


The Effectiveness of Group Counseling with Role Playing Techniques Charged With the Value of *Tapa Ngrame* in the Panji Story to Increase Altruism in Elementary School Students: A Cultural Approach in Counseling

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INTRODUCTION

Humans are homo socius, creatures who need other people, help each other, cooperate, and have an altruistic attitude towards other people (Fehr & Fischbacher in Knafo & Plomin, 2006). As social creatures, humans should help each other and interact with other people to exchange ideas and fulfill their daily needs (Roseman, 2008). This is often seen directly in people's lives, such as joint activities, community service, or providing assistance in the form of goods or services to people who really need it. In the current era of globalization, altruistic attitudes in Indonesia, particularly in major cities, are gradually shifting due to modernization. So, it is not surprising that in big cities the values of devotion, solidarity, and helping, which are social norms that have long been embedded in human culture (Axelrod, 1984), are experiencing a decline. What appears, then, is a manifestation

of self-interest and individualism. Essentially, humans cannot fulfill their needs independently, so a person typically places more emphasis on shared interests than personal interests (Camerer, 2006; Roth, 1995).

Altruistic attitudes emerge and develop from early childhood, constituting an essential aspect of children's social and moral development (Warneken, 2009). Hoffman (1981) explains that altruistic tendencies are inherently present in individuals; however, their expression and development are strongly influenced by age and environmental factors. In the context of elementary school students, altruism plays a crucial role in shaping prosocial behaviors such as helping peers, sharing, cooperating, and showing empathy within the school environment. These behaviors are fundamental for establishing positive peer relationships, reducing aggressive tendencies, and fostering a supportive classroom climate. Furthermore, elementary school age represents a critical developmental stage in which children begin to internalize social norms and moral values through interaction, imitation, and guided learning. Research indicates that children who demonstrate higher levels of altruistic behavior at an early age tend to experience greater life satisfaction and develop more positive social functioning later in life (Kahana et al., 2013). Therefore, strengthening altruistic attitudes during the elementary school period is essential, as it not only supports children's immediate social adjustment at school but also contributes to their long-term psychological well-being.

Elementary school is a formal educational institution that serves as a foundational stage for the development of students' intelligence, personality, moral values, and social skills (Article 1, Paragraph 37 of the 2003 National Education System Law). At this stage, children experience significant social and moral development, enabling them to understand others' perspectives and engage in prosocial behaviors. Research indicates that elementary school-aged children are capable of developing altruistic attitudes, such as helping, sharing, and cooperation, as their cognitive and empathic abilities mature (Eisenberg et al., 2006; Warneken & Tomasello, 2009).

Elementary education also serves as the primary foundation for the nation's future. Character strengthening through basic education is emphasized in the implementation of the 2013 Curriculum and Presidential Regulation Number 87 of 2017 on Character Education, which aims to prepare Indonesia's golden generation by 2045 (Kurikulum, 2013). At the elementary school level, the development of attitudes is crucial, as this formative period allows children to internalize values, social norms, and moral behaviors that shape their character. Positive attitudes such as empathy, cooperation, and altruism are essential for fostering responsible citizenship and harmonious social interaction.

Conversely, the lack of positive attitudes in elementary school students may result in low empathy, poor peer relationships, and behavioral problems that hinder both academic engagement and social development. Therefore, strengthening altruistic attitudes at the elementary school level is a strategic effort to support children's social adjustment, moral development, and long-term psychological well-being.

The altruistic form that exists in children consistently shows development towards progress in the early childhood years (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989). Children who are able to show an altruistic attitude in their daily lives from an early age will consistently maintain this situation into adulthood, and even the child's ability to help friends tends to increase in life because, as children grow up, they develop empathy and social responsibility (Piliavin & Charng in Haski-Leventhal, 2009). Altruistic forms in humans, which are manifested in the form of prosocial attitudes and behavior, begin to emerge at a very early age (Warneken and Tomasello, 2009; Svetlova et al., 2010; Dunfield, 2014). For example, 12-month-old babies provide information to others by pointing to objects (Liszkowski et al., 2006, 2008), 18-month-old children show concern for others in their distress and comfort (Zahn-Waxler et al., 1992; Vaish et al., 2009), and by the end of the second year of life, they are ready to share resources with others (Hay et al., 1991; Brownell et al., 2009; Dunfield et al.,

2011). Children at elementary school age not only help in various situations but also assist their peers (Hepach et al., 2017) and adults they don't know (Rheingold, 1982; Hepach et al., 2017), including strangers who have behaved antisocially (Dahl et al., 2013; Sebastián-Enesco et al., 2013; Vaish et al., 2010). At around the age of five, their thinking abilities begin to develop (Piaget, 1951; Perner, 1991). Children become less selfish and begin to adapt their behavior to the norms and rules of their environment.

