

## **Group Counseling with Relaxation Techniques for Reducing Anxiety Facing School Assignments in Junior High School School Students**

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**Abstract:** Adolescence is a transitional period where there are changes in itself, also known as puberty, which is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood. The changes experienced by adolescents will make adolescents get new roles and be tied to new activities, this can cause anxiety in adolescents. The purpose of this study is to reduce the level of student anxiety about schoolwork through group counseling with relaxation techniques. This study used an experimental research design with a one-group pretest-posttest design model. The data collection instruments used the interview method, observation, focus group discussion and the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) measurement tool. The intervention was carried out in four sessions, namely the explanation of the conclusions of the results of the focus group discussion and the implementation of group counseling, anxiety psychoeducation, relaxation exercises, and evaluation. Participants in this study were students of class VII in Junior High School X Yogyakarta. The results showed that there was a significant change in the anxiety experienced by participants before and after following the intervention group process with a significance value of  $p = 0.028$  ( $p < 0.05$ ) using the Wilcoxon test. Anxiety about the number of school assignments was reduced, participants became more comfortable, calm, and more optimistic in facing school assignments. The comfort obtained during breathing relaxation and muscle relaxation is also considered to be a daily need for participants if the body feels restless and tense.

**Keywords:** anxiety, group counseling, junior high school, relaxation, school assignments, students

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### **Introduction**

Junior High School students are included in the period of adolescent development. Adolescence lasts from the age of 12 to 21 years which consists of several development phases, namely early adolescents (12-15 years), mid adolescents (15-18 years), and late adolescents (18-21 years) [24]. Adolescence is a transition period that there is a change in self, also called puberty which is a transition from childhood to adulthood. Teenagers experience a lot of changes in themselves in physical, psychological, and social aspects [25]. Besides, adolescence is also known as a period that is full of shock because it is still in the stage of searching for identity [15]. This period is heavy enough to pass because of these changes. Junior High School students especially in class VII experiencing a transition from Elementary School to Junior High School, which is the state of moving from the top position (the condition of students being the oldest, biggest, and most powerful in the school) to the lowest position (students being the youngest, the smallest and weakest). The changes experienced by adolescents will make teens get new roles and be attached to new activities, and this causes anxiety in adolescents [2].

Based on the results of an interview with one of the X Junior High School Counseling Guidance teachers in Yogyakarta said that the problems experienced by students included behavioral disorders, resistance, smoking behavior, anxiety, and bullying. Based on this the initial screening process is carried out by distributing questionnaires to classes selected by the teacher one of which is the VIIG class. The questionnaire distributed to VIIG class students consisted of statements and questions related to behavioral disorders, resistance, smoking, bullying, anxiety, and depression. Questionnaires related to behavioral disorders and resistance refer to the symptoms found in the DSM IV-TR criteria. Problems of anxiety and depression refer to the PPDGI-III criteria and smoking behavior refers to the DSM V criteria.

The results of the screening with a questionnaire consisting of several problems obtained the results that the majority of VIIG class students experience anxiety by meeting several criteria/symptoms of anxiety and the majority experienced by students with the male sex. Nine students experienced anxiety symptoms and continued with group interviews. Based on the results of group interviews with focus group discussions, it was found that the problems experienced by all students were feeling worried about the overlapping school assignments, feeling anxious when having to deal with certain subject teachers because they were worried about being scolded if they answered the question wrong, feeling anxious about things matters relating to school rules. There was also a

sense of concern for the four participants when they were in the family environment, which was fear of being scolded by parents for doing something and fear of being blamed. Two participants experienced anxiety in establishing interactions with their social environment. Some of the problems experienced by the participants can be concluded that the nine students experienced anxiety in dealing with school assignments. Based on this anxiety measurement using the BAI scale (Beck Anxiety Inventory). BAI (Beck Anxiety Inventory) is a scale that can measure a person's anxiety level. The higher individual score, the higher his anxiety. Conversely, a low score indicates low individual anxiety. Research by Steer, Kumar & Ranieri (1995) [28] explains that BAI (Beck Anxiety Inventory) can be used to measure the anxiety of adolescents aged 13-17 years. The scale is given to all nine students. When distributing the BAI sheets, participants were initially given instructions that filling in the sheets was adjusted to their situation when facing school assignments. Kaplan and Sadock explain that the factors that influence anxiety include age, self-concept, and self-efficacy, physical condition, level of education, access to information, and adaptation processes [18].

