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Bibliotherapy Technique as an Intervention Media to Reduce Psychological Impacts on Disaster Affected Students

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ABSTRACT:

Geological disasters such as earthquakes can cause significant psychological impacts on students, including anxiety, trauma, and social withdrawal. This study examines the use of bibliotherapy in Guidance and Counseling services to reduce these effects. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through observations and interviews and analyzed through reduction, categorization, and interpretation. The findings show that bibliotherapy is an effective, flexible, and affordable intervention, operating through identification, catharsis, and insight. Integrated into group counseling, bibliotherapy promotes active, literacy-based emotional recovery through peer interaction. The findings support Emotional Literacy and Cognitive Behavioral Theories and provide practical guidance for counselors in developing adaptive post-disaster trauma recovery programs.

1. NTRODUCTION

Natural disasters represent a global phenomenon that frequently causes significant destructive impacts across various structures of social life. In Indonesia, the geographical location makes the nation highly vulnerable to geological disaster threats, particularly earthquakes. The earthquake that struck Cianjur Regency, West Java, with a magnitude of 5.6 in November 2022 serves as concrete evidence of the complex impacts generated (Supendi et al., 2022). The event resulted in large scale material losses, the destruction of thousands of residential facilities, and the interruption of educational access due to damage to hundreds of school buildings in the affected area.

Ideally, post disaster environmental conditions should provide a safe space and rapid recovery for the community, especially for school age children. The learning process in educational institutions is expected to remain conducive to support students cognitive, emotional, and social development. Post disaster management does not only focus on physical infrastructure construction but also demands the provision of integrated psychological intervention services within the school environment. Educators and school counselors are expected to possess pedagogical and therapeutic readiness to accompany students in overcoming psychological stress caused by emergency disaster situations (Pertama, 2004).

However, field realities indicate that the negative impacts of natural disasters do not stop at physical damage to educational facilities alone. Earthquake disasters leave deep traumatic wounds and psychological shocks on affected students, marked by emotional changes such as anxiety, sadness, sensitivity, frequent crying, and a tendency to withdraw from the social environment (Chairani, 2015). Data show that school age children account for a substantial proportion of victims and are vulnerable to post disaster clinical anxiety (Thoyibah et al., 2019). The cessation of teaching and learning activities combined

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with these emotional disturbances has the potential to decrease psychological well being and disrupt students individual development continuously.

Numerous prior studies have documented various efforts to address psychological impacts resulting from disasters among children and adolescents. Mapping anxiety levels and structured trauma healing interventions have been proven crucial in restoring the mental state of child disaster victims (Casman et al., 2023). On the other hand, the use of reading materials or bibliotherapy has been developed as an effective therapeutic method to reduce the emotional burden of natural disaster victims (Rahmat & Budiarto, 2021). Supporting scientific research from Brackett et al. (2011) and Bandura (1977) reinforces this framework by explaining that enhancing emotional literacy and restructuring cognition through positive reading materials can alter individual perception and self regulation.

Although the effectiveness of bibliotherapy and group counseling services has been partially discussed in the literature, a knowledge gap remains regarding how bibliotherapy techniques are specifically mapped within Guidance and Counseling services to reduce the psychological impact on earthquake victim students in school environments. Most previous studies focused on physical medical treatment or general trauma healing without detailing the cognitive mechanisms and interactive procedures of bibliotherapy that can be adapted by school counselors. Therefore, this study fills this void by analyzing the concept, function, and practical procedures of bibliotherapy as an adaptive counseling intervention for disaster affected students.

The urgency of this paper lies in the pressing need for Guidance and Counseling strategies that are affordable, flexible, and applicable individually or in groups amidst post disaster facility limitations (Eliasa, 2007). The novelty of this research rests upon a conceptual synthesis among emotional literacy theory, cognitive behavioral theory, and interactive bibliotherapy procedures focused specifically on addressing student psychological impacts. Based on these considerations, this study aims to comprehensively examine the application of bibliotherapy techniques in Guidance and Counseling services as an effort to reduce psychological impacts on students affected by natural disasters.

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. This approach was selected to collect, map, and analyze empirical evidence and facts in depth according to actual conditions in the field. The descriptive qualitative design allowed researchers to present a comprehensive picture of applying bibliotherapy techniques as an intervention media to reduce psychological impacts, such as post earthquake trauma felt by students.

2.2 Research Object

The primary focus of this study was directed at cognitive and emotional responses of disaster affected students as well as the implementation of bibliotherapy services by counselors. Research subjects included students experiencing psychological impacts due to the earthquake disaster. Subject selection aimed to gather in depth information regarding how selective reading materials can assist students in recognizing, processing, and reducing emotional pressure.

2.3 Data Collection

Data collection was executed using primary instruments comprising observations and interviews. Observations were conducted to obtain empirical data through direct monitoring of observable objects and student behaviors. Meanwhile, interviews were utilized to extract direct oral information from subjects regarding feelings, experiences, and understanding gained during the bibliotherapy process.

