

SMART-R Counseling: Developing Student Resilience during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Received April 02, 2022;

Revised April 30, 2022;

Accepted May. 10, 2021;

Published Online 2022-05-25

Conflict of Interest

Disclosures:

The authors declare that they have no significant competing financial, professional or personal interests that might have influenced the performance or presentation of the work described in this manuscript.

Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic that has lasted for two years is a dynamic condition that has an impact on all dimensions of life, including educational field. Various changes that appear in learning activities at school can not be denied has become a stressful situation that requires students to adapt quickly. Several findings have shown that there is a decrease in students' psychological well-being during the pandemic. This condition emphasizes that students need to have good psychological resilience so they are able to face difficulties and misfortunes, and be adaptive due the changes. The development of student resilience can be done through guidance and counseling services. SMART-R is a strength-based counseling model that can be implemented by counselors (BK teachers) to develop student resilience. Through the implementation of SMART-R counseling, students can have a more adaptive response in dealing with pressures and changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and can develop more positive feelings, thoughts, and behaviors.

Keywords: SMART-R counseling, strength-based counseling, resilience, covid-19.



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How to Cite: Kadek Suranata, Wayan Eka Paramartha, I Ketut Dharsana, Abu Yazid Abu Bakar. 2022. SMART-R Counseling: Developing Student Resilience During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Bisma*, 6 (1): pp. 103-108, DOI: [10.23887/bisma.v6i1.48829](https://doi.org/10.23887/bisma.v6i1.48829)

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic situation has spurred people to quickly adapt to various changes. Education is one sector that faces considerable challenges, namely changing face-to-face learning activities into online learning. In fact, normal school routines (face-to-face learning, students come to school) are one of the coping mechanisms possessed by adolescents (students) (Lee, 2020). So it is undeniable, the policy to close schools and stop face-to-face learning activities turned out to have an unfavorable impact on the psychological condition of students, which was marked by the emergence of psychological disorders in students including being prone to sleep disorders, high levels of anxiety, to depression (Cornine, 2020; Ifdil et al., 2021; Singh et al., 2020).

Oktawirawan's findings (2020) explained that distance learning that students had to participate in during the pandemic had become a condition that resulted in students having difficulty understanding the material, having difficulty doing assignments, and facing various technical obstacles such as unsupportive internet network conditions. This condition then triggers high levels of anxiety and other psychological disorders experienced by students during the pandemic (Ardan et al., 2020; Li et al., 2020; Liang et al., 2020). This shows that the COVID-19 pandemic has become a stressful and anxious event for students. If studied through a window of tolerance scheme (Siegel, 1999) this condition means that students tend not to be able to process stimuli effectively and affect the ability to think rationally and behave adaptively (stuck in hypo/hyper-arousal) or are outside the zone of good resilience.

Resilience refers to the concept of an individual's resilience in the face of adversity or adversity. The relationship between resilience and psychological mental health of students has been widely studied. The longitudinal analysis study conducted by Wu et al. (2020) found that resilience can significantly predict students' mental health status. In the study, it was explained that students who have low resilience tend to show symptoms of psychological disorders such as anxiety and depression that are higher than students who have high resilience. Resilience was also found to be one of the non-cognitive factors that contributed both to students' academic achievement and optimizing their psychological development (Gräbel, 2017; Handarini, 2019). Therefore, efforts to develop student resilience are needed, especially in the current pandemic conditions which not only cause high psychological disorders, but also negatively affect students' academic performance as indicated by the occurrence of learning loss (Engzell et al., 2021; Hammerstein et al., 2021).

Based on the description of these conditions, efforts are needed to develop student resilience, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. This effort can be done through guidance and counseling services in schools. School counselors (BK teachers) as facilitators play an important role in helping students to have resilience in facing difficulties and misfortunes due to the pandemic. Efforts that can be made by school counselors are to train students to have good psychological resilience (resilience) so that students can have a more adaptive response in dealing with pressure, and can have more positive perceptions, feelings, and behaviors in dealing with difficulties due to the pandemic.

This article aims to describe the role of school counselors (BK teachers) in developing student resilience through guidance and counseling (BK) services, and to describe SMART-R counseling as a counseling model that can be used to develop student resilience, especially in the COVID-19 pandemic situation.

Results and Discussion

The Role of Counseling Guidance in Developing Student Resilience during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Resilience is not an innate trait that is innate, but develops dynamically through students' interactions with the environment, as well as through an educational process that allows students to develop thinking skills (cognitive), social and emotional skills (Masten et al., 2008; Yates & Masten, 2012). As a component of the education process in schools, guidance and counseling as mandated in Permendikbud number 111 of 2014 plays an important role in ensuring that students can develop their potential optimally and be able to face various dynamics in their lives. This means that counselor teachers as counselors in schools have a strategic role in helping students to be able to have resilience in the face of adversity and adversity, especially in stressful conditions such as the COVID-19 pandemic. In an effort to develop student resilience through guidance and counseling services, BK teachers need to pay attention to several aspects so that the counseling practice carried out can be effective.

