

THE BIBLIOTHERAPY METHOD IN GROUP COUNSELING

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Abstract

Bibliotherapy is a technique used in group guidance services as an alternative to overcoming individual developmental problems in social life. This technique involves three stages, namely identification, catharsis, and insight. By reading books, learners can gain cognitive, affective, and psychomotor benefits. Group guidance services with bibliotherapy methods can also increase learners' engagement and make them more active in the learning process. This research explores the effectiveness of bibliotherapy in the context of group guidance. Using selected books, learners are given the opportunity to reflect, identify feelings, and gain new insights. The results show that bibliotherapy can increase self-understanding, reduce stress, and strengthen social skills. Therefore, group guidance services using this approach can be a valuable alternative in helping learners overcome life's challenges.

Keywords: Group Guidance, Bibliotherapy, Book Therapy

Abstrak

Bibliotherapy merupakan teknik yang digunakan dalam layanan bimbingan kelompok sebagai alternatif untuk mengatasi permasalahan perkembangan individu dalam kehidupan bermasyarakat. Teknik ini melibatkan tiga tahapan, yaitu identifikasi, katarsis, dan wawasan. Dengan membaca buku, peserta didik dapat memperoleh manfaat kognitif, afektif, dan psikomotor. Layanan bimbingan kelompok dengan metode bibliotherapy juga dapat meningkatkan keterlibatan peserta didik dan membuatnya lebih aktif dalam proses pembelajaran. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi efektivitas bibliotherapy dalam konteks bimbingan kelompok. Dengan menggunakan buku-buku terpilih, peserta didik diberikan kesempatan untuk merenung, mengidentifikasi perasaan, dan memperoleh wawasan baru. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa bibliotherapy dapat meningkatkan pemahaman diri, mengurangi stres, dan memperkuat keterampilan sosial. Oleh karena itu, layanan bimbingan kelompok dengan pendekatan ini dapat menjadi alternatif yang berharga dalam membantu peserta didik mengatasi tantangan kehidupan.

Kata kunci: Bimbingan Kelompok, Biblioterapi, Terapi Buku

INTRODUCTION

Humans are social beings who constantly interact and relate to one another. The human desire to interact makes communication a necessity in social life. Thus, communication is an activity that is an integral part of daily human life. Conversely, if people never

communicate, they will become isolated from the world, leading to negative consequences such as a lack of access to new knowledge and information from society.

As members of society, students are expected to communicate effectively both within and outside the school environment. In the school environment, students are expected to communicate with their peers, teachers, and other school staff. However, not all students are able to interact and communicate effectively. It is the educators' responsibility to make special efforts to help students improve their communication skills. One approach educators can take is to conduct group counseling sessions.

Group counseling is an activity carried out by a group of people by utilizing group dynamics (Prayitno, 1995: 178). Meanwhile, according to Romlah (2001:3), group counseling is a counseling technique that aims to help individuals achieve optimal development in accordance with their abilities, talents, interests, and values, and is conducted in a group setting. From these definitions, it can be concluded that group counseling is a counseling service conducted within a group by utilizing group dynamics so that members can develop their potential while also benefiting from discussions on specific issues. Group counseling can be conducted using various methodological approaches to achieve its objectives, one of which is the bibliotherapy approach.

Bibliotherapy is a term introduced by Samuel Crothers in 1916 to describe the use of books as part of the counseling process (in Erford, 2017). Bibliotherapy is a method of using literature to help individuals cope with mental health issues and life transitions (White & Nancy, 2011: 12). Etymologically, bibliotherapy derives from the Greek words *biblion*, meaning book or reading material, and *therapeia*, meaning healing; thus, the broad definition of bibliotherapy is problem-solving through books or reading material.

