline and online has a comparable impact. Doing the best possible self online has advantages in terms of cost efficiency, convenience for researchers and participants, as well as providing access flexibility for participants. In addition, participants have the ability to carry out the best possible process independently, allowing them to apply it according to their individual needs (Boselie et al., 2023). The best possible self can increase a person's self-optimistic attitude, if done routinely and consistently. This is in line with research Meevissen, et al (2011) Those who get the results from the best possible self intervention tend to have a strong impact in increasing the level of optimism significantly. Then research is carried out Carrillo, et al (2019) found that the best possible self intervention could increase optimism because it focused on positive aspects of the future. Next is research Hanssen, et al (2013) The results of the research were that participants who were involved in the best possible self intervention experienced an increase in their level of optimism, positive hopes for the future, positive emotions, and reduced levels of discomfort or pain felt. Meanwhile research Boselie, et al (2023) The results show that each BPS condition significantly increases optimism (i.e. an increase in positive future expectations and a decrease in negative future expectations). Recent research also states that the best possible self can increase optimism in students and even make them more enthusiastic and happy (Wahyuni et al., 2022). Various studies on the best self intervention to increase optimism in individuals with 2 weeks-1 month period, but researchers have not found the best possible self intervention carried out on high school students and also the best possible self intervention training with a time of 1 week, considering that high school students are already facing various problems in the surrounding environment, especially at school, where the problems that occur must be resolved so that they do not experience ongoing negative effects such as not being enthusiastic about learning. So it is important to increase the optimism that exists in high school students. Therefore, researchers were encouraged to examine "The effectiveness of the best possible self intervention in increasing optimism among Pakem 3 Islamic Senior High School (SMA) students in Yogyakarta".

## 2. METHOD

This type of research is True Experimental with a control group design with pretest and posttest. In implementing this experimental design, there were two groups involved. The first group or

experimental group receives treatment or manipulation, while the second group functions as a control group that does not receive manipulation (Bloomfield & Fisher, 2019; Tanjung & Huwae, 2023). The research aims to determine the difference in optimism between the experimental group that was given treatment and the control group that was not given treatment. The place of this research was conducted at SMA Islam 3 Pakem Yogyakarta and the time of this research was conducted for 1 week and each day was given writing training about positive things imagined in the future for 15 minutes. The participants in this research were 16 grade 11 students at Islamic High School 3 Pakem, consisting of 8 students from XI MIPA and 8 students from XI IPS. The sampling technique in this research is random sampling. Determination of the experimental and control groups was carried out by randomization using coins, namely the researcher marked the image on the coin intended for class XI IPS and the number for class experimental class and the one below as the control class. From the results of randomization using coins, it was found that class XI MIPA was the experimental class and class XI IPS was the control group. The instrument used in this research was an adaptation of the Optimism Scale from (Coelho et al., 2018) which contains 9 items with CFI = 0.938 and RMSEA = 0.055 with a Cronbach alpha reliability value = 0.90. To analyze the data, researchers used the Shapiro Wilk normality test, homogeneity test, then the Paired Sample Test to see the differences between the pretest and posttest and the Independent T Test to see the differences between the experimental group and the control group.

**Table 1. Research Design**

R	TO	O1	X	O2
	K.K	O1		O2

### Intervention Procedure Best Possible Self

#### 1. Pretest

Giving a pretest scale to the experimental group and control group, regarding optimism using an adapted scale, namely the Optimism Scale from Coelho, et al (2018) which consists of 9 items

#### 2. Implementation of the Intervention: For the experimental group

The programme takes 15 minutes in 1 week (13 October -19 October 2023). Instructors direct students to imagine their best possible self.

- Providing the best possible training materials yourself (on the first day)
- Direct students to write down 3-5 positive things they imagine.
- After writing down their hopes, students are asked to reflect on their writing.
- The instructor will select several students to tell their feelings, after writing Best possible self.
- The control group was not given any treatment

#### 3. Posttest

The post test was given again to the experimental group after being given the Best possible self intervention and was also given to the control group with the same scale, namely the Optimism Scale (Coelho et al., 2018).

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

This study involved subjects in the form of 16 students from class XI, consisting of two categories, namely class XI MIPA and class XI IPS, with each class having 8 students. The total number of students was then divided into two groups of 8 students for class XI MIPA and 8 students for class XI IPS.

