

## Psychoeducational Film Intervention with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) to Enhance Secure Attachment of Students towards Parents

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### Abstract

Separation from parents to study at a boarding school creates a sense of loss, alienation, loneliness, and a weakening of communication with parents among the students (santri). The issues faced by these students are related to attachment patterns, specifically secure attachment. Secure attachment significantly influences the social and emotional development of students, reduces behavioral problems, and alleviates depression. Therefore, this research aims to examine the efficacy of two psychoeducational interventions utilizing films, one with a cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) approach and one without a CBT approach, to enhance secure attachment among students towards their parents. This study employs a randomized controlled trial pre-post test design, with a research population of 20 students from Madrasah Tsanawiyah Candung. The participants are randomly divided into two different intervention groups, each consisting of 10 subjects. Data analysis involves the Wilcoxon signed ranks test and Mann-Whitney test. The results indicate a significant improvement in secure attachment among students in both the psychoeducational film intervention with CBT and the psychoeducational film intervention without CBT. However, further analysis reveals that the psychoeducational film intervention with CBT produces a higher increase in self-esteem compared to the intervention without CBT.

**Keywords:** Psychoeducation, cognitive-behavioral therapy, secure attachment.

### Introduction

Separated from their parents to study at Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), students (santri) experience a loss of a sense of security (Natasuwarna & Ramadhana, 2021), feelings of alienation (McGregor & Mills, 2012), and loneliness (Astuti & Sulistyanto, 2022). Interpersonal issues become inevitable (Mar'ati & Chaer, 2016), exacerbated by the lack of communication with parents leading to delinquent behavior (Kusuma, 2017).

Santri in pesantren are typically in their adolescence (Kusaini, 2021) and tend to have low secure attachment (Theisen et al., 2018). However, secure attachment is positively associated with social and emotional development (Tsappis et al., 2022). Among countries with adolescents exhibiting low secure attachment are China (Li et al., 2020), Europe (Heinze et al., 2018), Pakistan (Akhtar, 2012), Finland (Flykt et al., 2021), and Indonesia (Ramadhanti et al., 2021).

Attachment style is an individual's way of expressing closeness through behavior that reflects their feelings towards others in interpersonal relationships (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2015). Bowlby (1988) defines attachment as a strong emotional bond formed through interactions with individuals who hold special significance in one's life.

Ainsworth and Bell (1970) categorized attachment into three types: secure attachment, where the child views the mother or caregiver as a secure base for exploring the environment; insecure-avoidant attachment, characterized by avoiding the mother, such as ignoring her presence and not seeking closeness; and insecure ambivalent/resistant attachment, marked by rejecting the mother, for example, by kicking or pushing her. The latter two categories fall under insecure attachment.

Insecure attachment is characterized by self-negativity and excessive trust in others, making individuals dependent on their caregivers. Avoidant attachment is characterized by a positive self-view and distrust in others through emotional suppression. Meanwhile, secure attachment promotes effective interpersonal functionality and supports individuals in adequate social interaction. Previous research indicates that avoidant attachment is associated with low self-esteem, high levels of depression, and increased loneliness (Varghese & Pistole, 2017; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2015). Secure attachment results in contributions to effective self-development (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2015).

Apart from personality traits, attachment styles also influence cyberbullying behavior (Hemphill & Heerde, 2014; Cummings-Robbeau & Lopez, 2009). Research by Bloodworth (2015) suggests that adolescents with secure attachment tend to exhibit low aggressive behavior, including cyberbullying. Another study by Ireland & Power (2004) found that avoidant attachment correlates with

traditional bullying behavior. At the university level, avoidant attachment and avoidance behavior are positively associated with interpersonal aggression (Cummings-Robeau & Lopez, 2009).

Fuad & Budiyo's (2012) research on santri at Anwarussholihin Islamic Boarding School indicates that the attachment patterns of santri lean towards anxious resistant attachment (insecure attachment). Putri's (2018) study reveals that 71% of santri at Hasyim Asy'ari Islamic Boarding School in Tegal have moderate secure attachment, 20% have high attachment, and 9% have low attachment. Izzati's (2022) research also discloses that 68% of junior high-level santri at Al-Falah Islamic Boarding School in Pacul Bojonegoro have moderate secure attachment, 18% have low attachment, and 14% have high attachment. This implies that a considerable number of santri have low secure attachment. The low secure attachment of santri to their parents results in reduced resilience (Fuadi, 2023) and independence (Candra & Leona, 2019). Moreover, santri with low secure attachment are prone to homesickness in pesantren (Fadly, 2018) and experience poor self-adjustment (Mamduh, 2018).