The bibliotherapy approach is one of the approaches in counseling that can be conducted individually or in groups. In a group context, this intervention helps foster a working alliance between the counselor and the client, build trust, promote group cohesion, facilitate self-exploration, provide insights, and support personal growth (White & Nancy, 2011). According to Eftimova (2021), the bibliotherapy approach in group counseling is a counseling technique that uses books or literature as tools to help individuals understand and overcome their problems; this technique involves reading books or articles relevant to the individual's issues and then discussing them during counseling sessions.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative literature review method, which focuses on in-depth observation (Anton Wibosono, 2019). Data collection is conducted through relevant references such as journals and the internet. The study is descriptive in nature, providing a detailed and accurate portrayal of the situation regarding bibliotherapy counseling methods. In his study (Ahmad, 2019), qualitative research, according to Moloeng (2009:6), is research intended to understand the phenomena experienced by research subjects. Qualitative research is research that aims to understand the phenomena experienced by research subjects—such as behavior, perceptions, motivations, actions,

and so on—in a holistic manner. This method relies on descriptions in the form of words and language and focuses on natural contexts. The research conducted in this paper focuses on a literature review using a historical approach, which seeks to trace the concepts of bibliotherapy through studies and journal sources on bibliotherapy relevant to this study (Suwanto, 2020).

Table 1. Research Data

NO	DATA	DATA SOURCES
1.	Definition of Bibliotherapy	Matappa, A. (2020). Pendekatan Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) Teknik Bibliotherapy Sebagai Intervensi dalam Konseling Kelompok Jurnal Konseling. Volume 4 Nomor 1 Februari 2020, 43-47. Muhammad Rizai. (2021). Konseling Kelompok dengan Teknik Biblioterapi untuk Mengurangi Kecanduan Game Online pada Anak: Sebuah Kajian Literatur. Journal of Contemporary Islamic Counselling, 101-114. Rully, d. (2019). Bibliotherapy dalam menumbuhkan sikap optimis pasien. Berkala Ilmu Perpustakaan dan Informasi, Vol. 15 No. 1, Juni 2019, 94-96. Sa'diyah, H. d. (2022). Pengaruh Biblioterapi Sufistik dalam Meningkatkan Regulasi Diri Santri. Living Sufism, 1 (2), Desember 2022: 124-140, 133-137.
2.	The Purpose of Bibliotherapy	Anas, A. M. (2019). Meningkatkan Efikasi Diri Akademik melalui Bimbingan Kelompok Teknik Bibliotherapy Siswa Kelas VIII C SMP NEGERI 3. Jurnal Riset Mahasiswa Bimbingan dan Konseling, Volume 5, Nomor 3, Maret 2019, 274-276. Eka. (2022). Biblioterapi untuk Meningkatkan Perkembangan Sosial pada Anak Prasekolah. Jurnal Pengabdian Perawat (eISSN: 2829-8713), Vol 1 No 2, November 2022, 77-78. Matappa, A. (2020). Pendekatan Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) Teknik Bibliotherapy Sebagai Intervensi dalam Konseling Kelompok Jurnal Konseling. Volume 4 Nomor 1 Februari 2020, 43-47. Muhammad Rizai. (2021). Konseling Kelompok dengan Teknik Biblioterapi untuk Mengurangi Kecanduan Game Online pada Anak: Sebuah Kajian

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3.	The Functions of Bibliotherapy	Eka. (2022). Biblioterapi untuk Meningkatkan Perkembangan Sosial pada Anak Prasekolah. Jurnal Pengabdian Perawat (eISSN: 2829-8713), Vol 1 No 2, November 2022, 77-78. Rully, d. (2019). Bibliotherapy dalam menumbuhkan sikap optimis pasien. Berkala Ilmu Perpustakaan dan Informasi, Vol. 15 No. 1, Juni 2019, 94-96. Solikin, A. (2015). Bibliotherapy sebagai Sebuah Teknik dalam Layanan Bimbingan dan Konseling. Anterior Jurnal, Volume 14 Nomor 2, Juni 2015, 154 – 161.
4.	Types of Bibliotherapy	Solikin, A. (2015). Bibliotherapy sebagai Sebuah Teknik dalam Layanan Bimbingan dan Konseling. Anterior Jurnal, Volume 14 Nomor 2, Juni 2015, 154 – 161.
5.	Limitations of Bibliotherapy	Sa'diyah, H. d. (2022). Pengaruh Biblioterapi Sufistik dalam Meningkatkan Regulasi Diri Santri. Living Sufism, 1 (2), Desember 2022: 124-140, 133-137.
6.	Stages of Bibliotherapy Implementation	Matappa, A. (2020). Pendekatan Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) Teknik Bibliotherapy Sebagai Intervensi dalam Konseling Kelompok Jurnal Konseling. Volume 4 Nomor 1 Februari 2020, 43-47. Muhammad Rizai. (2021). Konseling Kelompok dengan Teknik Biblioterapi untuk Mengurangi Kecanduan Game Online pada Anak: Sebuah Kajian

