

NARRATIVE GROUP COUNSELING TO IMPROVE THE RESILIENCE OF FATHERLESS STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of narrative group counseling in improving the resilience of students experiencing fatherlessness. This research employed a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental method using a Non-Equivalent Control Group Design involving an experimental group and a control group. The research subjects were students of SMP Negeri 2 Palu identified as experiencing fatherlessness. Data were collected using a resilience questionnaire administered before and after the intervention. The experimental group received narrative-based group counseling services, while the control group received conventional group counseling services without specific techniques. Data analysis was performed using the nonparametric Mann-Whitney U test assisted by SPSS. The findings indicated that both groups experienced an increase in resilience; however, the experimental group showed a higher and more consistent improvement. The Mann-Whitney test results obtained a significance value of 0.014 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a significant difference between the experimental and control groups. Therefore, narrative group counseling is proven effective in enhancing the resilience of fatherless students and can be considered an alternative guidance and counseling intervention in schools to support students' psychological development.

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INTRODUCTION

The family is the smallest unit in society and plays a fundamental role in shaping a child's character and personality. In an ideal family structure, the presence of both parents is a crucial factor in supporting a child's psychological and emotional development. However, the phenomenon of fatherlessness has become a global problem that has increased in recent decades. (Nurmalasari et al., 2024)

According to data from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in 2021, 20.9% of children in Indonesia are growing up without an active father. This means that 2,999,577 out of 30.83 million children have lost a father figure and no longer live with their father. The absence of a father figure can reduce a child's self-confidence and ability to face life's challenges, so family and community support are essential.

The role of fathers in the family is crucial in shaping a child's emotional, social, and moral development. Fathers are not just breadwinners, but also role models, protectors, and sources of emotional support and discipline.

who help children build a strong sense of self. Fathers' involvement in parenting through attention, emotional attachment, and moral values education has been shown to support children's psychological health, empathy, self-confidence, and social skills. Conversely, when the father's role is absent or physically or emotionally distant, a phenomenon known as "fatherlessness" occurs (Ariyati et al., 2024).

The phenomenon of fatherlessness is increasingly common among students in Indonesia. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS, 2023), the number of single-parent families has increased significantly in the past five years, with the majority of children being raised by single mothers. This absence of a father figure can stem from various causes, such as divorce, death, employment outside the area, or emotional absence even if the father is still in the household. This situation has complex impacts on students' psychological development, particularly in aspects of emotional regulation and adjustment to the school environment. (Cristy et al., 2023).

This phenomenon was also found at SMP Negeri 2 Palu. Based on initial observations and interviews with the Guidance and Counseling teacher, several students do not live with their fathers due to divorce, death, or employment outside the area. This condition is evident in students' behavior, which includes being easily offended, lacking self-confidence, withdrawing from social interactions, and experiencing decreased motivation to learn. Some students also demonstrate difficulty managing emotions when facing conflicts with peers or academic pressure.

Fatherlessness is a condition where a child experiences a limited or absent presence and involvement of a father figure in their life, both physically and emotionally (Popenoe, 2017). This condition can impact a child's psychological, social, and academic development, particularly during adolescence, a crucial stage in the formation of self-identity. In the school environment, fatherless students tend to exhibit adjustment problems such as low self-confidence, social withdrawal, difficulty managing emotions, and obstacles in building healthy interpersonal relationships. shows that fatherless students are more likely to experience emotional problems, such as feelings of abandonment, loneliness, anxiety, and a loss of direction in achieving life goals. Furthermore, limited paternal involvement can impact students' emotional regulation, empathy, and psychological resilience in dealing with academic and social pressures (Sona & Linsiya, 2025).

The causes of fatherlessness vary, ranging from structural to economic to emotional. First, divorce is the most common cause, where child custody usually falls to the mother, while the father loses the parenting role. Second, compelling economic demands Fathers working away from the family for long periods can strain the emotional relationship between father and child. Third, the phenomenon of emotionally absent fathers, where the father is physically present but lacks emotional involvement, also has similar psychological impacts to physical absence. This combination of factors results in many children growing up without adequate paternal support (Hanifah et al., 2024).

