

Emotional Experience Writing to Increase Resilience to Stress in Adolescents

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Abstract. Based on the results of initial interviews at the Tunas Harapan and Tunas Melati Orphanages, information was obtained that the problems of the orphaned youth were difficulty adapting at the beginning of their existence in the orphanage, emotional behavior problems, lack of self-confidence, keeping their problems to themselves, and not being able to solve problems that trigger feelings of depression and anxiety cause stress. It indicated the need for an effort to assist adolescents in overcoming problems that cause stress; one of which is through writing activities as a form of conveying ideas. This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of the emotional experience writing (EXPRIT) intervention on the stress resilience of adolescents. The study used a mixed-method approach, with a pre-experimental design and research pattern one-group pretest-posttest. Participants (15 adolescents; 8 boys and 7 girls) were selected using purposive sampling method and stress resilience screening instrument. The results showed that there was no effect of the emotional experience writing (EXPRIT) intervention on stress resilience as indicated by the *t* count greater than *t*-table (men: 2,037 > 1,895; women: 2,117 > 1,943), but qualitatively there was a change in the level of stress resilience during the intervention treatment was indicated by an increase in the score of the stress resilience indicator.

Keywords: emotional experience writing (EXPRIT), orphaned youth; resilience

Adolescence is often associated with experiencing complex problems. This is associated with the characteristics of adolescents who have high curiosity and experience changes. Psychologist G. Stanley Hall "*adolescence is a time of storm and stress*", which means that adolescence is a period full of storms and mental stress, namely when there are significant physical, emotional, intellectual changes that can cause sadness and imbalance. Conflict in adolescents can lead to conflict between adolescents and their environment.

Adolescent problems can be caused by a lack of ability to deal with pressure from both the environment and oneself. Family support is needed in the face of anxiety or stress. Not all teenagers have a complete family or live with their family, one of which is a child who lives in an orphanage who experienced life away from the family for some time; orphaned youth are required to adapt, on the other hand, they do not get whole love from their biological family. This condition requires adolescent resilience in the face of various pressures or stress resilience.

According to Lazarus and Folkman (in Morgan, 1986), stress is an internal state caused by physical or environmental and social demands that is also considered potentially harmful. Stress is an emotional or physical tension that can come from any event or thought that makes a person feel frustrated, angry, and nervous. Some emotional reactions to stress are fear, phobia, anxiety, depression, feelings of sadness, and anger (Sarafino, 1994). In dealing with pressures from both internal and external factors, individuals who can manage stress well will have stress resistance or stress resilience.

According to Rutter (in Clarissa, 2012), resilience comes from individual success in dealing with problems or pressures rather than avoiding them, and resilient individuals will dare to face and solve problems or pressures without having to avoid them. Resilience can also mean a strength that allows individuals to remain strong in a slumped state (VanBreda, in Hendriani, 2018). Stress resilience is an individual's resilience in dealing with stress and other problems due to pressure conditions and helps adolescents cope with social-emotional problems. There are seven aspects that can shape the ability of resilience in individuals (Reivich & Shatte, 2002), namely: (a) regulation of emotions; (b) impulse control; (c) empathy (d) optimistic; (e) ability to analyze problems; (f) self-efficacy, and; (g) improved positive aspects.

Based on data from the National Commission for Child Protection (2015), there are 200 reports related to cases of child's emotional problem in 2012. This indicates an increase in stress in children in Indonesia. The findings of Furnamawati (2007) stated that most of the children in orphanages had moderate (49%) and high (37.5%). Supported by data, 26.9% of children experience behavioral disorders, and 10.2% experience emotional disorders. Furthermore, Hartini's (2000) research showed a picture of the psychological needs of orphaned children as having inferior personalities, passive, apathetic, withdrawn, easily discouraged, full of fear and anxiety, so they have difficulty establishing social relationships with the environment.

The results of interviews conducted starting on October 1 at the Tunas Melati Orphanage and on October 2 at the Tunas Harapan Orphanage, information was obtained from the caretaker of the orphanage that there were problems with orphans such as difficulty adapting at the beginning of their existence and some issues with emotional behavior. Lack of attention creates a fear of telling stories so that orphans tend to keep their problems to themselves, are less able to solve the issues, and lack self-confidence.