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

GROUP COUNSELING

1. Definition of Group Counseling

Group counseling can be defined as assistance provided to individuals within a group setting; in group counseling, information is typically conveyed or group activities are conducted to address various issues. Winkel (1997) explains that group counseling is a counseling process conducted between a professional counselor and several clients simultaneously in a small group. Group counseling services can be understood as an effort by the counselor to help group members solve personal problems and develop their individual selves through group activities, thereby achieving optimal development.

2. Objectives of Group Counseling

In general, group counseling services aim to develop students' socialization and communication skills. More specifically, group counseling aims to foster the development of students' emotions, thoughts, perceptions, perspectives, and attitudes. The specific objectives of group counseling include:

- a. Training students to have the courage to express their opinions in front of their peers.
- b. To help students adopt an open attitude within the group.
- c. To help students practice self-control during group activities.
- d. To help students acquire social skills.

3. Stages of Group Counseling

The group counseling process involves several stages designed to help group members achieve specific goals, resolve problems, and improve interpersonal skills.

a. Forming Stage

This stage involves getting to know one another and adapting to the group. During this stage, group members begin by introducing themselves and sharing the goals and expectations they hope to achieve through this group counseling. The leader or counselor explains the purpose of group counseling so that each member understands what it entails

and why it is necessary, and outlines the ground rules that will be followed during the sessions.

b. Transition Stage

This stage serves as a “bridge” between the first and third stages. During this stage, the counselor explains the activities to be carried out next, offers guidance, and observes whether the members are ready to proceed to the next stage

c. Activity Stage

This stage constitutes the core of the activity; therefore, the leader or counselor must pay attention to all aspects. The counselor, as the facilitator of the process, should be patient and open-minded, active yet not overly talkative, and provide encouragement, support, and empathy. Various activities are carried out during this stage, namely:

- 1) Each member is free to raise issues or topics for discussion.
- 2) Determine which issues or topics will be discussed first.
- 3) Members discuss each topic in depth and thoroughly.

d. Closing Phase

The main focus of the termination stage is the outcomes achieved by the group. The group’s previous activities and the results achieved encourage the group to continue its efforts so that the shared goals are fully realized. In this stage, the group leader or counselor will announce that the session is about to conclude; the leader and group members will share their impressions and the outcomes of the activities, and express their messages and hopes.

Bibliotherapy

1. Definition of Bibliotherapy

Bibliotherapy derives from Greek: *biblus* means “book” and *therapy* means “psychological intervention”; thus, bibliotherapy is defined as the use of books to help solve problems (Suwanto, 2020). According to Hidayat et al. (as cited in Rizai, 2021), bibliotherapy is a form of therapy that addresses problems through books, which can stimulate a person’s thinking; it is simple, affordable, and can be conducted anywhere. Rahmat & Budiarto (as cited in Rizai, 2021) state that bibliotherapy is a technique used to help clients engage in reading about the stories or experiences of others who have faced the same or similar problems as the client, thereby fostering more rational thinking and ultimately enabling the client to overcome the challenges they face.

Bibliotherapy is often referred to as reading therapy, a process in which a person experiencing problems is asked to read books that are helpful and motivating to accelerate their healing (Asep, 2015). According to Asep (in Eliasa 2015), bibliotherapy can stimulate adolescents to think; it is simple, inexpensive, and can be done at any time, while fully involving the adolescents’ independence and active participation, resulting in quite effective outcomes. From a *cognitive-behavioral* perspective, *bibliotherapy* is viewed as a reading activity designed to improve learning mechanisms (Suwanto, 2020).