A national study in Lebanon (Nakhoul et al., 2020) reveals that adolescents with low secure attachment exhibit higher levels of addiction to cigarettes, alcohol, and the internet compared to those with high secure attachment. Meanwhile, Xu et al. (2022) found that low secure attachment in adolescents increases anxiety and a lack of empathy towards the environment. This aligns with Delker et al.'s (2018) research, which indicates that adolescents with low secure attachment are more susceptible to stress risks compared to those with high secure attachment.

The enhancement of an individual's secure attachment can be achieved by exploring self-representations regarding attachment figures with the intention of reassessing and restructuring oneself with newly acquired understanding (Bowlby, 1988). The acquisition of new understanding is a key goal of psychoeducation (Supratiknya, 2011). Exploring self-representations can be facilitated by engaging with self-related films (Rismayanti, 2021), while cognitive restructuring is a technique within Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) that has demonstrated positive efficacy (Beck, 2011).

Hastuti et al.'s (2022) research indicates that cognitive restructuring can enhance student resilience. Additionally, counseling services employing a CBT approach can assist in preventing and reducing delinquent behaviors (Netrawati et al., 2019). CBT focuses on cognitive reconstruction by transforming negative and irrational thought patterns into more positive and healthy interpretations of life events (Fitriana et al., 2018). CBT is implemented through three sessions: identifying and acknowledging cognitive distortions, transforming distortions towards positive thinking patterns, and applying positive thinking in daily life (Beck, 2011). Beck (2011) asserts that behavioral change necessitates cognitive change (Karneli et al., 2018). Therefore, psychoeducation groups concentrate on developing cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills among members through structured procedures during group meetings (Corey & Corey, 2006).

Psychoeducational interventions have the potential for beneficial impacts on the improvement of secure attachment between parents and children (Yuen et al., 2022; Gold et al., 2023). Psychoeducation, in the form of non-training, can be directly delivered through films (Pengurus Pusat Himpunan Psikologi Indonesia, 2010). The utilization of films in psychoeducation, particularly with a CBT approach, proves effective in intervening in the issues faced by clients who are directly involved in addressing their problems (Robinson & Bolton, 2013). The steps involved in psychoeducation utilizing films with a CBT approach in enhancing secure attachment among students towards their parents essentially follow the psychoeducational steps utilizing films.

Research on interventions using films with a CBT approach to enhance secure attachment is still limited, especially among students in Islamic boarding schools (Fuadi, 2023; Supratiknya, 2011). To address this knowledge gap, this study will examine the efficacy of interventions using films with a CBT approach to improve secure attachment among students. Based on the aforementioned problem statement, the hypotheses of this research are as follows:

- Psychoeducational interventions using films with a CBT approach can enhance secure attachment among students.
- Psychoeducational interventions using films without a CBT approach can enhance secure attachment among students.

- Psychoeducational interventions utilizing films with a CBT approach have a greater effect in improving secure attachment among students compared to interventions using films without CBT.

## **Method**

### *Design*

This study employs a quantitative experimental research design to examine the efficacy of two different interventions: psychoeducational film with cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) and psychoeducational film without CBT (Firman, 2018; Creswell, 2015). The research design utilized is a randomized controlled trial pre-post test design. The study adhered to the Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials (CONSORT) guidelines (Butcher et al., 2022; Eldridge et al., 2016; Moher et al., 2010; Hopewell et al., 2008), the most recent update of the World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki (1964) in 2013, and the International Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical Research Involving Human Subjects (CIOMS 2016).

### *Participants*

The participants in the study comprised 20 students (santri), randomly assigned to two intervention groups. The research was conducted in three stages: (1) administering a pre-test to measure the baseline conditions of the respondents before receiving treatment, (2) providing treatment, and (3) conducting a post-test to assess any changes after the treatment. The research was conducted at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Candung Agam, West Sumatra. Informed consent was obtained from the subjects before they voluntarily participated in the study. The researcher provided information regarding the objectives of the study, potential risks, and research procedures, ensuring that the subjects understood the research process.

### *Intervention*

The intervention module underwent professional judgment evaluation by three experts in the fields of guidance and counseling, as well as CBT. Suggestions and feedback from the experts were then used as a basis to improve the module. Expert recommendations included the module content, the

storyline in the psychoeducational film, the duration of the intervention, and the method of delivering the intervention to the research subjects.