Altruistic attitudes in elementary school students can be systematically developed through structured guidance and counseling interventions. Group counseling offers a supportive social environment where children learn prosocial values through peer interaction, discussion, and shared experiences. Research has shown that group counseling is effective in promoting prosocial behaviors, including empathy, cooperation, and helping attitudes among children (Corey, 2016; Caprara et al., 2015). Within group counseling, role-playing techniques have been widely recognized as an effective method for enhancing altruism, as they allow students to practice perspective-taking and empathetic responses in simulated social situations (Eisenberg et al., 2006; Karcher & Hansen, 2014). Studies indicate that role playing in counseling and educational settings significantly improves children's altruistic attitudes by encouraging moral reasoning and emotional engagement (Gresham et al., 2011). Therefore, group counseling using role-playing techniques constitutes an effective and developmentally appropriate approach to fostering altruistic attitudes in elementary school students.

Although previous studies have demonstrated that group counseling with role-playing techniques is effective in enhancing altruistic and prosocial attitudes among children, most of these studies rely on general social scenarios and value-neutral materials. In contrast, the present study integrates local cultural values of *Tapa Ngrame* derived from Panji stories into the role-playing process. This cultural integration provides contextualized moral learning that is closely aligned with students' socio-cultural backgrounds, making altruistic values more meaningful and easier to internalize. Furthermore, this study focuses on elementary school students as a critical developmental group and applies a quasi-experimental design to empirically examine changes in altruistic attitudes before and after the intervention. Therefore, this research contributes to the literature by offering a culturally grounded group counseling model that extends existing role-playing approaches in school counseling.

Despite growing evidence that group counseling with role-playing techniques can effectively promote prosocial and altruistic attitudes in children, several research gaps remain. Existing studies have predominantly examined role playing using general or universal social situations without embedding culturally specific moral values. Moreover, limited empirical research has focused on the application of culturally grounded role-playing interventions within elementary school counseling settings, particularly in the Indonesian context. In addition, few studies have employed experimental or quasi-experimental designs to rigorously measure changes in altruistic attitudes before and after culturally integrated counseling interventions. Therefore, further research is needed to examine the effectiveness of group counseling with role-playing techniques that incorporate local cultural values, such as *Tapa Ngrame* from Panji stories, in enhancing altruism among elementary school students.

Based on a preliminary study conducted by counselors in elementary schools in Sumberrejo District, Bojonegoro Regency, East Java, there are no specific counseling services addressing low levels of altruism among elementary school students. Observations suggest that students often exhibit self-centered behavior and a lack of concern for their peers. This condition is consistent with findings by Kukuk et al. (2008), which suggest that low altruism in children may lead to attention-seeking behaviors such as disruptiveness, defiance, and hostility. Previous studies have attempted to enhance children's altruism through various interventions, including social learning and modeling approaches (Piliavin, 2001), group counseling (Yalom, 2020), play-based programs emphasizing

sharing and empathy (Ulutas & Aksoy, 2009), social stories (Sansosti & Powell-Smith, 2006), and digital media interventions such as video games (Gentile et al., 2009). However, recent developments in counseling research highlight the growing importance of culturally responsive and context-based interventions that align with students' socio-cultural backgrounds. In contrast to existing studies, the present research introduces an updated and novel approach by integrating local Indonesian cultural values of *Tapa Ngrame* from Panji stories into group counseling using role-playing techniques. This culturally grounded intervention is expected to provide more meaningful moral learning experiences and enhance the effectiveness of altruism development among elementary school students.

Literature Review

Altruism refers to voluntary behavior intended to benefit others without expecting external rewards, driven by empathy, moral values, and social responsibility (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989). In children, altruism is reflected in behaviors such as helping, sharing, cooperating, and showing concern for peers in need. The development of altruistic attitudes is closely related to cognitive growth, emotional regulation, and perspective-taking abilities, which gradually emerge during elementary school years. Altruism not only supports positive peer relationships and social adjustment but also contributes to moral development and emotional well-being. Therefore, fostering altruism in elementary school students is an essential aspect of character education and social development, particularly within structured educational and counseling settings.