Based on the results of the measurement of anxiety levels of nine students using the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) showed that the majority of students experienced anxiety in the moderate category, while there was one participant who experienced anxiety in the heavy category and three other participants experienced anxiety in the normal category. Anxiety is a subjective emotional experience that is not pleasant because a psychological state that threatens the existence of individuals and sources that threaten are unclear so that individuals feel unaware, confused, and afraid to face the future [22]. According to Halgin & Whitbourne anxiety is a concern that focuses on future orientation, feeling restless, and tense that a bad possibility will occur [12]. There are several aspects of anxiety, namely 1) Mood: The mood in individuals who experience anxiety is a condition that shows psychological discomfort, such as irritability, feeling very tense. The mood can also change suddenly when an individual is faced with conditions that give rise to such anxiety; 2) Mind: Anxious individuals have negative thoughts about their abilities. These thoughts such as worry, difficulty concentrating, empty thoughts, exaggerate threats, view themselves helpless or sensitive; 3) Motivation: individuals who experience anxiety tend not to have high motivation so that they will avoid the situation, high dependency and want to escape from reality; 4) Behavior: individuals who experience anxiety can be seen from things that have been displayed in uncontrolled behavior such as anxiety, nervousness, excessive vigilance. This behavior occurs because individuals feel there is a danger, threats, feel disturbed, and feel uncomfortable; 5) Biological reactions: biological reactions that occur in individuals experiencing anxiety include increased automatic movements, sweating, trembling, dizziness, palpitations, nausea, dry mouth [7]. Symptoms of anxiety facing homework experienced by students are physiological and psychological responses such as difficulty concentrating, fast palpitations, trembling hands, headaches, difficulty breathing, feeling restless, and cannot be relaxed.

Various interventions can be used to reduce anxiety, such as art therapy [1], mindfulness-based therapy [14], cognitive-behavioral therapy [9, 16], group behavioral approach counseling with relaxation techniques or progressive relaxation therapy [4, 17, 23]. Group counseling with a behavioral approach using relaxation techniques is one of the appropriate efforts to use when a person experiences anxiety because it can provide the opposite response from feeling anxious so that the muscles that were initially tense will relax after relaxation [29]. Based on this, in this study using group-based interventions with behavioral approaches in reducing anxiety Junior High School students. Group counseling is a form of counseling by utilizing groups to help, provide feedback and learning experiences. Group counseling uses the principle of group dynamics. Group counseling clients use group interaction to increase understanding and acceptance of certain values and goals, to learn or eliminate certain attitudes and behaviors [21]. Meanwhile, the behavioristic approach has a focus on behavior change occurring through stimuli that give rise to a reactive behavioral relationship (response). Corey explained that the behavioral approach aims to obtain new behavior, eliminate maladaptive behavior, and strengthen and maintain desirable behavior [10].

The behavior technique used is relaxation. Relaxation techniques are included in the behavioral approach with techniques developed that focus on repetitive components, for example, words, sounds, prayer phrases, body sensation, or muscle activity [19]. Relaxation is a technique that aims to release tension and restore the balance of mind and body and can cause comfort to the individual. This technique is based on the belief that the body responds to anxiety that is stimulated by the mind or other conditions of pain and illness. Relaxation techniques are useful for regulating the emotional and physical individual from anxiety, tension, stress, and others [19]. This technique is also combined with psychoeducation to increasing students' knowledge and understanding of anxiety experienced. The purpose of providing this intervention is to reduce the level of student anxiety about school assignments and be able to understand the problems about anxiety experienced. Also, participants can practice the techniques learned in the group intervention process as a strategy to reduce anxiety in facing school assignments and the burden of everyday life in the future.