In this context, resilience is a key aspect that needs to be developed in fatherless students. Resilience is defined as a person's ability to recover from difficulties, adapt to pressure, and find positive meaning from negative experiences (Muhammad, 2021; Dongalemba, 2025). Students with high resilience are able to cope with loss more adaptively, remain focused on life goals, and are not easily overwhelmed by circumstances. Researchers

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental method using a Non-Equivalent Control Group Design. The study subjects were selected using purposive sampling, with 14 fatherless students divided into an experimental group and a control group, each consisting of seven students. Both groups were given a pre-test and post-test to determine changes in student resilience levels. The experimental group received group counseling services using a narrative counseling approach, while the control group received group counseling services without the use of any specific techniques. The research instrument, a resilience scale, underwent validity and reliability testing. The validity test results showed an r table value of 0.312, indicating that the instrument items were considered valid if the calculated r value was >0.312 . The reliability test yielded a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.89, indicating high internal consistency.

Data analysis was conducted using the Mann-Whitney U Test due to the relatively small sample size and the data not meeting the assumption of normality. The entire data processing process was carried out with the help of the IBM SPSS Statistics version 25 program at a significance level (α) of 0.05.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

Based on the results of the implementation of narrative group counseling services, it shows an increase in

the level of resilience in fatherless students, both in the experimental group and the control group.

Tables 1. Pre-test and post-test results

Group	Subject	Before being given group counseling		After being given group counseling	
		Frequency	Classification	Frequency	Classification
Experiment	NK	60	Currently	71	Tall
	RM	55	Currently	65	Currently
	BY	66	Currently	75	Tall
	ADR	60	Currently	69	Tall
	Z	65	Currently	78	Tall
	ADV	60	Currently	70	Tall
	TA	59	Currently	72	Tall
Control	GR	57	Currently	58	Currently
	FA	60	Currently	62	Currently
	MR	66	Currently	67	Tall
	RZ	62	Currently	62	Currently
	Note:	65	currently	66	Currently
	JVT	63	Currently	64	Currently
	NV	58	Currently	59	Currently

Based on the results of the pre-test and post-test before and after the provision of narrative group counseling services to the experimental group, there were changes in the scores and classification of the resilience levels of fatherless students as listed in Table 1. Before being given services, all students in the experimental group were in the moderate category, namely NK (60), RM (55), BY (66), ADR (60), Z (65), ADV (60), and TA (59). This shows that the level of resilience of students before participating in narrative group counseling services was still in the moderate category.

After receiving narrative group counseling services, all students in the experimental group experienced an increase in resilience scores. Six students experienced an increase from the moderate to high category, namely NK (71), BY (75), ADR (69), Z (78), ADV (70), and TA (72). Meanwhile, RM experienced an increase in score from 55 to 65, but remained in the moderate category. These results indicate that narrative group counseling services were able to increase the resilience level of fatherless students in the experimental group more optimally.

In the control group, before the final measurement was carried out, all students were also in the medium category, namely GR (57), FA (60), MR (66), RZ (62), NB (65), JVT (63), and NV (58). After implementation of the post-test, occurred improvement score resilience in part big students . However , only One students who experience change category from currently become high , namely increased MR from score 66 to 67. Meanwhile that , students other still is in the category currently although experience improvement scores , namely GR (58), FA (62), NB (66), JVT (64), and NV (59), while RZ did not experience change score , namely remained at a score of 62 with category currently .

Furthermore, before the research data were analyzed inferentially, hypothesis testing was conducted using the nonparametric Mann-Whitney U Test with a significance level of 0.05 through the SPSS version 25 program. The Mann-Whitney test was used because it does not require normally distributed data, making it suitable for use in this study. The results of the data normality test can be seen in the following table.

Tables 2. Mann- Whitney U test

Test Mann - Whitney U Test

Mann-Whitney University	2,000
Wilcoxon W	30,000
Z	-2,881

Asymp . Sig. (2-tailed)	,004
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	,002 ^b

Mann–Whitney U Test results table on the post-test of the experimental group and the control group, the Mann–Whitney U value was 2.000, the Z value was -2.881, and the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value was 0.004 which was reinforced by the Exact Sig. [2(1- tailed Sig .)] value of 0.002*. The significance value was smaller than the significance level of 0.05 ($0.004 < 0.05$), so H_0 was rejected and H_1 was accepted. Thus, it can be concluded that there was a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group in the post-test results .

DISCUSSION

Narrative group counseling services significantly improved the resilience of fatherless students . This finding was proven through a comparison of pre-test and post-test scores between the experimental and control groups, where the group receiving narrative group counseling intervention experienced a more even and higher increase in resilience compared to the group that did not receive a special approach. The results of the Mann-Whitney nonparametric statistical test showed a significance value smaller than the specified significance level, so it can be concluded that there was a significant difference between the two groups after the treatment was given. This confirms the research hypothesis that narrative group counseling is effective in improving the resilience of fatherless students .