Role playing technique group counseling is a counseling service carried out in a group atmosphere using role playing techniques, utilizing the group to help, provide feedback, and learning experiences. Group counseling in the process uses the principles of group dynamics. (Latipun, 2006). Hasen, Warner & Smith (1982) further emphasize that group counseling services are an excellent way to handle interpersonal conflicts and assist individuals in developing their personal abilities. In this regard, all group counseling is oriented towards individual development, prevention, and alleviation of problems. Winkel (2007), in group counselling, there are two main aspects, namely the process aspect and the face-to-face meeting aspect. The process aspect of group counseling has unique characteristics because the process is carried out by more than two people. Likewise, the aspect of face-to-face meetings is that those who meet face to face are several people who are members of a group, who provide psychological assistance to each other. Group counseling has a therapeutic element. The therapeutic characteristics of group counseling are inherent in interpersonal interactions within groups, helping individuals to understand themselves better and find solutions to various difficulties they face. Erle M. Ohlsen (in Winkel, 2007), in his book *Group Counseling*, states that interactions in counseling groups contain many therapeutic elements.

The Panji story is an original history belonging to Indonesia from the Kediri period (1080-1222). According to Sunarto (2015), the Panji story is a collection of stories originating from the Javanese classical period, specifically from the era of the Kadiri kingdom. The Panji story in literary form originated from the Javanese cultural environment, particularly based on the love story of the royal character Janggala. Raden Panji Inukartapati or Panji Asmarabangun from the Kingdom of Mamenang, Daha, or Kediri. In its development, the Panji story spread widely, not only in the archipelago but also to Malaysia, Thailand, and Cambodia. The story of Panji contains the value of *Tapa Ngrame*, which is a form of the value of asceticism. The teachings of asceticism are widely known and practiced in various religious beliefs as an effort to form self-discipline and prevent lust. *Tapa Ngrame* is a form of asceticism that involves providing selfless help to anyone who is experiencing suffering. Even his life is at stake to maintain safety and create a peaceful life in society. The embodiment of the value of *Tapa Ngrame* in the Panji story can be found in the stories: the story of Panji Anggriani, the story of Timun Mas, the story of Keong Mas, the story of Bango Thong-

Thong, the story of Limaran, the story of *Andhe-Andhe Lumut*, and the story of Enthit. The positive values taught through the practice of asceticism in the Panji story are characterized by altruistic values, namely the formation of traits, attitudes, and behaviors that prioritize the interests of others over one's own personal interests. Bierhoff and Kramp (1991) stated the following characteristics of altruistic behavior: a) empathy; b) belief in just about the world; c) social responsibility; d) locus of control, and e) low egocentrism.

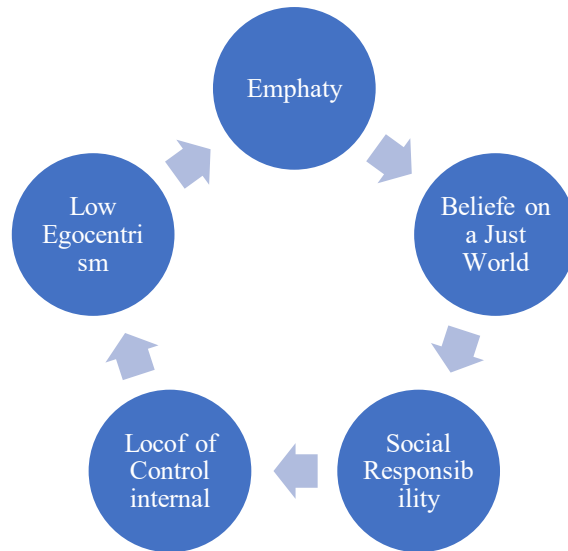


Figure 1. The altruistic personality (Bierhoff & Kramp, 1991)

Empathy: People who help are found to have higher empathy levels than those who do not. The most altruistic participants described themselves as responsible, sociable, calm, tolerant, having self-control, and motivated to make a good impression. **Belief in a just world:** People who help prepare the world as a just place and believe that good behavior is rewarded and bad behavior is punished. **Social responsibility:** People who help express the belief that everyone is responsible for doing their best to help people in need. **Internal locus of control:** This is an individual's belief that he or she can choose to behave in ways that maximize good outcomes and minimize bad ones. **Low egocentrism:** Those who help do not intend to be egocentric, self-absorbed, and competitive.