## 1. Methodology

This study uses an experimental research design with a one-group pretest-posttest design model, which measures the dependent variable on one experimental group using a pretest, then is given treatment, and the dependent variable is re-measured through the posttest without a comparison group [26]. The intervention was conducted in four sessions, namely, the first session was an explanation of conclusions the results of focus group discussions, and the implementation of group counseling, the second session was anxiety psychoeducation, the third session was relaxation training, and the fourth session was evaluation. Participants in this study were students of class VII in Yogyakarta X Junior High School. Taking participants using purposive sampling techniques by considering the characteristics of the natural sample. Of the 30 students, nine people were found to experience anxiety symptoms based on questionnaire data. Next, six participants experienced anxiety related to dealing with school assignments in the moderate to a severe category so that they would be followed up for treatment. The data collection instruments used interview, observation, focus group discussion, and Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) scale. Analysis of pre-test, post-test data was carried out by quantitative methods. Analysis of the results of observations and interviews will be used as additional data to clarify quantitative results. The method used in quantitative analysis is nonparametric statistics using the Wilcoxon Matched Pairs Test because the number of research subjects is small (less than 30) so the distribution of data is considered abnormal. Data analysis used the Wilcoxon test to find differences in the mean pre-test and post-test. This analysis is used to determine the effectiveness of group counseling with relaxation techniques to reduce the anxiety of VII graders of Junior High School. Wilcoxon test analysis was carried out through the 21.00 SPSS (Statistical Product or Service Solution) computer program.

## 2. Result

The first session in this study was an explanation of the conclusions of focus group discussions and continued with group counseling. In this session, participants were initially asked to sit together in a circle. Participants were reminded of group norms that had been agreed at the first meeting. Then, participants were explained of the problems faced by having concerns about school assignments, although some participants also experienced other anxiety such as anxiety about family and friendship. Participants were given an explanation that from the problems experienced there will be given several activities to overcome the anxiety experienced. Participants seemed enthusiastic to take part in the intervention activities that would be carried out, namely, there were participants A and L who commented: "yes... fun activities". There were also R and N participants who commented "*I want to follow the activities because I am often worried*". Participants were asked to share stories about anxiety experienced in facing school assignments and efforts that have been made in overcoming it. In the beginning, some participants were still dependent and were not sure of themselves so that in expressing their opinions they tended to look at the facilitator or see the opinions expressed by other participants. It was done by participants A, N, H, and I who then expressed their opinions after hearing the opinions of the participant L and R. Furthermore, after the discussion process had begun, several conflicts arose between the participants in which all participants wanted to express their opinions because they wanted to show themselves and interrupt the words of others. There are three active participants, but there are also three passive participants who need encouragement.

When the group counseling process takes place, participants can able to realize the anxiety problems they are experiencing. Participants were able to express their opinions on several of things that gave rise to anxieties and worries that disrupted their daily conditions, namely all participants were concerned about school assignments that were piled up starting with subject L who actively expressed his opinion first. Then, participant A said that "*the school schedule is very busy from morning to evening so the task is not finished*". Some participants have to take part in activities outside the school class schedule such as attending extracurricular activities, namely on participants I, A, and H so they are afraid of the task is unable to be completed properly. The transition of participants when entering junior high school from elementary school makes all participants have to adjust themselves to the tasks given because when they were still in elementary school the school assignments were felt not as much as when junior high school. Participants' fear of certain subject teachers makes them even more scared when faced with assignments related to these subjects. All participants felt afraid if they were not able to complete the task following with the wishes of the teacher, worried if they did not get the maximum value, and worried about being scolded by the teacher if they could not complete the task on time. Some of the problems experienced by the participants triggered other participants, especially subject R, who initially feared expressing their opinions were able to express it because they felt they had similar problems with other members. Participants also provide mutual support when other participants are still silent and afraid to express their opinions.

When the group counseling process takes place, participants can express their efforts in overcoming the problems experienced, namely subjects H, L, and R by sleeping, subjects A and I by playing ball, and subject N

by playing mobile. It's just that the loss of anxiety does not last long because after that anxiety will reappear. Two participants stated that in reducing their worries about tasks that had not been done by cheating on other friends' tasks, namely on subjects A and N, but both participants were afraid of their friend whose task was seen felt displeased and was afraid of being known by the teacher, so they overcome their anxiety by raising new anxiety again. In the group counseling process, the participants, especially L, N, A, and H feel that they don't know the right effort in overcoming anxiety in facing effective school assignments.