The relationship between the components of guidance and counseling services in an effort to develop student resilience is described as follows.

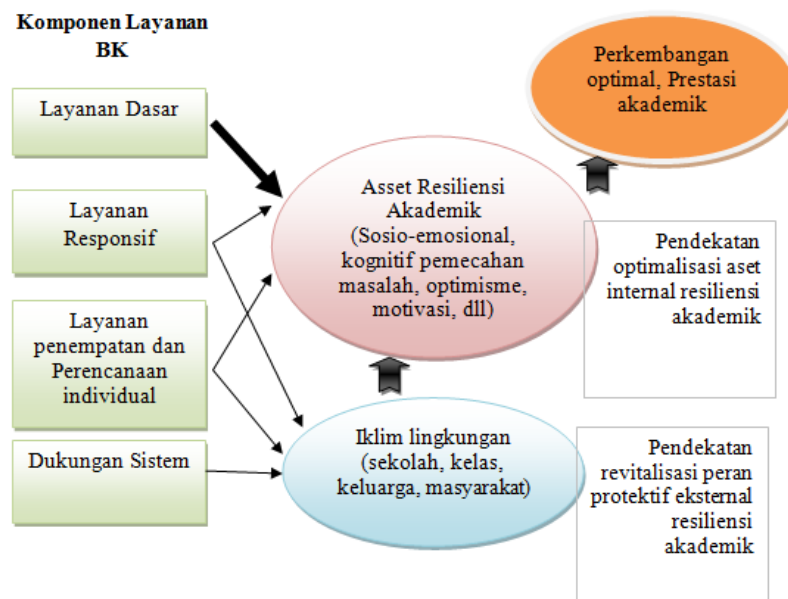


Figure 01. Components of Counseling Services in Developing Student Resilience

There is some empirical evidence that supports that counseling interventions implemented in schools have succeeded in helping students to develop resilience, including intervention programs based on cognitive-behavioral models such as the Penn Resilience Program (PRP), FRIENDS and resilience activity for every day (READY) (Reivich & Gillham, 2010; VicHealth, 2015). Efforts to develop resilience were also carried out by Suranata et al., (2017) through the implementation of a strength-based counseling model. The results of this study found that the group of students who took strength-based counseling showed an increase in resilience scores or an increase in the 2nd to 11th week of counseling implementation. The results of the empirical study indicate that efforts to develop student resilience can be carried out through guidance and counseling services in schools and strengthen the role of counselors (counseling teachers) in developing student resilience, especially during the pandemic.

SMART-R Counseling Concepts and Procedures

The SMART-R counseling model was developed based on the cognitive-behavioral counseling (CBT) model and the strength-based counseling model. This counseling model focuses on helping individuals to be able to adapt to sharing risks and difficulties by developing resilience, namely realizing and empowering the potential strengths that exist within themselves, such as positive hopes and beliefs as well as support that comes from the environment (Suranata, 2019). Related to this goal, the targets in this strength-based counseling program are mainly self-awareness, positive expectations and students' beliefs about the potential strengths that exist within themselves, support from the social environment (family, school, peers, community in an effort to overcome problems and difficulties) difficulty.

SMART-R counseling formulates techniques from cognitive-behavioral counseling, REBT, solution-focused brief counseling, and other strength-based counseling techniques. The SMART-R counseling procedure consists of five stages, namely (1) source your strength, (2) manage the potential, (3) actuating the potential and strength, (4) re-definition to make a change and (5) termination. The first stage (source your strength) aims to make the counselee aware of his competence or resources, both internal and external resources. The counselor can guide the counselee to create a narrative that retells experiences when meeting an obstacle by focusing on success in overcoming the obstacle, then the counselor plays a role in finding the meanings of the narrative conveyed by the counselee. In this phase, the counselor can also use the exception question technique to help the counselee realize that he is empowered/competent (de Shazer et al., 2007).

The second stage (manage the potential) is carried out to help the counselee manage thoughts/perceptions to be more rational, reduce negative emotions, and train the counselee to be more

adaptive. Some of the techniques that can be used include cognitive restructuring, systematic relaxation and dezentification, and self-monitoring through daily journals. Counselors can also help counsees to identify more positive coping strategies when dealing with unfavorable situations. At this stage the counselor also helps the counselee to manage the potential, resources, and positive competencies that have been identified in the previous stage. Then in the third stage (acting the potential and strength), the counselor guides the counselee to implement or empower the competencies, resources, and potential they have in dealing with everyday life.