Rationale of the Study

The rationale of this study is based on the need to address low levels of altruism among elementary school students through effective and culturally relevant counseling interventions. Although previous research has shown that group counseling and role-playing techniques can foster prosocial and altruistic attitudes, limited studies have integrated local cultural values into these interventions, particularly in elementary school settings in Indonesia. Considering that altruism develops optimally when moral values are presented in meaningful and familiar contexts, this study integrates *Tapa Ngrame* values from Panji stories into group counseling with role-playing techniques. This approach is expected to enhance students' engagement, facilitate deeper internalization of altruistic values, and provide an empirically grounded, culturally responsive counseling model for promoting altruism among elementary school students.

Aim and Hypotheses

The aim of this study is to examine the effectiveness of group counseling, incorporating role-playing techniques and *Tapa Ngrame* values from Panji stories, in enhancing altruistic attitudes among elementary school students. Based on the aim of the study, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: There is a significant difference in altruistic attitudes between elementary school students who receive group counseling with role-playing techniques integrated with *Tapa Ngrame* values from Panji stories and those who do not receive the intervention.

H2: Elementary school students who participate in group counseling with role-playing techniques integrated with *Tapa Ngrame* values from Panji stories demonstrate significantly higher altruistic attitude scores after the intervention compared to their pre-intervention scores.

METHODS

Design

This study employed a quasi-experimental research design using a pre-test and post-test control group design. Two groups of elementary school students were involved, consisting of an experimental group that received group counseling incorporating role-playing techniques and *Tapa Ngrame* values from Panji stories, and a control group that did not receive the intervention. Both groups were measured before and after the treatment using an altruism attitude scale to examine changes in altruistic attitudes. The groups were assigned using a non-random assignment procedure, as randomization was not feasible in the school setting.

Participants

The participants of this study were fifth-grade and sixth-grade students from elementary schools (SD/MI) in Bojonegoro Regency, East Java. A total of 30 students participated in the study and were divided into an experimental group and a control group, each consisting of 15 students. The group size was determined based on theoretical and practical considerations in group counseling, which suggest that an effective counseling group typically consists of 6 to 15 members to ensure optimal interaction, group dynamics, and individual participation (Corey, 2016). A group of this size allows counselors to facilitate meaningful role-playing activities, encourage peer feedback, and maintain a supportive group atmosphere without reducing the opportunity for each member to actively engage. The experimental group included students from SDN Kaliombo I (8 students) and MI Islamiyah Ngampal (7 students), while the control group consisted of 15 students from MI Islamiyah Attanwir. Participants were assigned to groups using a non-random assignment procedure in accordance with the quasi-experimental design.

The research procedure involved implementing group counseling interventions for both the experimental and control groups. The experimental group received group counseling that incorporated role-playing techniques and *Tapa Ngrame* values derived from Panji stories. In contrast, the group control received group counseling using imagery techniques without cultural value integration. Prior to the intervention, both groups completed a pre-test to measure their altruistic attitudes. Following the counseling sessions, a post-test was administered to assess changes in altruism. The effectiveness of the intervention was determined by comparing pre-test and post-test scores between and within the two groups.

Table 1. Data on the Size of Research Subjects According to Treatment.

School	Number of Students	Number of Research	Subjects Remarks
SDN Kaliombo I	29	8	Experimental Group
MI Islamiyah Ngampal	31	7	Experimental Group
MI Islamiyah Attanwir	63	15	Control Group
Amount	123	30	Experimental Group and Control Group

Instruments

This study employed two types of research instruments. The first instrument consisted of treatment materials in the form of group counseling manuals. These manuals included (1) a group

counseling guide using role-playing techniques integrated with *Tapa Ngrame* values derived from Panji stories for the experimental group, and (2) a group counseling guide using imagery techniques for the control group. Both counseling guides were systematically developed based on group counseling principles and were reviewed by experts in guidance and counseling to ensure content validity and appropriateness for elementary school students.