Various problems faced by adolescent children in orphanages indicate the need for an effort to assist adolescents in overcoming problems that cause stress, one of which is through writing activities as a form of conveying ideas or ideas and emotional reactions using written language as a medium of delivery.

The results of Pennebaker and Smyth's (2016) research explain that writing is a form of free disclosure in a particular way. According to Pennebaker and Smyth (2016), expressive writing therapy is a therapeutic technique by compiling writing about an experience or event that disturbs one's mind, and expressive writing therapy activity is a

way that can help individuals to understand the emotional outbursts that exist in their lives (Sugiarto, 2018). Writing can also help someone in everyday speaking without finding it difficult to express it. Expressive writing therapy is a graphic writing therapy technique.

This is also supported by the results of research by Indah et al. (2011), writing that it can facilitate adjustment to stressful experiences so that individuals can understand the experience well and can identify ways to overcome it. In the mental health aspect, the expressive writing method can reduce depression and rumination (Lepore & Smyth, 2002) and increase self-image (Pennebaker & Seagal, 1999).

Emotional Experience Writing (EXPRIT) is one of the intervention techniques developed from expressive writing therapy techniques used in counseling, psychotherapy, and rehabilitation. The procedure for implementing emotional experience writing is also based on expressive writing, which is oriented towards disclosing the emotional experiences experienced. This is under the opinion of Pennebaker & Smith (2016); expressive writing therapy is a therapeutic technique by assembling writing about an experience or event that disturbs a person's mind. Individuals need a way to help express emotions better. This therapeutic activity is a way that can help individuals to understand the emotional outbursts that exist in their lives (Sugiarto, 2018). Hynes and Thompson (in Pumamarini, 2016) divide therapy's stages into four stages: recognition/initial writing, examination/writing exercise, juxtaposition/feedback, and application to the self.

Based on the results of initial interviews at the Tunas Harapan and Tunas Melati Orphanages, information was obtained that the problems of the orphaned youth were difficulty adapting at the beginning of their existence in the orphanage, emotional behavior problems, lack of self-confidence, keeping their problems to themselves, and not being able to solve problems that trigger feelings of depression and cause stress. So it takes an effort to help adolescents in overcoming problems that cause stress, one of which is through writing activities as a form of conveying ideas using written media as a medium of delivery so that it can increase resilience stress in adolescents. The hypothesis of this study is that the application of the Emotional Experience Writing Model intervention can increase stress resilience in adolescent boys and girls at the Tunas Harapan Orphanage and the Tunas Melati Orphanage, Pontianak City.

Method

Participants

The participants in this study were orphaned youth aged 12-18 years; lived in an orphanage for at least 2 years; experiencing social emotional problems; and willing to take part in the Emotional Experience Writing (EXPRIT) intervention from start to finish with a

total of 5 sessions. A total of 8 boys and 7 girls in two orphanages met the criteria to be participants in this study

Design of the Research

This study used a pre-experimental design with a one group pretest-posttest research design. The design is meant to determine changes in stress resilience levels before and after participating in the emotional experience writing (EXPRIT) intervention.

Instrument of the Research

The effectiveness of the emotional experience writing (EXPRIT) intervention on stress resistance was measured using a stress resistance scale (adapted from the teen wellness-self assessment), containing 10 items with construct validity testing and Cronbach's Alpha reliability value of 0.70 which means quite reliable (Sugiyono, 2016). This scale is given 2 times (pretest-posttest) with the predetermined answer categories: score 0 never, score 1 sometimes, score 2 often, score 3 very often, and score 4 always.

This study also used observation techniques during the intervention session to determine the level of stress resilience. The stress resilience scale has ten statements based on resilience indicators according to (Reivich & Shatte, 2002), namely (a) Emotion Regulation (Regulasi Emosi) abbreviated to RE; (b) Impulse Control is shortened to PI (Pengendalian Impuls); (c) Optimistic (Optimis) shortened to OP; (d) Problem Analysis abbreviated to AM (Analisis Masalah); (e) Self-Efficacy shortened to ED (Efikasi Diri); (f) Improvement of Positive Aspects (Aspek Positif) is removed to AP. This scale is given twice with the following scores.