**Table 2. Description of Gender Data**

Class	Gender				Total	Status
	Female	Percentage	Male	Percentage		
XI MIPA	7	87.5 %	1	12.5 %	8	100%
XI IPS	8	100%	-	-	8	100%
Total	15	93.75 %	1	6.25 %	16	100%

In Table 2, it is known that the female gender is 15 people with a percentage of 93.75%, namely 7 people or 87.5% from class XI MIPA and 8 people or 100% from class XI IPS, then for the male gender there are 1 person with a percentage of 6.25%, namely 1 person or 12.5% from class XI MIPA Further description of data based on the age of the subject can be seen in the next Table.

**Table 3.** Description of Age Data

Class	Age						Total		Status
	16	Percentage	17	Percentage	18	Percentage			
XI MIPA	4	50%	3	37.5%	1	12.5%	8	100%	Experimental Group
XI IPS	6	75%	2	25%	-	-	8	100%	Control Group
Total	10	62.5%	5	31.25%	1	6.25%	16	100%	

In Table 3 it can be seen that for the age of 16 years there are 10 people with a percentage of 62.5%, namely 4 people or 50% from class XI MIPA and 6 people or 75% from class XI IPS, age 17 years there are 5 people with a percentage of 31.25%, namely 3 people or 37.5% from class XI MIPA and 2 people or 25% from class XI IPS, and age 18 years there is 1 person with a percentage of 6.25%, namely 1 person or 12.5% from class XI MIPA. Furthermore, the description of hypothetical data can be seen in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Hypothetical Data Description

Group	N	Hypothetical			
		Min	Max	Mean	SD
Experiment	8	9	45	27	6
Control	8	9	45	27	6

In Table 4 it can be seen that The hypothetical minimum value for the experimental and control groups is 9, the hypothetical maximum value for the experimental and control groups is 45, the hypothetical mean value for the experimental and control groups is 27, and the hypothetical standard deviation value for the experimental and control groups is 6. Next is a description of the empirical data. experimental group and control group in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Description of Empirical Data

Group	N	Pretest				Posttest			
		Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Experiment	8	21	40	35.75	3,536	39	41	40.13	0.835
Control	8	19	40	37.25	1,389	20	40	37.00	1,773

In Table 5 show that the minimum empirical value for the pretest for the experimental group is 21 and the posttest for the experimental group is 39, while for the control group the minimum empirical value for the pretest is 19 and the posttest for the control group is 35. Then the maximum empirical value for the pretest for the experimental group is 40 and the posttest is 41, while the maximum empirical score for the control group's pretest was 40 and the posttest was 40. Then the empirical mean for the experimental group's pretest was 35.75 and the posttest was 40.13, while the empirical mean for the control group's pretest was 37.25 and the posttest was 37.00. for the experimental group pretest empirical standard deviation was 3.536 and posttest was 0.835, while the control group pretest empirical standard deviation was 1.389 and posttest was 1.773. Next, categorize the experimental group in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Categorization of Experimental Groups

No	Score	Amount	Category	Percentage
1.	$X < 21$	-	Low	-
2.	$21 \leq X < 33$	-	Currently	-
3.	$33 \leq$	8	Tall	100%
Total		8		100%

In table 6 it can be seen that the experimental group that was given the best possible self intervention is in the high category with a percentage of 100%. Next is the categorization of the control group which was not given treatment in Table 7.

**Table 7.** Control Group Categorization

No	Score	Amount	Category	Percentage
1.	$X < 21$	2	Low	25%
2.	$21 \leq X < 33$	4	Currently	50%
3.	$33 \leq$	2	Tall	25%
<b>Total</b>		8		100%

In Table 7 it can be seen that the control group in the low category is 2 people with a percentage of 25%, the medium category is 4 people with a percentage of 50%, and the high category is 2 people with a percentage of 25%. Next, the normality test to find out whether the data is normally distributed or not can be seen in Table 8.

**Table 8.** Normality Test Results

	Statistics	Significance	Information
<b>Pretest Experiment</b>	,895	,263	Normal
<b>Experiment Posttest</b>	,835	,067	Normal
<b>Control Pretest</b>	,858	.114	Normal
<b>Control Posttest</b>	,906	,330	Normal

In Table 8, the experimental pretest data shows a value of 0.895 with a sig value.  $0.263 > 0.05$ , for the experimental posttest data the result was 0.835 with a sig value.  $0.067 > 0.05$ , for the control pretest data the result was 0.858 with a sig value.  $0.114 > 0.05$ , for control posttest data the result was 0.906 with a sig value.  $0.330 > 0.05$ . so all data can be said to be normal because  $> 0.05$ . Next, the homogeneity test used to see whether the data is homogeneous or not can be seen in Table 9.