The second session in this study continued with the provision of anxiety psychoeducation for participants. Participants were initially asked to fill out an anxiety pretest sheet. Participants looked enthusiastic when asked to fill in the psychoeducation pretest sheet in the form of essay questions, but when participants read the questions on the pretest sheet, three participants commented: "Hmm ... I don't know what I want to fill, I don't know yet". However, when the participants were given encouragement and motivation to write things they knew only, participants immediately wrote down the answers on the pretest sheet. Participants asked to sit in a line facing the front because they will be given psychoeducation related to anxiety. Some participants were enthusiastic about paying attention to the material described and occasionally nodded their heads in listening to the information conveyed, but there were also participants who looked down and had blank views. Then, when one participant is appointed to come to the front of the class as testimony because he will be given an assignment, namely on subject R, he seems unwilling to advance and needs to be encouraged. Visible body gestures from subject R are not relaxed by moving the body, hands are trembling, and often look around when they come to the front of the class. However, when subject R was asked to complete the paper folding task, he appeared to smile slightly. When participant R was asked about the feelings and thoughts experienced when asked to come to the front of the class to complete a task, he answered: "my heart feels excited, afraid and embarrassed if I can't do the job".

When participants are given psychoeducation about anxiety is to think about something excessively about things that will happen in the future where the incident has not yet occurred, some participants commented "oh yaa yaa...so when we think too much like that, even though it hasn't happened yet". Some participants hold the chest when they get an explanation of the symptoms/characteristics of anxiety experienced. After completing the presentation on anxiety psychoeducation, participants were asked to fill out a posttest sheet. Participants initially complained about filling out because they had previously filled out the pretest sheet. However, when participants were explained to write their understanding of the information that had been conveyed, they immediately wrote it down.

When participants are invited to discuss psychoeducation that has been given, initially tend to be passive and silent. However, when they were encouraged, then there was one participant who actively commented on participant L who said that "yes sis, now I know why I worry if there is an assignments, because I think that is excessive when it is not certain it will happen, then I also feel like my heartbeats, not concentrating dan trembling". That triggers other participants to think about the same thing, although there are still other participants who are passive to express their opinions. The results of pretest and posttest psychoeducation anxiety in participants can be seen in table 1.

**Table 1:** Pretest and Posttest Results of Anxiety Psychoeducation

No.	Name	Psychoeducation Pretest Results	Psychoeducation Posttest Results
1.	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anxiety is something that makes you unable to think, anxiety starts from the problem.</li> <li>Symptoms of anxiety that is not concentrated, the face becomes pale.</li> <li>How to deal effectively with anxiety by praying to God and seek forgiveness.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anxiety can make the body tremble because of thinking something bad will happen.</li> <li>Symptoms of anxiety: Body trembling, difficult to think.</li> <li>Effective ways to deal with anxiety: Seek forgiveness, pray, relax with breathing, and muscle relaxation.</li> </ul>
2.	N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anxiety is when faced with problems.</li> <li>Symptoms anxiety: Heart palpitations, sweaty hands, trembling.</li> <li>Effective ways to deal with anxiety: be patient</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anxiety is when faced with a problem, thinking something bad will happen.</li> <li>Symptoms of anxiety: body trembling, body sweating, palpitations.</li> <li>Effective ways to deal with</li> </ul>

			anxiety: patient and relax your body with relaxation.
3.	I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anxiety is a matter that blocks the heart.</li> <li>Symptoms of anxiety: palpitations, cold sweat, sweaty face, trembling.</li> <li>How to deal effectively with anxiety: Prayers, share with others.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anxiety can make the body tremble, think of something excessive that has not yet happened.</li> <li>Symptoms of anxiety: Body trembling, unable to concentrate.</li> <li>Effective ways to deal with anxiety: practice relaxation</li> </ul>
4.	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anxiety is when called by a counseling teacher and worried when facing a lot of assignments.</li> <li>Symptoms of anxiety: Heart palpitations, trembling hands, sweating.</li> <li>How to deal effectively with anxiety: Perform 5 daily prayers and pray to be given a good solution.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anxiety is when making mistakes and worrying about something that hasn't happened.</li> <li>Symptoms of anxiety: Tense, sweating, difficulty thinking.</li> <li>How to deal effectively with anxiety: perform 5 daily prayers, pray, relax your breath and muscles.</li> </ul>
5.	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anxiety is an unpleasant feeling in the heart when doing activities.</li> <li>Symptoms of anxiety: Sweating, irritation, palpitations.</li> <li>Effective ways to deal with anxiety: Take a break.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anxiety is a condition that is experienced that has not yet happened, thinking of something excessive.</li> <li>Symptoms of anxiety: Sweating, palpitations.</li> <li>Effective ways to deal with anxiety: Take a break and relax.</li> </ul>
6.	R	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anxiety is an uncomfortable feeling in yourself when doing activities.</li> <li>Symptoms of anxiety: Trembling hands and feet, feeling restless.</li> <li>Effective ways to deal with anxiety: Take a short break.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anxiety is an uncomfortable feeling in the heart of something that hasn't happened, over-thinking.</li> <li>Symptoms of anxiety: Trembling hands and feet.</li> <li>Effective ways to deal with anxiety: Relax with relaxation.</li> </ul>