The second instrument was an altruism attitude scale used to measure students' altruistic attitudes before and after the intervention. The scale consisted of 35 items reflecting key dimensions of altruism, such as helping behavior, empathy, sharing, and cooperation. The instrument demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of $\alpha \geq 0.70$, indicating good reliability for research purposes. This scale was administered as both a pre-test and post-test to assess changes in students' altruistic attitudes following the counseling interventions.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using statistical procedures to examine the effectiveness of the counseling intervention. Descriptive statistics were first employed to summarize participants' altruism scores in terms of mean and standard deviation. Inferential analysis was then performed using a paired samples t-test to assess differences between pre-test and post-test scores within each group and an independent samples t-test to compare post-test scores between the experimental and control groups. All statistical analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS version 25.0 with a significance level set at 0.05.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Result

Data Description of Pre-Test Research

Table 2. Results of Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Pre-test Level of Altruistic Attitudes of Elementary School Students.

Group	N	X	SD	SE
Experimental	15	67.733	1.162	.300
Control	15	67.53	1.641	.423

Table 2 above shows that the experimental group of 15 elementary school students had an average value of 67.7 with a standard deviation of 116. Meanwhile, the control group had an average value of 67.5 with a standard deviation of 1.64. This means that the 30 elementary school students have a low level of altruistic attitudes.

Data Description Post Test Research

Table 3. Post-test results of the altruistic attitude level of elementary school students with descriptive statistical analysis.

Group	N	X	SD	SE
Experimental	15	104.46	3.85	.994
Control	15	89.93	4.86	1.25

Table 3 above shows that the experimental group of 15 elementary school students has an average value of 104.4 with a standard deviation of 3.85. The control group has an average value of 89.9 with a standard deviation of 4.86. This shows that the post-test results for both groups improved after treatment.

Pre-test Data for Experimental Group and Control Group

The normality test used in this study is the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, which was applied to pre-test data on the altruistic attitude of elementary school students before being treated with counseling group role-playing techniques loaded with the value of asceticism, the Panji story, and counseling group imagery techniques. The data normality decision is based on the value of Asymp.Sig. (2-tailed) indicates a number > 0.05 . The following data normality test results in this study.

Table 4. Normality test results, Pre-test Data for Experimental Group and Control Group

Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a		
Statistic	df	Sig.
.195	15	.128
.212	15	.069

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 4 above shows that the probability value of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality or the value of Asymp.Sig. (2-tailed) was equal to 0.128 for the experimental group that applied counseling group techniques, including role-playing with asceticism, and 0.69 for the Dick group that applied counseling group techniques, including imagery. The sig value of both groups is greater than 0.05 (sig >0.05), so it can be concluded that the two data sets are normally distributed.

Post-test Data for the Experimental Group and the Control Group

After being treated with counseling group role-playing techniques, charged with the value of asceticism, the Panji story was used for the experimental group, and counseling group imagery techniques were used for the control group. Furthermore, the acquisition of altruistic attitude scores. Post-test results were subjected to a normality test. The normality test used is the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for the post-test altruistic attitude of elementary school students. The data normality decision is based on the value of Asymp.Sig. (2-tailed) indicates a number > 0.05 . The following data normality test results in this study.

Table 5. Results of the post-test data normality test for the Experimental Group and Control Group

Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a		
Statistic	df	Sig.
.122	15	.200*
.127	15	.200*

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 5 above shows that the probability value of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality or the value of Asymp.Sig. (2-tailed) is equal to 0.200 for the experimental group that applies counseling group techniques, role-playing with asceticism, and Pennant story value, and 0.200 for the Dick group that applies counseling group techniques and imagery. The significance value of both groups is greater than 0.05 (sig > 0.05), so it can be concluded that the two data sets are normally distributed.

The results of the analysis of the Pre-test and Post-test scores for the Counseling Group role-playing techniques, which included the asceticism story, Pennant, and Counseling Group imagery techniques. Based on the test results of pre-test and Post-test data analysis using the paired samples t-test in the experimental and control groups, the following analysis results were obtained. The experimental group showed an increase in altruistic attitude scores among students after being given counseling group role-playing techniques that emphasized the value of asceticism, as seen in the Panji story. With the acquisition of an altruistic attitude score, on average, at the time of the

pre-test, it is equal to 67.73. At the time, the post-test score increased to 104.46. While in the control class, the acquisition of altruistic attitude scores of students also increased after being treated using counseling imagery techniques, with an average value of 67.53 on the pre-test. Increased to 89.93. The following analysis results are using the paired samples test.