Psychoeducational treatment utilizing films with a CBT approach was administered six times, as was the psychoeducational treatment without a CBT approach. This study implemented a double-blinded design, where the research assistants were unaware of which intervention group received CBT and which did not. Two trainers with master's qualifications in guidance and counseling, who were trained, delivered the interventions. The intervention sessions lasted 45 minutes each for a total of six sessions. Research assistants collected pre-test and post-test data. The data were then processed by another research assistant to avoid bias from the primary researcher. The design of the psychoeducational activities utilizing films with a CBT approach can be found in [Table I](#) below.

Table I

*Design of Psychoeducational Activity Material Utilizing Film with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)*

No	Activity Material	Objectives
1	Parental Guidance Lantern in Life	Directing students to become sensitive to their parents' emotions and behaviors accompanying their feelings, and to communicate verbally.
2	My Family's Future	Instilling trust in students that parents respect and understand their needs and desires.
3	Parental Love Along the Way	Students are able to feel parental love even when far away from their parents.
4	Parents as Life Heroes	Assisting students in experiencing joy when near their parents.
5.	Cognitive Restructuring	Students learn to understand patterns of cognitive distortion, methods to change cognitive distortions, and how to apply cognitive restructuring in daily life.

Psychoeducational stages utilizing films with a cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) approach involve a series of activities designed to assist individuals in understanding, identifying, and altering thought patterns and behaviors that may cause or exacerbate mental health issues. The psychoeducational stages utilizing films with a CBT approach consist of the following: (1) Experiencing Phase, during this phase, the counselor and the client engage in specific activities. In this phase, the counselor presents a film and aids the client in finding focus; (2) Publicizing Phase, in this phase, the counselor

endeavors to have the client experience various reactions and personal observations regarding the newly encountered experience. In this phase, the client is asked to watch the film and analyze it in preparation for discussion. CBT techniques are introduced in this phase, including general techniques (Socratic questioning); (3) Processing Phase, during this phase, the counselor assists the client in processing and interpreting various data obtained from the preceding phases. In this phase, the counselor initiates guiding the discussion by posing questions, deepening the analysis, and providing summaries. CBT is fully applied in this phase, utilizing general techniques such as Socratic questioning and specific techniques including problem-solving and skills training, relaxation, and mindfulness; (4) Generalizing Phase, in this phase, the counselor aids the client in formulating principles and hypotheses based on the overall learning experience. In this phase, the counselor documents or records discussion outcomes. CBT approaches are still employed in this phase, including specific techniques such as a credit list; (5) Application Phase, the application phase is where the counselor assists the client in capturing the meaning and benefits of the newly undergone training, as well as building determination and plans to apply it in everyday life situations. In this phase, the counselor summarizes learning points or discussion items derived from the film.

The design of psychoeducational activities utilizing films without a CBT approach can be observed in [Table 2](#) below.

**Table 2**  
*Psychoeducational Activity Material Design Utilizing Film without CBT*

No	Activity Material	Objectives
1	Parental Guidance Lantern in Life	Directing students to become sensitive to their parents' expressions and behaviors accompanying their emotions and communicate verbally.
2	My Family's Future	Instilling trust in students that parents respect and understand their needs and desires.
3	Parental Love Along the Way	Enabling students to feel parental love even when they are far away from their parents.
4	Parents as Life Heroes	Assisting students in realizing joyous feelings when close to their parents.

Psychoeducational stages using films without the CBT approach consist of: (1) Experiencing Phase, during this phase, the counselor and the client engage in specific activities. In this phase, the counselor presents a film and assists the client in finding focus; (2) Publishing Phase, in this phase, the counselor endeavors for the client to experience various reactions and personal observations of the newly encountered experience. In this phase, the client is asked to watch the film and analyze it in preparation for discussion; (3) Processing Phase, in this phase, the counselor assists the client in processing and interpreting various data obtained from the previous phases. In this phase, the counselor initiates guiding discussions by posing questions, deepening analysis, and providing summaries; (4) Generalization Phase, in this phase, the counselor helps the client formulate principles and hypotheses based on the overall learning experience. In this phase, the counselor documents or records discussion outcomes; (5) Application Phase, the application phase is where the counselor helps the client grasp the meaning and benefits of the newly undergone training and builds determination and plans to apply it in everyday life situations. In this phase, the counselor summarizes learning points or key discussion points or issues that can be derived from the film.

### *Randomization*

This study applies simple random sampling using manually selected draws. The draw contains 20 subject names, which are then placed in a bowl. Subsequently, the research assistant randomly selects a draw from the bowl, and each name that appears is then placed in the psychoeducational film intervention group with CBT. Meanwhile, the remaining 10 draws are automatically placed in the psychoeducational intervention group without CBT.