The *bibliotherapy* approach has empirical support for the treatment of depression, various anxiety disorders, and a range of clinical issues (Jacob in Suwanto, 2020). Dewi and Prihartanti (2014) discuss bibliotherapy and ethics in the development of the trait of responsibility: their research found that five factors constitute the responsibility trait scale: conscientiousness, task orientation, excellence, perseverance, and commitment.

Bibliotherapy can also be used as a therapeutic mechanism to help build a counseling relationship, explore lifestyle and career issues, and facilitate reorientation and retraining (Jackson in Suwanto, 2020). Based on the above explanation, it can be concluded that bibliotherapy involves asking someone experiencing difficulties to read books that are helpful and motivational to accelerate their healing. Reading about the difficulties faced by others who are in a similar situation to the client can provide awareness and understanding of the problems they are facing.

According to Novianti (in Andi, 2020), bibliotherapy interventions can be categorized into four levels: intellectual, social, behavioral, and emotional. At the (1) intellectual level, an individual gains knowledge about behaviors that can solve problems, aids in self-understanding, and provides intellectual insights. (2) At the social level, individuals can hone their social sensitivity; they can transcend their own frame of reference through the imagination of others. (3) At the behavioral level, individuals gain the confidence to discuss issues that are difficult to address due to feelings of fear, shame, and guilt. Through reading, individuals can be encouraged to engage in discussion without feeling ashamed that their personal secrets might be revealed. (4) On the emotional level, individuals can be moved by their feelings and develop awareness regarding emotional insights. This technique can provide the best solutions by referencing similar problems experienced by others, thereby stimulating a strong desire within the individual to solve their own problems.

2. Objectives of Bibliotherapy

According to Asep (in Salsa 2015), the objectives of bibliotherapy are essentially the same as those of counseling, namely:

- a. To help members become self-reliant.
- b. To provide information that is needed or aligned with the character traits they wish to develop.
- c. Shaping behavior in general; by understanding the information in reading materials, they can specifically shape attitudes, perceptions, change social prejudices, and bring about other changes.
- d. Supporting someone experiencing emotional turmoil due to the problems they face by providing reading materials on appropriate topics that embody the character values the individual in question wishes to cultivate.

- e. To stimulate the mind, enabling members to exchange ideas and thereby enhance their awareness.

3. Functions of Bibliotherapy

Functions of Bibliotherapy According to Nola Kortner (as cited in Asep 2015). The functions of bibliotherapy can be viewed from the following perspectives:

- a. Developing an individual's self-concept.
- b. Enhancing understanding of one's own behavior or self-motivation.
- c. Fostering self-honesty.
- d. Guiding the discovery of one's true self and other interests.
- e. Showing that the individual is not the only one facing problems.
- f. Building emotional resilience and coping with mental stress.
- g. Demonstrating that there are multiple approaches to problem-solving.
- h. Helping someone by discussing their problems.
- i. Assisting in planning a course of action to resolve problems.

4. Types of Bibliotherapy

According to Berry (Nur Fathiyah, 2006), bibliotherapy can be divided into two main types: the clinical type and the educational/humanistic type.

b. Clinical Type

The Clinical Type is a method implemented by healthcare professionals such as psychiatrists, psychologists, and other social workers. The facilitator in the clinical method is a therapist, and the participants are patients who are ill. The goal of the clinical type is to help a person achieve a better state of well-being. The application of the clinical type in bibliotherapy can enable patients suffering from specific illnesses or disabilities to make decisions after reading biographies or stories of successful adaptation by people who have experienced similar hardships.

b. Educational or Humanistic Type

The educational or humanistic type is a form of bibliotherapy carried out by teachers, counselors, and librarians in an educational setting. The facilitators in this method are the leaders, and the participants are healthy individuals, such as students. The educational or humanistic approach in bibliotherapy can broaden a person's perspective on the diversity of human conditions, thereby fostering a comprehensive understanding of these

differences. Additionally, this therapy helps expand one's awareness of the diverse values that can enrich a person's life.