Procedure

The pretest from the Tunas Harapan Orphanage were done on September 8, 2021, and the posttest on November 15, 2021, while the pretest at the Tunas Melati Orphanage was done on December 12, 2021, and the posttest on January 1, 2022. The stages of emotional experience writing (EXPRIT) can be seen in the Table 1.

Table 1.
Stages of Emotional Experience Writing (EXPRIT)

Session	Method	Description
Behavioral screening	Observation	-
Pretest	Stress Resilience Scale	Subjects fill out the Stress Resilience Scale
Rapport building	Mini games and ice breaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening and introduction Explain the purpose of the activity Explain about Emotional Experience Writing (EXPRIT)

Session	Method	Description
		• Question and answer
Session 1 EXPRIT Theme: My Childhood Experience	Observation and giving musical instruments	The subject tells and describes emotional experiences at childhood through writing.
Session 2 EXPRIT Theme: Love Me	Observation and giving musical instruments	The subject tells and describes people who care, love and support all this time through writing.
Session 3 EXPRIT Theme: Listen to Me	Observation and giving musical instruments	The subject tells and describes experiences about events that have made him feel angry, sad, and disappointed so far through writing.
Session 4 EXPRIT Theme: Goodbye Stress, Angry, and Worry	Observation and giving musical instruments	The subject wrote down ways to overcome his feelings so far and dared to tell orally.
Session 5 EXPRIT Theme: My Hopes and Wishes	Observation and giving musical instruments	<i>Disclosure</i> The subject gives good suggestions for himself and uses writing to express his feelings when he has difficulty telling or expressing it verbally.
<i>Group Inquiry</i>	Discussion	-
Posttest	Stress Resilience Scale	Subjects fill out the Stress Resilience Scale

Analysis

Analysis of quantitative data using non-parametric statistics tested by paired t-test. This method is a hypothesis testing method where the data used are not independent (in pairs). This test is used to compare scores before and before the intervention to find out there is no significant change that will be tested using SPSS 22 for Windows. While the qualitative analysis technique used in this study is descriptive qualitative from the results of observations and writings of adolescents during the five intervention sessions using coding techniques to determine the ability of stress resilience in adolescent boys and girls in orphanages. Coding was carried out to organize and identify youth writing based on 6 indicators of resilience (Reivich & Shatte, 2002).

Results

The result of the study was collected from two places, namely the Tunas Melati Orphanage and the Tunas Harapan Orphanage.

Table 2.*Comparison of Statistical Analysis Results between Boys and Girls in Orphanages*

Group	n	Data Source	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Male	8	Pretest	20.50	4.794	2.037	.081
		Posttest	25.88	5.831		
Female	7	Pretest	19.14	3.485	2.117	.079
		Posttest	23.29	8.077		

Table 2 shows that the results of male adolescent subjects analyzed were eight people in the orphanage with an average (mean) posttest of 25.88, with Std. Deviation (standard deviation = 5.831) and the mean (mean) of the pretest was 20.50 with Std. Deviation (standard deviation 4.794). While the statistical results of female adolescent subjects were analyzed as many as seven people in the orphanage, the posttest average (mean) was 23.29, with Std. Deviation (standard deviation = 8.077) and the mean (mean) of the pretest was 19.14 with Std. Deviation (standard deviation 3.485), which means that there is an increase in the ability of stress resilience in adolescents, is indicated by the average results (mean) for male adolescents (25.88 > 20.50) and females (23.29 > 19.14) in orphanages after the emotional experience intervention was given. Writing (EXPRIT), but based on the results of statistical test analysis at the two orphanages, there has been no effect of the emotional experience writing (EXPRIT) intervention on stress resilience abilities.