The increased resilience in the experimental group is inseparable from the core processes of narrative counseling: externalizing problems and reconstructing self-identity. Through this approach, students are encouraged to separate themselves from persistent negative narratives, such as the label "unlucky fatherless child," and replace them with new, more positive and constructive identities(Aulia et al., 2023) emphasize that narrative counseling helps individuals reinterpret their life experiences so that they no longer see themselves as "the problem itself" but rather as individuals with the strength and resources to change. This process encourages fatherless students to view fatherlessness not as a permanent obstacle but as part of a life journey that can strengthen their identity.

Dynamics group in session counseling participate strengthen the recovery process psychological students . Group setting create room safe for every member For share experience , mutual listen , and get validation emotional from fellow students who face situation similar. Stated that dynamics group like empathy , support social , and reflection together speed up formation resilience in a way collective . In context this , students No only Study from experience personal , but also from narrative friends who have background behind comparable loss , so that the feeling of loneliness and alienation that has been This felt gradually decreased . (Melinda et al., 2025)Also emphasized that counseling group is service effective assistance For help child in overcome various problem attitudes and behavior , especially when dynamics group utilized optimally .

Temporary that , group control that gets service counseling group without approach special also experienced improvement resilience , however improvement the No happen in a way evenly throughout member group . There are a number of students whose improvement Still is in the category moderate , which indicates that service counseling without technique specific Not yet quite optimal for overcome complexity problem psychological student fatherless .

This is in line with Sari and Munawaroh's (2022) view which emphasizes that guidance counseling need equipped with approach directed to be able to help student recognize strength himself , building meaning new from experience loss , and develop skills healthy social .

Findings study this also strengthens importance draft meaning-making in the process of recovery psychological student fatherless . Nissa and Primana (2023) explain that theory resilience emphasize ability individual For find meaning positive from experience negative as the core of the recovery process . Through counseling group narrative , students directed For No just tell pain loss , but also for find wisdom, strength hidden , and potential self that has been This No realized . This process is what differentiates counseling narrative from approach counseling others , because He No only focused on reduction symptom negative , but also on empowerment psychological term long .

More continue , results study This consistent with findings previously shown effectiveness counseling narrative in increase aspect psychological positive . Fitriani and Nisa (2021) and Arifin (2022) have prove that approach narrative capable increase self-esteem , regulation emotions , and acceptance self to the individual facing it pressure psychological . In context student fatherless , Lestari and Amalia (2023) revealed that teenager with level

resilience tall show ability solution problems and control a better self well , which are two of that's all Lots

indicator successful resilience improved through intervention in study This .

In a way overall , counseling group narrative proven capable functioning No only as a healing medium emotional , but also as means empowerment sustainable psychological . Pramuaji et al. (2022) emphasized that counseling group narrative grow mark togetherness , acceptance self and confidence to the process of change on oneself students . With Thus , research This give contribution practical meaning for service guidance and counseling in schools , especially in provide relevant and effective intervention models For help student fatherless develop resilience as the main capital in face various challenge life .

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that narrative group counseling services are effective in increasing the resilience of fatherless students. This improvement is demonstrated through changes in students' resilience levels after the intervention. The narrative group counseling process helps students express their experiences, manage their emotions, and reconstruct the meaning of their conditions through the process of externalizing problems and developing a more positive self-identity. These findings suggest that narrative group counseling can be an alternative guidance and counseling service for guidance counselors in helping fatherless students develop adaptability skills and cope with psychological stress more constructively.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations. First, the number of research subjects was relatively limited, so the results cannot be broadly generalized to the fatherless student population. Second, the short duration of the intervention means the study cannot describe the sustainability of changes in student resilience over the long term. Third, the measurement instrument used was a psychological scale, so the data obtained still depended on the respondents' subjective perceptions. Furthermore, this study only examined the effectiveness of narrative group counseling without comparing it with other counseling approaches.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Further research is recommended to involve a larger number of subjects with more diverse characteristics to ensure stronger generalizability of the results. Further research should also conduct follow-up measurements to determine the consistency of resilience improvements after the intervention. Furthermore, future studies could compare the effectiveness of narrative group counseling with other approaches and use mixed methods to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the resilience change process in fatherless students.

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