The next session is relaxation practice. In this session, participants were initially given an understanding that the anxiety experienced when facing school assignments can cause physical tension. Furthermore, participants are invited to recognize the physical reactions experienced when experiencing anxiety. Through the identification of physical reactions, participants are given an understanding of the function of relaxation that can help them deal with anxiety and body responses so that tense muscles can be comfortable and relaxed. Then the participants were introduced to breathing relaxation and muscle relaxation.

When breathing relaxation will be carried out, participants are asked to pay attention to the therapist to relax breathing by breathing in the breath from the nose and exhaling slowly from the mouth periodically. After the participants understood the procedure in carrying out a series of relaxation, the participants were invited to apply together with melodious music, arrange a comfortable position while closing their eyes until the relaxation process was complete. Based on the explanation given, it appears that the participants understood enough, so they immediately took a comfortable sitting position in preparing themselves for the relaxation process. Based on observations, the participants were able to follow the instructions given without experiencing obstacles, even though at the beginning of the implementation there were participants who did not focus by laughing and seeing other participants, but when the participants were given direction and encouragement to follow the process well, participants were able to follow it

After the process of breathing relaxation is complete, participants are invited to reflect on the relaxation of breathing that has been done. Initially, when asked to reflect, all participants immediately gave their opinions simultaneously so that they needed direction to convey them one by one. The participants' answers were as

follows: (A) "becoming calmer and the heart feels freer" (N) "more comfortable and somewhat sleepy" (L) "becoming calmer and the heart feels comfortable". (I) "the heart feels relieved and calm", (H) "becomes calmer and relaxed", (R) "more relieved, the heart feels freer and comfortable".

Relaxation resumed by doing muscle relaxation exercises. Participants were initially given an explanation in advance about the movements to be carried out starting from the face, shoulders, hands, and feet. Through the results of observation, participants can practice correctly without experiencing difficulties even though when going to start there are participants who do not want to follow instructions by just closing their eyes, namely participants I and N, thus requiring encouragement to follow well. After the muscle relaxation process is complete, participants are invited to reflect on the muscle relaxation that has been done. The participant answers as follows: (A) "the body becomes lighter, the head feels light, happy to follow it". (N) "the body is lighter and relaxed, rather sleepy" (L) "The body becomes lighter and the heart feels calmer". (I) "the body becomes lighter", (R) "the body feels lighter and more relieved".

Participants are then explained that relaxation that has been practiced can be done daily at home or school if you experience anxiety or uncomfortable physical reactions. Therefore, participants are expected to be able to practice breathing and muscle relaxation independently at home or school by examining the condition of the body before and after relaxation. All participants can respond well so that each participant is given a sheet of monitoring paper to monitor the results of the relaxation that has been done.

The next session is evaluation. Evaluation is done after three days from the previous session. The participants were initially invited to discuss the results of independent relaxation. All participants relax independently. From the majority of participants, the majority did relaxation three times a day and two participants relaxed twice a day. However, all participants can perform relaxation independently without obstacles and assume that independent relaxation that is done routinely can provide a comfortable and relaxed body response even when going to face many school assignments. Participants are also invited to discuss the results of group counseling with relaxation techniques that have been given as well as psycho education and discussions that have been submitted. Overall the intervention process can increase participants' understanding of anxiety about school assignments and efforts to reduce it. Participants said that they became more calm and optimistic when they had to face many school assignments and did not want to think too much about school assignments. Overall, the screening process makes it easy to form groups of participants who experience anxiety facing school assignments.

The willingness of participants to be involved in group interventions becomes a supporting factor so that the group intervention process can be carried quite well. During the implementation, there were enthusiastic attitudes from the participants especially L, R, H, and N to be involved in a series of group intervention processes. All participants are always present in every session until the evaluation process. This makes the process of group intervention run smoothly. The involvement of the school, namely the Guidance Counseling teacher and subject teacher also supports maximizing the process of providing interventions to students who experience anxiety in facing school assignments.