**Table 9.** Homogeneity Test Results

Lavender's Test for Equality of Variances	F	Sig.
Value	1,806	,200

In Table 9 you can see the results of the homogeneity test, the value of  $F = 1.806$  with a sig value.  $0.200 > 0.05$ . So it can be said that the data from the experimental group and the control group can be said to be homogeneous because the significant value  $> 0.05$ . Next is the paired sample test to see the differences in pretest and posttest results in the experimental and control groups. Can be seen in Table 10.

**Table 10.** Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest Experiment	35.75	8	3,536	1,250
	Experiment Posttest	40.13	8	,835	,295
Pair 2	Control Pretest	37.25	8	1,389	,491
	Control Posttest	37.00	8	1,773	,627

In Table 10 it can be seen that for pair 1, namely the experimental pretest with a mean value of 37.75 and the experimental posttest with a mean value of 40.13, there was an increase after being given the best possible self intervention, while for pair 2, namely the control pretest with a mean value of 37.25 and the control posttest with a mean value of 37.00, there was decreased in the control group because they were not given treatment. Furthermore, the significance of the paired sample test can be seen in Table 11.

**Table 11.** Paired Sample Test

		Mean	SD	t	Sig.
Pair 1	Pretest - Posttest (Esperimen)	-4.375	3.583	-3.453	.011
Pair 2	Pretest- Posttest (Kontrol)	.250	1.488	.475	.649

In [Table 11](#), it can be seen that the results of pair 1, namely the experimental pretest with the experimental posttest, show the results of the  $t$  value = -3.453 with a sig value.  $0.011 < 0.05$  so that it can be said that there is a significant difference between the results of the experimental pretest and the experimental posttest, while for pair 2, namely the control pretest and control posttest, it shows the results of the  $t$  value = 0.475 with a sig value.  $0.649 > 0.05$  so it can be said that there is no significant difference between the results of the control pretest and the control posttest. Furthermore, the independent sample  $t$  test is carried out, it can be seen in the next table. Furthermore, looking at the differences in optimism between the control group and the experimental group can be seen in [Table 12](#).

**Table 12.** Independent Sample T Test Group Statistics Test Results

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Posttest (experiment- control)	Experiment	8	40.13	,835	,295
	Control	8	37.00	1,773	,627

In [Table 12](#) of this table it can be seen that the posttest mean of the experimental group is 40.13 while the mean posttest of the control group is 37.00. So the difference between the experimental group and the control group can be seen with a value of 3.13. So the experimental group that had been given the best possible self training had higher optimism than the control group. Furthermore, the significance of the Independent Sample T Test can be seen in [Table 13](#).

**Tabel 13.** Hasil Uji Independent Sample T Test

		t-test for Equality of Means		
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Posttest Eksperimen*Kontrol	Equal variances assumed	4.511	14	.000
	Equal variances not assumed	4.511	9.957	.001

In [Table 13](#), the Equal variances assumed section can be seen the value of  $t = 4.511$  with a sig value.  $0.000 < 0.05$ , so that as a basis for decision making in the independent sample  $t$  test it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the control group and the experimental group that has been given the best possible self intervention because the significance value  $< 0.05$ .

## Discussion

This study evaluates the use of the Best Possible Self intervention as a way to increase levels of optimism in adolescents. It was found that implementing the Best possible self intervention regularly can increase the attitude of optimism in individuals ([Schutte & Malouff, 2023](#)). The results of this research show that the experimental group experienced increased optimism after implementing the Best Possible Self intervention. Specifically, mean optimism scores increased after one week of intervention. This finding is in line with previous research that the Best possible Self intervention can focus on increasing optimism by emphasizing a positive view of the future ([Carrillo et al., 2019](#)). Recent research shows that effective self-intervention can increase optimism among final year students, who are writing their theses, just by doing it for a week and showing good results ([Wahyuni et al., 2022](#)). Providing the best possible self both offline and online has a comparable impact. Doing the best possible self online has advantages in terms of cost efficiency, convenience for researchers and participants, as well as providing access flexibility for participants. In addition, participants have the ability to carry out the best possible process independently, allowing them to apply it according to their individual needs ([Boselie et al., 2023](#)).