According to Scechtman (2009), there are two types of bibliotherapy, namely:

b. Affective bibliotherapy

Most of the existing literature on children's bibliotherapy falls under the category of affective bibliotherapy (Gladding, 2005; Scechtman, 2009). The basic assumption in affective bibliotherapy is that people use defense mechanisms, such as repression, to protect themselves from pain. When these defenses are frequently activated, individuals become unaware of their feelings. Therefore, storytelling techniques are essential in providing insight into personal issues (Forgan, 2002). The positive value of affective bibliotherapy is that it enhances individuals' self-understanding and helps them realize that the problems they face are both universal and unique. Readers learn that they are connected to other people and cultures, which provides comfort and validates their feelings and thoughts (Gladding, 2005).

b. Cognitive Bibliotherapy

Cognitive bibliotherapy was practiced as early as the 20th century, when psychiatrists and librarians recommended books to patients based on their specific issues, assuming the patients would learn from them and apply the lessons to their lives. This could take the form of self-help followed by group sessions to discuss the books. The fundamental assumption of cognitive bibliotherapy is that all behavior is learned and can therefore be unlearned and re-learned with proper guidance. This theory relies on learning as the primary catalyst for behavioral change.

5. Limitations of Bibliotherapy

There are limitations and considerations when using bibliotherapy. The main limitation of bibliotherapy is that it should not be used as the sole treatment approach. According to Pardeck & Pardeck (as cited in Halimatus, 2022), bibliotherapy serves as a supplement to treatment. Bibliotherapy has several limitations:

- a. Bibliotherapy delivered through fiction has mixed empirical support, whereas nonfiction books—particularly self-help books—have only limited scientific support for bibliotherapy.
- b. Most people are not avid readers. This means that bibliotherapy has a limited impact on certain groups of people. However, bibliotherapy has successfully reached non-readers through audiobooks and other innovative approaches. Bibliotherapy is most effective when applied to children and adolescents who have established reading habits.

- c. Clients may come to understand their problems through reading. Clients may be unable to empathize with characters in a story, leading to a form of projection that relieves them of the responsibility to address their own issues (Pardeck & Pardeck, 1984).
- d. Overreliance on books is dangerous (Bernstein, 1983). Bibliotherapy cannot solve all problems. In fact, bibliotherapy can increase feelings of fear and defensiveness and heighten resistance to change.
- e. We must consider the possibility that relationships with supportive people can lead to problem resolution (Zaccaria & Moses, 1968). This therapy must be monitored by carefully evaluating the impact of the therapeutic relationship on the client's problems compared to the impact of bibliotherapy on the client's problems (Pardeck, 1990).

6. The Implementation Stage of Bibliotherapy

According to Herlina (in Halimatus, 2022), the bibliotherapy process encompasses various activities that are crucial for the effective use of books in therapy. This process includes client readiness and book selection, the client's reading activities, and follow-up activities. All these activities aim to guide the client through the stages of the bibliotherapy process: identification and projection, catharsis, and insight.

A. Readiness

Before conducting bibliotherapy, the therapist must consider a key factor: the child's readiness. If the timing is wrong, it will hinder the implementation process. According to Zaccaria & Moses (1968), children are most willing to begin bibliotherapy when:

- 1) The therapist has established a good relationship with the client, based on mutual trust and confidence in one another.
- 2) If the client is an older child, the child and therapist have reached an agreement regarding the issue to be addressed.
- 3) An initial assessment of the issue has been conducted.

b. Book Selection

Therapists must consider several factors when selecting books for therapy. The most important factor is the problem the child is experiencing. Children may be experiencing mild or severe adjustment and developmental issues. There are many books with various themes, but it is important to note that when using fiction, the book must feature believable characters and situations that offer realistic hope to children. Therapists also need to be aware of the child's interests and reading ability. Another important element of a book is its format. For children with special needs, alternative formats are available,

such as Braille, audiobooks (tapes), and large-print books. Therapists are also encouraged to use paperback editions, as they are more suitable for children (Fader & McNeil, 1968).