Table 6. Results of Pre-test and Post-test Data Analysis with Paired Sample Test

	Paired Samples Statistics			
	X	N	SD	SE
Post-test Experiment	104.46	15	3.85	.99
Pre-test Experiment	67.73	15	1.16	.30
Post-test Control	89.93	15	4.86	1.25
Pre-test Control	67.53	15	1.64	.42

Then, the results of the t paired samples test are presented for each experimental and control group. It was found that there was a significant difference between the average value of the pre-test and the post-test in the experimental class. This is indicated by a significance value of 0.000 or below 0.05 in the experimental class. This means that there is a difference in the scores of students' altruistic attitude scores before and after being treated with counseling group role-playing techniques charged with the value of asceticism, as seen in the Panji story, with an average increase in score of 36.73. On the other hand, there was also a significant difference between the average value of pre-test Shiva and the average value of post-test students in the control class. This is indicated by a significance value of 0.000 or below 0.05 in the control class. This means that there is a difference in the scores of students' altruistic attitude scores before and after being treated with the counseling imagery technique group, with an average increase in score of 22.4. The following test results are the paired t-test results for the experimental class and the control class.

Table 7. Results of the T-test analysis, Paired samples test, Experimental Group, and Control Group

		Paired Differences					t	df	F
		X	SD	SE	95% CI				
					Lower	Upper			
Post-test Experiment – Pre-test Experiment		36.73	3.86	.99	34.59	38.87	36.82	14	.000
Post-test Control – Pre-test Control		22.40	5.06	1.30	19.59	25.20	17.11	14	.000

The effectiveness of group counseling using role-playing techniques in developing altruistic attitudes among elementary school students is evidenced by the results of the paired samples t-test and the comparison of post-test mean scores between groups. The experimental group demonstrated a statistically significant increase in altruistic attitudes from pre-test to post-test ($p < 0.05$), with a mean gain of 36.73 points, which was higher than the gain observed in the control group (22.40 points). Moreover, the post-test mean score of the experimental group ($M = 104.46$) exceeded that of the control group ($M = 89.93$), indicating a stronger improvement following group counseling using role-playing techniques embedded with the ascetic values of the Panji story. Supported by normally distributed data, these findings confirm that group counseling with role-playing techniques plays a significant and effective role in enhancing altruistic attitudes among elementary school students compared to imagery-based group counseling.

Discussion

The results of the above study also establish the results of previous studies that consistently show that for children, effectively improving altruistic behavior (Yalom in Brown, 2020), because it involves the interaction of children in groups, which involves children learning the behavior of

sharing and working together with others. In addition, group counseling is believed to be effective in treating children's behavioral problems, because children's lives are more in peer groups (Sheckman in Jacob's, 2012; Sonstegard et. Al., 2004).

The involvement of children in a group atmosphere helps children to have an awareness that they must be responsible for themselves and others. Group counseling trains its members to foster cohesiveness among group members (Jonathan & Lie, 2017). In group counseling, group members gain a direct and realistic picture of the problems other group members face. This study also corroborates the results of research conducted by Yalom & Leszcz (2020), which concluded that group therapy is effective in helping individuals with social behavior problems, one of which is altruistic attitude behavior. Group therapy serves as a systematic model that helps individuals heal and improve their psychological well-being. Additionally, over 70% of counseling for children is conducted in schools (Hoag & Burlingame, in Corey, 2012).

In general, one of the goals of group counseling services is to develop students' social skills, especially the ability to interact with others. Through group counseling services, factors that can hinder or interfere with student interaction are identified and addressed through various techniques, allowing students to interact optimally. Group counseling also describes the elements or conditions present in the group that help lead the client to positive change (Kivlighan & Holmes, 2004) and is a service that provides many benefits in helping alleviate students' personal problems in school. Because it is held in a group atmosphere, it allows students the opportunity to discuss and alleviate problems experienced through group dynamics. All members participate in discussing the problem so that learners, as members of the group, can experience the function of alleviating the problem. In addition, students who participate in group counseling services can also benefit from improved communication skills, increased social sensitivity, enhanced self-control, and training in responsible behavior.

The improvement of the altruistic attitude of students is also based on the results of research using role-playing techniques. This is in line with the opinion of Fannie and George Shafte (1967) that, in the implementation of role playing, students explore the problem of human relations by applying the problem situation and then discussing it. Together, students can explore feelings, attitudes, values, and problem-solving strategies. Role-playing techniques in this study refer to the counseling rational emotive behavior therapy (REBT) proposed by Albert Ellis in the 1960s, which emphasizes the mutual interaction among cognition, emotion, and behavior (Corey, 2012). This technique is suitable for improving the altruistic attitude of elementary school students because it can help change irrational beliefs into rational ones, which are one of the causes of low altruistic attitudes among elementary school students. Students who have low altruistic attitudes believe that what they do to help others has no meaning and are more concerned with their personal lives. They are more likely to be individualistic, selfish, and want to win on their own. REBT counseling teaches group members how to actively and effectively challenge and refute the irrational beliefs they hold. This process involves three things: 1) detecting irrational beliefs and seeing that they are illogical and unrealistic, 2) debating these irrational beliefs and showing oneself how they are not supported by evidence, and 3) distinguishing between irrational thinking and rational thinking (Ellis, 1994; in Dryden & Neenan, 2004).

