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# THE EFFECTIVENESS OF STRENGTH-BASED COUNSELING MODEL IN DEVELOPING UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ACADEMIC HOPE

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the effectiveness of the self-strength counseling model in developing student academic expectations. The study was conducted using a single-subject experimental design to measure the relationship between 2 variables, namely self-strength counseling and academic expectations. The type of design used is the A-B-A design, where there are three experimental phases, namely phase A is the baseline phase and phase B is the intervention phase. The data analysis used in this research is descriptive statistical techniques because the study has a single case (single subject). The number of subjects in this study was limited, namely only five students. The results showed that self-strength counseling was effective in increasing student academic expectations after the intervention process. The study results can be used to reference counselors in higher education to improve student academic expectations through the self-strength counseling model.

Keywords: strength based counseling, academic hope, single-subject experimental design

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## INTRODUCTION

The focus of the present study was the dynamic changes of university students' academic hope. Chamodraka (2008) argues that discussion on hope could be put in a continuum of counseling from implicit to explicit. These scholars propose a framework to understand various ways where hope can be purposefully used in the counseling process. They propose three different conceptualizations for deliberate hope work in counseling: instilling hope (i.e. hope conveyed through a therapeutic relationship), finding hope (i.e. uncovering the seeds of hope that already exist for the counselee), and creating

hope (i.e. hope is a joint construction between counselors) and counselees).

The current understanding of developing hope in counseling stems from the studies of the effectiveness of therapy techniques and counseling taken from Synders' theory of hope, which is specifically developed to internalize hope in clients (Lopez, Floyd, Ulven, & Snyder, 2003). Hope-related counseling is specifically designed to help clients to conceptualize clearer goal and more path to achieve it, to optimize clients' motivation to maintain the goal, and to reframe the obstacles as a challenge. More specifically, the advocates of this counseling

1 approach propose an integration of general factors, solution intervention, narrative, and cognitive behavioral intervention to help clients to obtain positive self-perception of their skill

Hope-based intervention is found to be effective among middle adult client (Chamodraka, 2008), consistent with Synder (2002) who state that such intervention is effective to handle depressed early-adult clients. It is also consistent with Cheavens, et al. (2001), as cited in Cheavens et al., 2006; and Chamodraka, (2008) who stated that it is effective for individuals suffering from depression and anxiety.

Various counseling approaches have been applied, however, the result is still suboptimal. Approaches that have been reported are: Hope Therapy and Narrative Therapy. Accordingly, it is necessary to apply another strategy to develop clients' academic hope. One of the possible strategies is strength-based counseling, which represent an extreme paradigm shift in the field of psychology from pathology-focused medical model to the modality development model (Walsh, 2006). This approach attempts to understand human virtue and discover the individual's strength to effectively face his/her life. Strength-based counseling provide a theoretical and practical framework designed to involve counselors and psychologist to develop modality/asset of individuals of all life span (Smith, 2006; Rashid, 2015; Fortune, 2018; Pflugrad, et al., 2018).

Strength-based counseling model could be defined as a process of helping individuals where the counselors learn the strength and the quality of individuals in positive perspective during the therapeutical process or at school context (Snyder, Cheavens, and Sympton, 1997). This new perspective may help family and school to find and discover adolescents' strength. Furthermore, adolescents are taught to identify their strengths and direct them when facing a problem. This strength framework may help parents, teachers, and other relevant professions to modify and reframe the way they see and understand adolescents (Saputro, 2018). Through strength-based counseling, a counselor is demanded to make a changes in the service perspective, from seeing the individual's risk to seeing the individual's strength (Davidson, 2014; Grothaus, 2012; Hartanto, 2019; Toporek, 2017). The core concept of the strength-based counseling is the use of strength category as a foundation in establishing and

employing a rational counseling intervention. Strength category proposes several contributing attributes toward the negative or positive social and emotional function (Aspinwall & Staudinger, 2003).

A counselor needs strength category to identify his/her clients' positive attribute, to focus to the virtue of individuals, and to place the strength in the clients' psychological and social functions (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; McMahon, 2013; Mirkovic, et al., 2016). In addition, by understanding the clients' strength, a counselor can clarify the role of clients' strength in counseling and psychotherapy process (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

The developed strength-based counseling model consisted of eight stages as follow: 1) Establishing a therapeutic relationship, 2) Identifying and discovering strength, 3) Identifying internal and external hindrances on problems and strengths, 4) Identifying and growing hope, 5) Framing solutions and treatment plans, 6) Developing strength and competence, 7) Building new identity and reintegration, 8) Evaluating and terminating the counseling process.

#### METHODOLOGY

Single-subject experimental design was applied to measure the relationship between two variables in this study, i.e., strength-based counseling and academic hope. Using A-B-A design, three phases were carried out, phase A represented baseline phase and phase B was the intervention phase. Since the present study was a single-subject, the obtained data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. 5 university students were recruited as participants.

#### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section describes the effectiveness of strength-based counseling in improving each participant's academic hope.

##### Participant IDN

IDN was a female students from Lampung. Her parents were civil servants. She said that she did not like organizational activity. However, her cognitive ability was above standard, as shown by her GPA of above 3.50. As displayed in figure 4.5, the intervention process was effective to improve her academic hope. Her highest achievement in intervention phase (B) was found in the 7th phase. The trend she showed during the intervention phase kept increasing. In the early period of the first and the second

sessions, it was found that she find it difficult to respect other people.

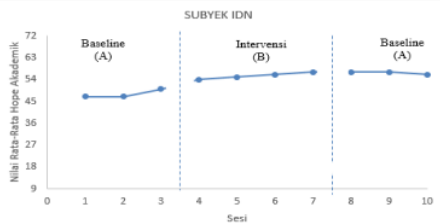


Figure 1.  
IDN trends

Results of observation, worksheet analysis, and qualitative data analysis. IDN was an individual with medium hope and has high academic hope after the intervention was conducted.

#### Participant FIP

FIP was a male students with Betawi cultural background. His parents were civil servants. He currently did not live with his parents. FIP possessed excelent academic achievement and was actively involved in student activities.

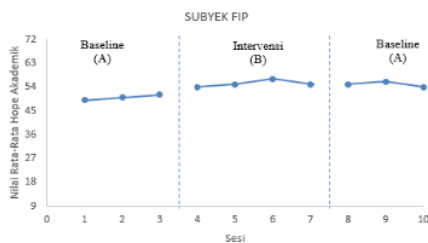


Figure 2.  
Research finding on FIP

Figure 2 shows that strength-based counseling intervention was effective to enhance FIP's academic hope. The highest result was found in the sixth stage. In this stage, FIP participated in individual counseling process to reduce the obstacles he faced.

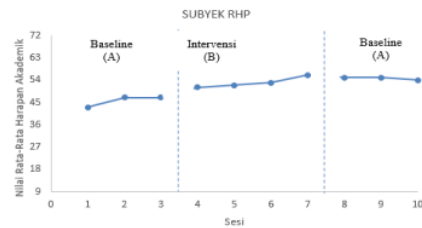
#### Participant RHP

RHP was a male student with Javanese cultural background. Javanese culture attached to RHP make him put other people higher than himself. His parents were civil servants, It was found that he was actively involved in community organization. He was a vocational high school graduate.

Figure 3 shows that the intervention process was effective to enhance RHP's

academic hope. The highest improvement was found in the seventh stage. RHP tended to exhibit increase in every intervention phase. His academic hope in the final stage was categorized as high.

Figure 3.  
Research finding on RHP



#### Participant ID

ID was a male student with Jambi cultural background. His parents were oil palm farmer and an entrepreneur. It was found that he was graduated from Pondok Pesantren before attending university. He was the oldest participants.

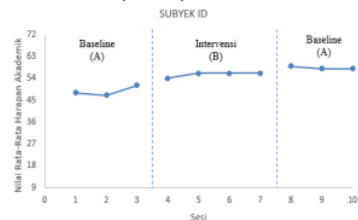


Figure 4.  
Research finding on ID

The analysis result showed that ID experienced academic hope improvement. Figure 4 showed that the strength-based counseling was effective to enhance ID's hope. Despite the academic hope improvement, his score was stagnant during the 5th, 6th, and 7th stage.

#### Participant NA

NA was a female student graduated from Madrasah Aliyah (Islamic senior high school). Her parents were civil servant with Javanese cultural background. She has average cognitive ability, as shown by her GPA of lower than 3.50. NA was interested in organizational activities, she actively participated in Student Organization.

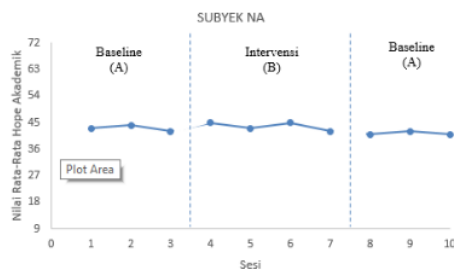


Figure 5.  
Research finding on NA.

The finding shows that strength-based counseling intervention was not effective to enhance NA's academic hope. As shown in figure 5, there is no significant increase during the intervention phase. NA's academic hope was categorized as medium. The best improvement was noticed during the sixth stage, where NA participated in individual session more than other participants did. This is interesting and proves that academic hope is a flexible and complex psychological concept.

### CONCLUSION

In general, strength-based counseling is effective to improve students' academic hope. The finding of the study could be used as a reference for university counselors to enhance students' academic hope.

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