c. Introducing Books

Once the child is ready to participate in the bibliotherapy process and a book has been selected, the therapist must be careful in incorporating the book into treatment. Most professionals in the “helping” professions believe that it is best to recommend books when working with older children. However, when working with young children, the opposite is true. Regardless of the strategy used to introduce the book into therapy, the therapist must understand the content of the selected book.

d. Follow-Up Strategies

Zaccaria & Moses (1968) concluded that there is a consensus among various bibliotherapy studies that reading activities should be accompanied by discussion and consultation. During and after reading a book, a child can go through three stages of bibliotherapy. Through bibliotherapy, young children can find solutions to their problems without the need for verbalization, confrontation, or in-depth interpretation—strategies that are often crucial to the success of treatment. With the therapist’s guidance, children can empathize with characters in the book who face similar problems to their own. Through this process, children begin to understand how the characters in the book deal with their problems and then start to see solutions (Pardeck, 1990). For older children, further stages of the bibliotherapy process can be achieved with the help of a therapist (Pardeck & Pardeck, 1984). Below are activities that a therapist or assistant can conduct after reading the book. These follow-up strategies are suitable for most children. Some follow-up activities require small-group settings. The therapist may conduct one or more of these activities. Strategies include creative activities, artistic activities, discussions, and role-playing (Pardeck & Pardeck, 1984).

e. Creative Writing

After reading the book, the child will do the following:

- 1) Write a synopsis of the book, considering a character’s perspective different from those in the book.
- 2) Create a daily schedule for the child’s self-identification and then compare it to the child’s own schedule.
- 3) Keep a diary for a character in the story.
- 4) Write a letter from one character in the book to another character, or from a child to a character in the book.

- 5) Create a different ending or stop reading before the final chapter, then create their own ending to the story.
- 6) Write a letter addressing a problem situation described in the book.
- 7) Write a news article about an event in the book.

f. Art Activities

After reading this book, children are invited to participate in the following activities:

- 1) Unlike picture books, children use their imagination to create a map representing the events in the story.
- 2) Make puppets and clay models of the story's characters.
- 3) Create a collage of events in the story by pasting photos or cutting them out of magazines.
- 4) Photograph one key event in sequence from the book at a time.
- 5) Use drawings created by the children or images taken from magazines to build models representing key events and characters in the book.

g. Discussion and Role-Playing

The therapist asks the children to:

- 1) Participate in a roundtable discussion to decide which characters in the book will be discussed.
- 2) The client takes on the role of a key character and acts out historical events.
- 3) A mock courtroom role-play based on historical events, in which the client plays the roles of the defendant, attorney, judge, jury, and witnesses.

Discussing the characters' strengths and weaknesses to foster the child's self-awareness.

CONCLUSION

Group counseling is a form of guidance or assistance provided by a counselor to a group of individuals with the goal of achieving personal, social, and academic growth. Group counseling involves interaction between group members and the counselor or a professional guidance specialist. Bibliotherapy is a technique for healing the mind, including fears, anxiety, and stress. In bibliotherapy, individuals read stories, books, poems, or other reading materials relevant to the issues they are currently facing; they then reflect on what they have read to understand and resolve their own problems. Bibliotherapy can be conducted either individually or in groups, with a focus on selecting reading materials that align with the needs and interests of group members.

The importance of bibliotherapy as a creative and beneficial tool in the context of group counseling lies in its ability to help group members achieve personal growth and overcome various life challenges. Group counseling that incorporates bibliotherapy techniques can serve as an effective tool for fostering discussion, reflection, and personal growth. As part of group counseling, bibliotherapy provides broader insights, enriches discussions, and supports the emotional and psychological development of group members. Group counselors play a crucial role in leading discussions and facilitating reflection among group members regarding reading materials that address the specific issues they are currently facing.

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