The source of the qualitative results in this study was taken based on the writings of the subjects who participated in five intervention sessions with coding techniques, namely the identification and labeling of units of meaning; these units can be words, sentences, or paragraphs (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This technique is used to determine the ability of stress resilience in young men and women in orphanages. Coding is carried out based on six resilience indicators (Reivich & Shatte, 2002), namely:

1. Emotional regulation (abbreviated as 'RE') is the state of staying calm and focused when under stress.
2. Impulse Control (abbreviated as 'PI') is the ability to control every impulse, desire, and pressure that arises from within.
3. Optimistic (abbreviated to OP) believe that you can handle the problems you face and believe in yourself for a bright future.
4. Problem analysis ability (abbreviated to 'AM') is the individual's ability to identify and accurately identify the causes of the problems encountered.
5. Self-efficacy (abbreviated as "ED"), namely solving problems experienced and achieving success.
6. Improvement of the positive aspect (abbreviated to 'AP') is the individual's ability to interpret the problems faced as strengths in the future.

Coding was carried out by researchers and preceptors. The grouping of sentences from the youth's writings will be coded according to resilience indicators. Based on the results of M's diary, *"When I feel angry I will remain silent and not think about it and look for new thoughts to relieve that anger"* this sentence is included in the RE code (emotional regulation) which is to keep trying to stay calm and focus under stressful conditions.

Ability to control every impulse, desire, and pressure that arises from within (PI), for example DI's diary results *"When angry, I usually get emotional so I want to say rude words and throw things but I calm myself with istighfar"*, DI controls impulses emotions by way of istighfar.

Believe that you can handle the problems you face and believe in yourself for a bright future (OP), for example from the results of AL's diary *"I often feel like a depressed person but I realize that I should not lower myself and at some point I must be able to reach my goal."* Although AL often feels like a depressed person, AL believes that he can achieve his goals.

Individual's ability to identify and accurately identify the causes of the problems encountered (AM), for example from the results of the S diary *"When schoolwork piles up, I feel confused about how to do it so that I feel lazy which makes assignments pile up and eventually becomes stressful"*. This sentence explains that S knows what causes him stress.

Able to solve problems experienced and achieve success (ED), for example from the results of the APD's diary *"I still envy my friends who can go out with friends, but my parents never allow it. But that's okay, I can get through it and I'm sure one day I will become a successful person"*. APD believes that he can overcome the problems he is facing and achieve success.

Individual's ability to interpret the problems faced as strengths in the future (AP), for example the results of the HQ's diary *"Bang Imam as a caregiver at the orphanage forbade me not to do bad deeds, he forbade me, that's a sign of love"*. The sentence written by HQ explains that he can take the positive side of the problems he faces.

To determine the score for assessing the ability of stress resilience that appears in the writings of orphaned children, the researcher determines a score of 1 for sentences that appear with a frequency of 0 times. Score 2 for sentences that appear with a frequency of 1 to 2 times. Score 3 for sentences that appear with a frequency of 3 to 4 times. While a score of 4 for sentences that appear with a frequency of 5 times.

Table 3.
Results of Writing Stress Resilience for Male Adolescents at Tunas Melati Orphanage

	RE	PI	OP	AM	ED	AP	Total
Session 1	10	9	8	8	10	9	54
Session 2	9	10	8	8	8	9	52
Session 3	9	8	8	8	8	8	49
Session 4	14	15	8	10	9	9	65

	RE	PI	OP	AM	ED	AP	Total
Session 5	9	9	11	8	8	8	53
Total	51	51	43	42	43	43	

Table 4.

Results of Writing Stress Resilience for Female Adolescents at Tunas Harapan Orphanage

	RE	PI	OP	AM	ED	AP	Total
Session 1	10	9	8	8	10	9	54
Session 2	9	10	8	8	8	9	52
Session 3	9	8	8	8	8	8	49
Session 4	14	15	8	10	9	9	65
Session 5	9	9	11	8	8	8	53
Total	51	51	43	42	43	43	

Based on the results of the table 3 and 4, there is an increase in several indicators in the stress resilience ability of boys and girls in orphanages.