### *Outcome*

The outcome of this research is secure attachment. The method used to collect data is the secure attachment scale, employed for pretest and posttest data collection during the experiment's implementation. The reliability test results of the secure attachment scale indicate 32 valid items and 5 invalid items. The secure attachment scale has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.897, with item-total correlation scores ranging from 0.345 to 0.673. The questionnaire framework is presented in [Table 3](#).



**Table 3**  
*The Grid of Secure Attachment Instrument for Students towards Parents*

Variable	Sub Variable	Indicator
Secure Attachment of Students towards Parents	Trust	Students believe that parents respect them.
		Students believe that parents understand their needs and desires.
	Communication	Students feel that parents are sensitive to the expressions and behaviors accompanying their emotions.
		Communicating verbally
	Clossness	Experiences when away from parents
		Feeling happy when close to parents

## Data Analysis

The data analysis techniques employed in this research encompass the utilization of the Wilcoxon signed ranks test and the Mann-Whitney test. The SPSS 22 program was employed for the statistical analysis of the research data. To mitigate bias, the data analysis was carried out by a research assistant.

## Results

The research activities were conducted at MTs TI Candung, involving a total of 20 students divided into two groups. The experimental group consisted of 10 students, while the control group comprised another 10 students. Specifically, the aim of this study was to assess the effectiveness of psychoeducation utilizing films with a Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) approach in enhancing the secure attachment of students.

The obtained data include pretest and post-test results related to the secure attachment of students. The presentation of the data on secure attachment among students before receiving

psychoeducation using films with a CBT approach is provided in [Table 4](#). An overall depiction of the conditions of secure attachment among students can be observed in the aforementioned table.

Table 4  
*Data Tabulation of Secure Attachment of Students towards Parents*

Category	Interval	F	%
Very High	$\geq 136$	5	3,94
High	110-135	12	9,45
Medium	84-109	63	49,61
Low	58-83	44	34,64
Very Low	$\leq 57$	3	2,36
<b>Total</b>		<b>127</b>	<b>100</b>

Based on [Table 4](#) above, it can be observed that the secure attachment of students towards their parents generally falls within the moderate category, with a frequency of 63 students and a percentage of 49.61%. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that there is still a presence of secure attachment among students towards their parents in the low category, with a frequency of 44 students and a percentage of 34.64%. Meanwhile, in the very low category, there are 3 individuals, constituting a percentage of 2.36%.

Table 5  
*The Result of Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Analysis on the Difference of Secure Attachment in Students: Comparison between Psychoeducational Film Group and CBT.*

	Pre-Post Test
Z	-2,803 <sup>b</sup>
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,005

Based on [Table 5](#) above, it is evident that the probability values for Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) of secure attachment among experimental group students towards parents are 0.005, or a probability below 0.05 ( $0.005 < 0.05$ ). From these results, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) is accepted. Therefore, the first hypothesis tested in this research is supported,

which is "there is a significant difference in the secure attachment of students towards parents in the psychoeducational film with CBT group."

The second hypothesis examined in this study is "there is a significant difference in the secure attachment of students towards parents in the control group following psychoeducation utilizing films without CBT." This second hypothesis will also be tested using statistical analysis with the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks technique, utilizing SPSS version 22.00. This analysis is chosen because the technique involves paired data with two related samples. The calculated results can be observed in [Table 6](#) below.

Table 6  
*Results of Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test for Secure Attachment of Students Psychoeducational Intervention Group without CBT Film*

	Pre-post test
Z	-2,805 <sup>b</sup>
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,005

Based on [Table 6](#) above, it is evident that the Asymptotic Significance (2-tailed) probability values for secure attachment among the control group students are 0.005, which is below the threshold of 0.05 ( $0.005 < 0.05$ ). Consequently, with these results, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) is accepted. Thus, the second hypothesis tested in this study is supported, indicating "a significant difference in secure attachment among students in the psychoeducational group utilizing films without the CBT approach."

The third hypothesis posited in this research is, "there is a significant influence on secure attachment among students in the psychoeducational group utilizing films with the CBT approach compared to the control group receiving psychoeducation through films, where the psychoeducational group with CBT demonstrates a higher increase in their secure attachment." To test this third hypothesis, the Mann-Whitney U technique was employed, utilizing SPSS version 22.00 for analysis. The results of this examination are summarized in [Table 7](#) as follows.