The stages of role-playing techniques used in this study refer to the stages formulated by Shafte (1967). In the implementation of role-playing techniques, students are faced with problems through direct action, problems are depicted, acted out, and discussed. Students are asked to be both actors and observers. A person puts themselves in the shoes of another person and then tries to interact with others who also perform a role in the same situation. Therefore, attitudes such as altruistic attitudes, empathy, sympathy, anger, and compassion appear during the interaction. Emotional content, as well as his words and actions, become part of the analysis carried out during the role-playing process. The essence of role-playing lies in the involvement of participants and

observers in real-world problem situations, as well as the desire for revolution and understanding that this involvement entails. The role-playing process provides direct examples of human attitudes and behaviors that serve as a vehicle for students to: 1) explore their feelings; 2) gain insight into their attitudes, values, and perceptions; 3) develop their skills and attitudes in problem solving; and 4) explore the material taught in a variety of ways. These goals reflect some assumptions about the process within role-playing techniques. First, role-playing implicitly advocates experientially charged learning situations in which the "here and now" becomes the content of instruction. This Model assumes that it is possible to create authentic analogies with real-life problem situations, and through these re-creations, the student can "taste" life. Thus, it elicited emotional responses and behaviors from students. Additionally, role-playing techniques can appeal to students' feelings, which they can recognize and possibly release. The version of role-playing put forward by Shaftel (1967) emphasizes both intellectual and emotional content; analysis and discussion of the enactment are as important as the role itself.

The effectiveness of role-playing techniques in improving students' altruistic attitudes is in line with research results that suggest this technique is effective in modifying attitudes, values, perceptions, and behavior by challenging irrational beliefs and replacing them with rational ones. The results of research conducted by Tahmores (2011) indicate that role-playing techniques effectively enhance children's social skills, which in turn influence their ability to interact with their environment, encompassing skills such as cooperation and mutual assistance. In addition, role playing techniques are also effective in improving interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships of students, as the results of research conducted by Wee et al. (2013) which states that role playing techniques are effective for improving interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships, which when an individual has good interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships, then the individual will tend to have a self-sacrificing attitude for the sake of others, work together, and do not have a selfish attitude. An increase in altruistic attitudes was also found in students in South Korea who attended university laboratory schools, where the curriculum was based on multiple intelligences (Ahammer, 1979). In line with the results of the above research, role-playing techniques are also effective for increasing empathy. This research was conducted by Pratisti et al. (2019), who tested the effectiveness of role-playing in increasing the empathy of 8th-grade junior high school students in Kartasura. The results of this study suggest that role-playing can help individuals form a deeper understanding of a particular situation, allowing them to view it from another person's perspective. Someone who has good empathy will tend to adopt attitudes and actions that lead to altruistic behaviors, manifested in selfless acts of kindness, mutual assistance, and a genuine care for others.

The effectiveness of group counseling role-playing techniques in improving students' altruistic attitudes is also influenced by the cultural content used. The cultural value embodied in the role-playing technique is illustrated in the story of the banner. In this story, Panji contains teachings of values, namely ascetic values, which are able to form an altruistic attitude in a person (Pudjaswara, 2014). The term asceticism is interpreted as the effort of a person or group of people to engage in exercises that aim to "eliminate desires or carnal passions" with the goal of achieving spiritual perfection (Kartodirjo, 1999). One form of asceticism in the story of Panji is *Tapa Ngrame*, which involves ascetic meditation by providing selfless help to anyone experiencing suffering. Even his life is at stake in order to maintain security and realize the peace of community life. The manifestation of asceticism in Panji's story can be found in the stories: the story of Jaka Bluwo, the story of Keong Mas, the story of Panji Laras, the story of Limaran, the story of Andhe-Andhe Lumut, and the story of Enthit.