Discussion

The purpose of implementing the Emotional Experience Writing (EXPRIT) intervention is to provide knowledge and help orphaned youth deal with social-emotional problems that cause stress. The research results quantitatively in table 2 showed an increase in the results of the pretest & post-test of orphanages. Still, the results of statistical analysis test results did not show any effectiveness in the emotional experience writing (EXPRIT) intervention. Based on the observations, this can be caused by several factors; namely, the subject's level of reading comprehension is low in understanding and interpreting statements from the stress resilience scale, as evidenced by several adolescents often asking questions when filling out the scale. There are subject errors when filling out scale items and sentences in the items of the scale. The scale adapted from the stress resilience scale translated into Bahasa caused the subject to understand the sentences used less well. Thorndike (in Heilman et al., 1981) explained that reading is like a thinking process, involving a learning process, assessment, reflection, analysis, synthesis, problem-solving, selection, decision making, comparison, determination of relationships, and critical evaluation of reading content that requires regulation. Cognitive abilities such as symbols and understanding. This can be interpreted when performance in reading material is low; it will result in wrong assessment, analysis, and interpretation.

The results qualitatively indicate an increase in several indicators related to the ability of adolescent boys and girls to stress resilience in orphanages. In male subjects, the high number of indicators of stress resilience in emotion regulation and impulse control obtained a score of 51 each. This indicates that male adolescents can remain calm and

focused in stressful conditions and control or desire that arises from within. Still, the subject is less able to analyze the causes of the problems experienced, as indicated by the results of the problem analysis indicators for male subjects, which are low with a score of 42.

The results of female adolescent subjects show that the highest stress resilience indicator lies in the optimistic hand getting a score of 49 and impulse control getting a score of 48; this shows that female subjects believe or believe they can solve problems and believe in themselves for a bright future and can control impulses or desires that arise from within. As with male subjects, female subjects are also less able to analyze the causes of the problems experienced, as indicated by the results of the problem analysis indicators for female subjects being low with a score of 38. The low score on this indicator is caused by the inability to identify the subject's problems, so the subject has difficulty recognizing the root of the situation he is facing. As a result, male subjects emphasize emotion regulation and impulse control to deal with problems. In contrast, female subjects emphasize optimism and impulse control to deal with issues that cause stress.

The fourth session with the theme "*goodbye stress, angry and worry*" is a session that has the highest results compared to other sessions from the two orphanages; this session is included in one of the indicators of stress resilience, namely impulse control. The subject can write down how to deal with stress, anger, and anxiety by controlling every impulse in him, as indicated by the impulse control scores of the two orphans who have high marks. The third session with the theme "*listen to me*" is the session that has the lowest score; this session is included in one of the indicators of stress resilience, namely problem analysis, where the subject is asked to describe experiences about events that cause anger, sadness, and disappointment. By the results in the table on the problem analysis indicators, the two orphanages had a low score, so that the third session got the lowest score of 52.

Conclusion

The qualitative results show that there are pretty high scores on several indicators, but there are differences in scores between male and female subjects. The highest hands are emotion regulation and impulse control in male subjects, while in female subjects, the highest indicator scores are optimism and impulse control. The results also show a low score on the problem analysis indicators in the two orphaned youth subjects.

The results of the implementation of the intervention quantitatively through the data obtained from the pretest and posttest scores also showed an increase in the stress resilience ability of male and female adolescents in both orphanages after being given the emotional experience writing (EXPRIT) intervention as indicated by the rise in the pretest-posttest score (5%) in men and (11%) in women. However, the statistical analysis test

showed that the emotional experience writing (EXPRIT) intervention did not yet affect the ability of stress resilience in orphaned youth.

Suggestion

Statistical tests indicated that the emotional experience writing (EXPRIT) intervention was not effective. Regarding the psychological problems of adolescents in orphanages, there is emotional instability and a lack of resilience to stress when facing difficult situations. Coping strategies need to be given to help orphaned youth better adapt to stressful situations facing problems. With the limitations of this study, it is hoped that future researchers can pay more attention to the factors and conditions of the subject and can develop a stress resilience scale.

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Authors' contribution

The preparation of this research was carried out by THN under the guidance of SNJ and ET as a prerequisite for obtaining a Bachelor of Psychology degree. All authors discussed the results and contributed to the final manuscript.

Conflict of interest

The authors declared no potential conflict of interest with respect to the research, author, and/or publication of this article.

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