Table 7  
*The Result of Mann-Whitney U Analysis of Secure Attachment among Santri in Both Intervention Groups*

	Gain score
Mann-Whitney	18
Wilcoxon	73
Z	-2,424
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0,015
Exact Sig. (1-tailed Sig.)	,015 <sup>b</sup>

Based on [Table 7](#), the probability Sig. (2-tailed) of secure attachment of students towards parents in the experimental and control groups is 0.015, which is below the significance level of 0.05 ( $0.015 < 0.05$ ). Consequently, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) is accepted. Thus, the third hypothesis tested in this study is accepted, which states that "There is a significant difference in the level of secure attachment of students towards parents in the psychoeducation group utilizing films with a CBT approach compared to the psychoeducation group utilizing films without CBT, where the psychoeducation group with CBT shows a higher increase in secure attachment." In the data description section, the average for the psychoeducation group with CBT is higher than the psychoeducation group without CBT.

## Discussion

The research aimed to examine two psychoeducation interventions: film with CBT and film without CBT. The findings indicate an increase in secure attachment of students towards parents in both intervention groups. However, the psychoeducation group with a CBT approach demonstrates a greater impact in enhancing secure attachment compared to the group without CBT.

These results align with Bowlby's (1988) perspective, suggesting that counselors can improve secure attachment by exploring individuals' models of self-representation towards attachment figures, aiming to reassess and restructure with new understanding. The psychoeducation interventions

with and without CBT contribute to a deeper understanding among the participants (Supratiknya, 2011) and enable them to explore their self-representation models more meaningfully (Rismayanti, 2021). Cognitive restructuring, a technique in CBT, proves effective in altering individuals' perceptions of experiences and events in a healthier manner (Beck, 2011).

Psychoeducation interventions, whether utilizing films with Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) or without, contribute to an increase in secure attachment in students through a multifaceted approach rooted in theoretical frameworks. Attachment theory, pioneered by Bowlby, underpins the understanding of emotional bonds between individuals, emphasizing the importance of secure attachment characterized by trust and comfort in relationships. By providing students with knowledge and skills related to secure attachment, psychoeducation interventions aim to improve the quality of these attachment bonds. Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) plays a pivotal role in reshaping negative thought patterns and behaviors associated with attachment figures and interpersonal relationships. Through cognitive restructuring, individuals develop a more positive perception of their attachment figures, fostering a healthier attachment style.

Psychoeducation, as a broader concept, empowers individuals by imparting information and skills to better understand and manage their psychological well-being, including attachment dynamics. Films serve as a therapeutic medium, allowing individuals to witness relatable scenarios and reflect on their own experiences, aiding in the internalization of attachment-related concepts. Moreover, interactive learning activities within these interventions enhance engagement and facilitate the application of new knowledge and skills in real-life relationships. This comprehensive approach, drawing from attachment theory, CBT principles, psychoeducation strategies, and the use of films, contributes to the development of secure attachment in students by addressing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects of attachment.

The utilization of films in psychoeducation aims to cultivate conditions that enable students to acquire attitudes, knowledge, and skills related to secure attachment towards parents. This is consistent with Gitna and Wiyono's (2018) explanation that using films in psychoeducation serves

as a mediator for delivering material and application, allowing students to acquire attitudes, knowledge, and skills.

Furthermore, the CBT approach in this intervention aids students in interpreting their ability to cope with low levels of secure attachment. This resonates with Sasmita et al., (2021) study emphasizing how CBT emphasizes how individuals perceive their surroundings and interpret their ability to cope with a situation.

The implementation of psychoeducation utilizing films with a CBT approach received positive responses from participating students, as evidenced by their active engagement and enthusiasm throughout the activities. The pretest and posttest results for secure attachment towards parents show a significant improvement in the experimental group, indicating the effectiveness of psychoeducation with a CBT approach.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the discussion in the previous sections leads to several conclusions. Firstly, the secure attachment of students in the experimental group was initially low before receiving psychoeducation with a CBT approach but significantly improved afterward, reaching a high category. This suggests a notable difference in secure attachment among students in the experimental group towards parents before and after receiving psychoeducation with a CBT approach. On the other hand, the secure attachment of students in the control group was initially low before psychoeducation with films and improved to a high category afterward. However, the increase in scores was not as substantial as in the experimental group. There is a significant effectiveness in the secure attachment of students in the experimental group who underwent psychoeducation utilizing films with a CBT approach compared to the control group, which received psychoeducation utilizing films without CBT.

In summary, it can be concluded that psychoeducation utilizing films with a CBT approach is effective in enhancing secure attachment of students towards parents compared to the control group, which received psychoeducation utilizing films without CBT.

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