In the fourth stage (re-definition to make a change) the counselor guides the counselee to conduct self-monitoring to find out how the cognitive response (perception), attitudes and emotions, as well as the counselee's behavior to everyday conditions (adversity or obstacle) and evaluate it through discussion between the counselor and the counselee. Then in the fifth stage (termination), the counselor guides the counselee to develop optimism, hope, and motivation to achieve his goals and ideals, and directs the counselee to develop further plans to realize his potential, hopes, and ideals. At the end of the activity, the counselor also provides reinforcement and compliments to the counselee.

The Effectiveness of SMART-R Counseling

SMART-R counseling is a new counseling model that was developed in 2019. The use of SMART-R counseling was reported in the Suranata study (2019) which tested the feasibility and effectiveness of implementing SMART-R counseling to increase resilience in high school students.

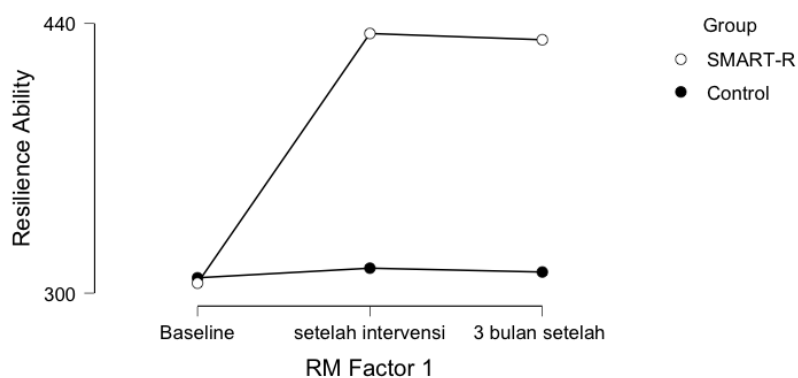


Figure 02. Graph of Increasing Student Resilience After the SMART-R Counseling Intervention

Based on the graph, it can be seen that there was an increase in resilience in the group of students who received the SMART-R counseling intervention compared to students who did not receive the intervention. Furthermore, the study of Suranata et al. (2019) examines the implementation of counseling compared to several counseling models that have been established in improving the psychological well-being (well-being) of students and students.

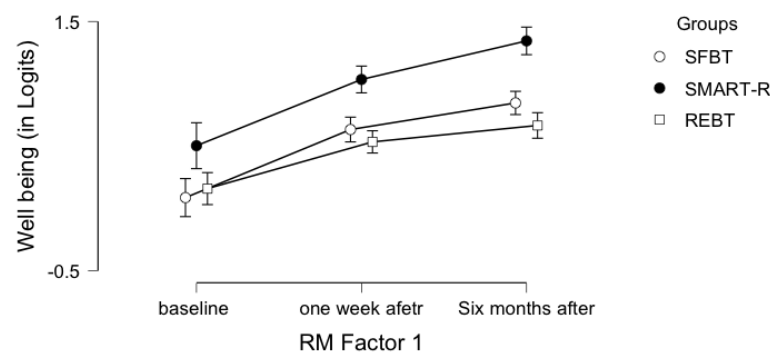


Figure 03. Results of a Comparative Study on the Implementation of SMART-R Counseling

The results of this study found that the SMART-R counseling intervention was most effective in improving students' well-being compared to the SFBT and REBT models. Students' and counselors' perceptions of the feasibility of SMART-R counseling were also reported to be quite good (Suranata, 2019). The results of empirical studies related to SMART-R counseling have shown that this model has good feasibility and effectiveness in its implementation as a psychological intervention, especially for students.

Conclusion

Resilience is one of the important competencies for students to have in dealing with crisis situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Good resilience skills, apart from helping students adapt to changes and challenges, also have a positive effect on academic achievement. Therefore, the development of student resilience must always be carried out, especially in educational activities in schools. Efforts to develop student resilience can be done through guidance and counseling services. School counselors (BK teachers) must be facilitators to train students to have good resilience. SMART-R counseling is a counseling model that can be used by counselors in an effort to develop student resilience. Several studies have reported the feasibility and effectiveness of SMART-R counseling to develop psychological aspects of students including resilience. Through the implementation of SMART-R counseling, it is hoped that students can have good resilience so that students can have a more adaptive response in dealing with pressure, and can have more positive perceptions, feelings, and behaviors in dealing with difficulties due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Students in schools as developing individuals need resilience as the ability to survive and rise from conditions that threaten mental health, and to succeed. Based on this study, it is recommended for guidance and counseling teachers/school counselors to apply the SMART Resilience counseling model to develop the skills needed by students to develop resilience. With strong resilience, students have a greater potential to achieve success in academics, careers and life.

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Article Information (Supplementary)

Conflict of Interest Disclosures:

The authors declare that they have no significant competing financial, professional or personal interests that might have influenced the performance or presentation of the work described in this manuscript.

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First Publication Right: BISMA The Journal of Counseling

<http://dx.doi.org/10.23887/bisma.v6i1.48829>

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