Role-playing techniques can effectively develop altruistic attitudes because they place students in experiential social situations that require perspective-taking, emotional involvement, and prosocial decision-making in a safe and structured group context. Through role playing, students actively experience the feelings, needs, and difficulties of others, which stimulates empathy,

sympathy, and social responsibility, core components of altruism. This process enables students to internalize helping behaviors not merely as cognitive knowledge but as lived social experiences, reinforced through group interaction, feedback, and reflection. Moreover, role playing facilitates the restructuring of irrational, self-centered beliefs into more rational and prosocial beliefs, as emphasized in REBT, thereby reducing egocentric thinking and increasing concern for others. When integrated with culturally meaningful narratives, such as the Panji story, role-playing further strengthens altruistic attitudes by embedding moral values, self-sacrifice, and communal responsibility within familiar cultural symbols, making prosocial behavior more relevant, meaningful, and sustainable for elementary school students.

The value of asceticism, as exemplified by *Tapa Ngrame* in the story of Panji, is effective in helping to cultivate an altruistic attitude in elementary school students. Because the cultural values it contains are teachings that emphasize the importance of altruistic attitudes. The results of this study support previous research, which suggests that cultural content can be effectively applied in counseling practices in Indonesia. The character of the Indonesian nation is one of obedience and respect for the culture that originated in the region. As the results of a study conducted by Habsy (2019), who developed a Javanese counseling culture to increase the confidence of vocational school students who experience psychological pressure. This research demonstrates that the Javanese counseling culture is effective in enhancing the self-confidence of students experiencing psychological pressure. Because the Javanese counseling culture conveys a valuable moral message for life, encompassing good values and the importance of heroism as an example. In line with Habsy's (2019) research, the study conducted by Hidayah & Ramli (2017) on the need to enhance the cultural life of Madurese students by incorporating the values of local wisdom from Madurese culture also demonstrates the effectiveness of culture in counseling practice. Current research results support Collins & Arthur's (2010) assertion that users of counseling services should be aware of their own cultural heritage in counseling services. Collins and Arthur's statement is confirmed by Wolfgang (1985), who states that counselors should be able to incorporate cultural issues into their counseling practice.

Implication

The findings of this study have important practical implications for guidance and counseling services in elementary schools. Group counseling, incorporating role-playing techniques and local cultural values, can be an effective intervention model for developing students' altruistic attitudes, empathy, and social responsibility. School counselors are encouraged to utilize culturally grounded role-playing activities as part of preventive and developmental counseling programs, as this approach not only enhances students' prosocial behavior but also strengthens character education aligned with national educational goals. Furthermore, the integration of local wisdom into counseling practices supports culturally responsive counseling, making interventions more meaningful and contextually relevant for students, thereby increasing the sustainability of positive behavioral change.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

This study has several limitations that should be taken into account when interpreting the findings. The sample size was relatively small and limited to elementary school students in a specific region, which may restrict the generalizability of the results to broader populations. In addition, the study focused on short-term outcomes of group counseling with role-playing techniques, without examining the long-term sustainability of changes in altruistic attitudes. Future research is therefore recommended to involve larger and more diverse samples, apply longitudinal designs to assess the durability of intervention effects, and compare role-playing techniques with other counseling approaches. Further studies may also explore the integration of different cultural values or

educational settings to strengthen the effectiveness and applicability of culturally based group counseling interventions.

CONCLUSION

Based on the statistical analysis using the independent samples t-test, this study confirms the proposed hypothesis that group counseling incorporating role-playing techniques and ascetic values from the Panji story is effective in improving the altruistic attitudes of elementary school students. This effectiveness is evidenced by a significant increase in students' altruistic attitude scores, as measured by the Altruistic Attitude Scale, as well as by students' reflections during the evaluation and follow-up stages, which indicated increased awareness of previously held irrational beliefs and a growing concern for others through helping behaviors. Furthermore, group counseling using role-playing techniques demonstrated a higher level of effectiveness than imagery-based group counseling, as it integrates local cultural values that strongly emphasize altruism. The improvement process occurs through group interaction, where students engage in sharing, cooperation, and collective problem-solving, particularly during the working stage when role-playing activities based on the *Tapa Ngrame* value of the Panji story are implemented. Through role enactment, discussion, and evaluation, students are guided to internalize ascetic values and transform irrational beliefs into rational ones through the disputing process, detecting, discriminating, and debating irrational beliefs, thereby fostering more consistent altruistic attitudes in their daily lives.

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