2.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis employed qualitative descriptive techniques. Oral data from interviews and field data from observations were transcribed, categorized, and interpreted to systematically describe the effectiveness of bibliotherapy techniques. Data trustworthiness was maintained through careful observation and confirmation between behavioral observation results and subjects oral statements, ensuring the generated data were deep and credible.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

a) Concept of Bibliotherapy in Guidance and Counseling

Etymologically, the term bibliotherapy originates from Greek, where *biblus* means book and *therapy* signifies psychological assistance efforts, thus defining bibliotherapy as the use of books to help resolve problems. Bibliotherapy is an expressive therapy involving an individual relationship with the essence of books, poetry, or other writings as a therapeutic medium. This approach serves as a literature based mental health management method designed to enhance children coping abilities regarding shifts in health status, school environments, and social conditions. Utilizing books and digital resources supports children needs to process information, elevate understanding, express feelings, and expand awareness concerning their challenges.

Operationally, bibliotherapy is also known as reading therapy, wherein individuals experiencing difficulties are asked to read relevant materials to motivate and accelerate emotional healing. By reading about similar hardships faced by others, students gain awareness and insight into their own problems. This activity utilizes age-appropriate books followed by guided discussions. In practice, school counselors, social workers, nurses, and educators can combine reading activities with listening to stories, reading poetry, watching films, and observing pictures to ensure the intervention process runs in an engaging and enjoyable manner.

Implementing book therapy encompasses selective, planned, and directed reading assignments to influence individual attitudes, feelings, and behaviors. Bibliotherapy serves as an effective alternative intervention for adolescents due to its capacity to stimulate thinking processes while remaining flexible, efficient, and fully engaging for independent participation. In interactive execution, facilitators lead group discussions to help participants integrate cognitive and emotional responses toward the literature read. This process is utilized not only within clinical settings, but also focuses on student self development and personal growth within school environments.

b) Functions and Objectives of Bibliotherapy

Results indicate that bibliotherapy possesses a comprehensive array of functions in addressing diverse psychological problem backgrounds of individuals. These functions include:

1) Developing a positive self concept in individuals.
2) Enhancing understanding of self behavior and motivation.
3) Fostering self honesty when facing reality.
4) Providing direction to discover identity and new interests.
5) Strengthening emotional resilience in confronting mental pressure.
6) Instilling awareness that an individual is not the only person experiencing problems.
7) Expanding perspectives that multiple avenues for problem solving exist.
8) Assisting individuals in dissecting problems through guided discussions.
9) Helping plan conete action steps to resolve problems.

Substantively, the objectives of bibliotherapy align with the goals of guidance and counseling services in schools. Primary objectives of implementing this technique include:

1) Assisting group members to become capable of helping themselves independently.
2) Presenting required information in accordance with targeted character values.
3) Shaping general behavior, altering social prejudices, and refining perceptions.
4) Accompanying individuals experiencing emotional turmoil by providing reading materials containing relevant character values.
5) Stimulating minds so group members can exchange ideas, thereby elevating self awareness.

c) Procedures and Implementation Stages of Bibliotherapy

The implementation of bibliotherapy in guidance and counseling services consists of three main stages:

1) Identification Stage:

Students identify themselves with characters and events in books, whether real or fictional. Through appropriate reading materials suited to their developmental stages, students discover characters experiencing situations similar to their personal conditions.

2) Catharsis Stage:

Students follow story plots and problem resolutions experienced by characters, thereby feeling a sense of emotional relief. This emotional involvement allows students to release suppressed emotions through discussions, artwork, writing, drawing, coloring, or doll-based roleplay.

3) Insight Stage:

Students realize that the problems they face can be resolved by considering solution steps learned from characters in stories.

In field applications, counselors implement bibliotherapy through systematic steps as follows:

1) Identifying student needs and problems through observation.
2) Matching student needs with appropriate reading materials.
3) Determining time arrangements, number of sessions, and session introductions to students.
4) Designing follow up activities after reading, such as discussions, writing, drawing, or drama.
5) Motivating students through introductory questions and reviewing reading contents periodically.
6) Providing time intervals for students to reflect on reading materials.
7) Accompanying students in concluding therapy through discussions and compiling solution lists.

3.2. Discussion

Through deep interpretation of the obtained data, a major finding emerged showing that applying bibliotherapy techniques within Guidance and Counseling services is proven effective as an intervention media to reduce psychological impacts and trauma on disaster affected students. This condition indicates that selective and targeted

reading materials serve as a responsive emotional recovery tool for school age children (Corey, 2016). Substantively, this finding addresses the study objective by demonstrating that bibliotherapy successfully transforms the counseling process from passive verbal advice giving into an expressive learning experience that stimulates student self awareness independently (Shechtman, 2009).