This research also resulted in differences in optimism in the control group and the experimental group which had been given the possible self intervention. Where the experimental group that was given the best possible self intervention showed more positive attitudes (optimism). This is in line with previous research which provided the best possible self intervention, namely that the treatment group had a more positive attitude (significant increase in positive attitudes) than the control group (no significant increase in positive attitudes) ([Duan et al., 2022](#)). The best possible self intervention also increases optimism (i.e. increasing positive future expectations and decreasing negative future expectations) in individuals ([Boselie et al., 2023](#)). Apart from optimism, best possible self intervention can also increase self-esteem and self-efficacy ([Enrique et al., 2018](#)). This is in line with research [Pál & Sebestyén \(2023\)](#) where this research looked at the best possible self intervention in increasing optimism,

self-esteem, and self-efficacy and the results showed that the best possible self intervention significantly increased optimism, self-esteem, and self-efficacy, apart from that, anxiety significantly decreased in the intervention group. compared to the control group. The best possible self can be done in various ways, including using online media, through images, audio, in research the method used is through writing. However, despite getting good results, online media, images and audio have been proven to be able to increase optimism and have a positive effect on the individuals who do it. In line with previous research, the best possible self intervention was carried out by listening to musical instruments, making individuals more able to think about positive things, thereby increasing optimism (Enrique et al., 2018; Putra et al., 2023). Likewise, through pictures and online media by providing positive videos or good pictures it can make individuals think more positively so that when the best possible intervention is carried out in this way it can increase individual optimism (Boselie et al., 2023; Deck et al., 2023; Meevissen et al., 2011). These methods can be used because an optimistic attitude is a person's way of looking at something. When an individual has an optimistic attitude, he will see good things as beauty and bad things as challenges that he must face (Seligman, 2006).

After doing the best possible self for seven consecutive days, experimental group participants experienced a significant change in optimism. They reported positive changes in various aspects of their lives. They feel happier, physically and mentally healthier, and better able to overcome the problems they face. Additionally, participants also envisioned and noted improvements in their finances, allowing them to better meet their personal and family needs. They also saw improvements in their careers and jobs, as well as more harmonious and happy family relationships. From this article, it can be concluded that participants have hopes of experiencing many positive things, such as getting a suitable job, having good and deep social relationships, and experiencing significant personal and professional growth. The description above is in line with research Kim-Godwin (2020) research results, namely that participants who were involved in the best possible self intervention experienced an increase in their level of optimism, positive hopes for the future, positive emotions, and reduced levels of discomfort or pain felt (Peters et al., 2013). In line with research Altintas, et al (2020) Obtaining the results of possible self intervention shows individuals who are optimistic, and do things positively, think positively, and eliminate negative emotions. So that individuals who take part in this intervention become happy individuals because they see things positively (Heekerens & Eid, 2021). The limitations that exist in the research that has been carried out are taken into consideration for further research in the hope of obtaining better results. This research is limited in several ways which are limitations of the research, such as limited subjects, short intervention activities that were only carried out for 1 week, carried out during the last class period which made the subjects tired of thinking, changes in optimism scores were only measured after participants completed the session. best possible self so there is no information regarding how long the effects of this intervention will last. Apart from that, there were participants in the experimental group and the control group who lived in dormitories, so the researcher could not deny the occurrence of bias in this research.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The results of the study prove that implementing the best possible self intervention is effective in increasing the level of optimism in students. There was a change in the average level of optimism in the experimental group that received the best possible self intervention. This average change was more significant compared to the control group. The pretest and posttest scores in the experimental group showed significant differences, with the posttest scores being higher than the pretest scores. Meanwhile, in the control group there was a decrease in scores between the pretest and posttest, but not significantly, indicating that there was no significant difference between the pretest and posttest results in the control group. Then there was a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group, where the experimental group was more optimistic than the control group. Suggestions for further research include increasing the number of participants and extending the duration of the best possible self intervention. Apart from that, it is also recommended to carry out a more in-depth analysis regarding other factors that influence the level of optimism, as well as taking measurements at the end of each daily intervention session to find out how long the effects of the best possible self intervention can last.

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