This study finding can be explained through interactions among several primary factors, namely the use of positive message reading materials that influence student cognition and mindsets, and the execution of guided discussions that strengthen internal emotional release (Annisa, 2021). The success of this pattern occurs due to interaction mechanisms across three main therapeutic stages: identification where students match experiences with story characters, catharsis that offers emotional relief, and insight that opens new perspectives for solving personal problems (Gladding, 2018). This indicates that relationships among internal bibliotherapy elements form psychological mechanisms directly influencing student emotion regulation and coping abilities (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Theoretically, this finding supports and expands the conceptual framework of Emotional Literacy Theory from Brackett et al. (2011) and Cognitive Behavioral Theory from Bandura (1977). The emotional literacy perspective explains that student engagement with inspirational reading texts facilitates abilities to recognize, understand, and express emotions appropriately. Additionally, Cognitive Behavioral Theory asserts that positive information in books can reconstruct cognition, ultimately directing behavior change and self efficacy improvement. From these theoretical assumptions, bibliotherapy functions as a psychopedagogical instrument bridging positive cognitive reconstruction with emotional trauma recovery (Pertama, 2004).

This finding confirms earlier research by Rahmat and Budiarto (2021), reporting that bibliotherapy methods are highly effective as trauma healing handlers to reduce psychological impacts on natural disaster victims. This outcome also aligns with studies by Casman et al. (2023) and Thoyibah et al. (2019) regarding the importance of post disaster anxiety reduction interventions for children. However, differences exist in delivery effectiveness, where bibliotherapy integrated into group counseling provides broader social impacts compared to individual interventions alone (Yalom & Leszcz, 2020). This difference arises due to peer interaction dynamics within groups that mutually reinforce emotional catharsis.

The academic novelty of this study lies in solving methodological gaps and practical gaps through structured interactive bibliotherapy procedures within school Guidance and Counseling formats. Previous studies generally relied on bibliotherapy in clinical settings or hospital situations only. This paradigm shift from passive clinical trauma treatment toward active literacy-based recovery successfully overcomes student verbal expression barriers through alternative media such as drawing, writing, or role play (Malchiodi, 2005). This reinforces that psychological trauma recovery in children requires mediator tools relevant to their cognitive development stages.

The significance of this finding emphasizes the importance of implementing bibliotherapy techniques as an efficient and affordable evidence-based approach for school counselors in overcoming post disaster facility constraints. Although external factors such as family social support levels and shelter environments provide secondary contributions, the overall synthesis confirms that child trauma recovery results from synergy among therapeutic reading materials, emotional catharsis stages, and empathetic group discussion dynamics without relying on expensive facilities.

4. IMPLICATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

The findings of this study offer practical and theoretical implications for Guidance and Counseling studies in schools by mapping that bibliotherapy techniques in group counseling formats effectively reduce post disaster psychological impacts and trauma in students. This study successfully fills Practical Knowledge Gaps and Methodological Gaps regarding how structured interactive bibliotherapy procedures can be applied flexibly and efficiently by school counselors amidst post disaster facility constraints.

Furthermore, this study contributes new scientific knowledge to Guidance and Counseling and Educational Psychology by synthesizing a new framework regarding emotional literacy-based group bibliotherapy intervention procedures. This framework can assist school counselors and practitioners in designing adaptive trauma healing programs for students through accumulated field findings and empirical evidence.

5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This study possesses several limitations that require careful consideration when interpreting findings. The research focused on students in specific disaster affected areas, meaning emotional impact characteristics and reading responses may vary if applied in other regions with different cultural backgrounds. Additionally, this study did not measure long term sustainability of student anxiety reduction post intervention, nor did it strictly control external variables such as family support levels and shelter social climates that might exert secondary influences on student emotional recovery.

Based on these limitations, several development directions are recommended for future research. Subse-

quent studies are encouraged to utilize quantitative experimental designs to measure student trauma and anxiety reduction scales statistically and empirically. Future researchers are also advised to focus on developing application based interactive reading modules or digital illustrated story products tested for validity and practicality during disaster emergency situations. Lastly, follow up studies are recommended to examine the long-term endurance and effectiveness of bibliotherapy techniques in maintaining student emotional stability.

6. CONCLUSION

The application of bibliotherapy techniques in Group Guidance services is proven effective as a psychopedagogical intervention media to reduce psychological impacts and trauma in disaster affected students. The success of this intervention is driven by continuous interaction between positive message reading materials and three main therapeutic stages: identification, catharsis, and insight, enabling students to recognize and regulate emotions independently.

Integrating bibliotherapy into group formats expands emotional recovery impacts through peer interaction dynamics while overcoming children verbal limitation barriers via expressive activities like drawing, writing, or role play. This approach transforms counseling processes from passive advice giving into active literacy-based recovery adaptive to student cognitive development stages.

Although this study proves the practical validity of bibliotherapy as an efficient and affordable intervention for school counselors, the study remains limited to specific subject scopes and short-term evaluations. Therefore, future research is expected to test technique effectiveness through proven experimental approaches and develop digital media-based reading material variations relevant to post disaster student needs.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

The authors take full responsibility for the data presented in this study

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

ETHICAL APPROVAL STATEMENT

The author has approved the article to be published in the International Journal of Counseling and Psychotherapy (IJCP) by following the Publication Ethics and Journal Policies.

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