The relationship of social interaction that is well established between participants makes participants get comfort so that at each session the participants can actively express their opinions. Problems experienced by participants make participants not feel alone because of the concerns experienced with various school assignments. Although there are attitudes of some participants, namely Q, A, N, H, and I. who violate group norms by interrupting the opinions of other participants who are talking and laughing and there are passive participants namely I so that they need encouragement. The submission of instructions given makes it easy for participants to follow the intervention process. The results obtained from the implementation of relaxation can make participants get a comfortable and optimistic body in dealing with school assignments. The submission of material given during psycho education was also considered good by the participants so that they were easy to understand. Positive responses from participants allowed them to provide input so that the implementation of group interventions would be carried out later on with different problems. Given group interventions can reduce participants' anxiety levels as indicated by a decreased posttest scale score, For more details can be seen in table 2.

**Table 2.** Participant Pretest and Posttest Results with BAI Scale

Name	Pretest Score	Category	Posttest Score	Category
A	17	Mild-moderate anxiety	15	Mild-moderate anxiety
N	21	Moderate-severe	6	Normal anxiety

		<i>anxiety</i>		
I	17	<i>Mild-moderate anxiety</i>	5	Normal anxiety
H	11	<i>Mild-moderate anxiety</i>	6	Normal anxiety
L	10	<i>Mild-moderate anxiety</i>	1	Normal anxiety
R	18	<i>Mild-moderate anxiety</i>	1	Normal anxiety

Data analysis was also carried out with the SPSS version 21 program. The data analysis method used to see the difference in pretest-posttest in determining the outcome of an intervention is the nonparametric test using the Wilcoxon test. The analysis showed that the value of  $Z = -2.201$  with a significance of  $p = 0.028$  ( $p < 0.05$ ). This shows a significant difference between anxiety experienced by participants before and after following the group intervention process that can be seen in table 3.

**Tabel 3.** Wilcoxon Analysis Test Results  
**Test Statistics<sup>a</sup>**

	POSTTEST – PRETEST
Z	-2,201 <sup>b</sup>
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,028

- a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test
- b. Based on positive ranks.

The decrease in anxiety facing school assignments experienced by participants, especially the subjects L and R was caused by the high enthusiasm of the two participants in following the intervention process from the beginning of the FGD (Focus Group Discussion) process until the end of the evaluation. Both participants were quite cooperative and active in the discussion process and followed the instructions given during the relaxation process. This was also followed by participants N, I, and H who also experienced a decrease in anxiety facing school assignments after being given group intervention. However, there was participant A who experienced an insignificant decrease in the posttest score, was reduced by 2 scores and was included in the same category as the results of the pretest namely mild-moderate anxiety. This could be because, since the beginning of the FGD process, participant A was less cooperative in following the group discussion process and tended to follow the opinions of other participants. Participant A also needs encouragement in expressing opinions and the focus is easily distracted when the group intervention process takes place.

### 3. Discussion

The results showed that there were significant changes in anxiety experienced by participants from before and after following the group intervention process with a significance value of  $p = 0.028$  ( $p < 0.05$ ). The results of group interventions that show reduced anxiety in students after being given relaxation exercises by the explanation in the basic hypnosis and hypnobirthing training workbooks [20] a series of relaxation techniques ranging from muscle relaxation, breathing relaxation, visual relaxation that is done regularly and concentration will make the body responds to release endorphins so that the individual relaxes and there is a decrease in pain especially when the brain reaches alpha waves or at rest. In the condition of the body secrete the hormones serotonin and endorphins, then humans will be in a more relaxed condition without tension and anxiety.

Anxiety can cause uncomfortable cognitive, psychomotor, and physiological responses. Anxiety is a subjective emotional experience that is not pleasant because a psychological state that threatens the existence of individuals and the source of the threat is not clear so that individuals feel ignorant, confused, and afraid to face the future [22]. Based on the results of group interventions, the anxiety experienced by participants is because what is considered threatening is the amount of school workload that must be completed by the allotted time, fear of not being able to complete the task properly and optimally, participants also feel afraid when unable to complete school assignments according to teacher expectations and get a penalty, worry if there get a score that is not optimal. It is also by what was explained by Aminullah that the factors that cause adolescent junior high

school students to experience anxiety are when entering a new school, the burden of school assignments, and the learning process given at school [3].

The majority of participants experienced anxiety in facing school assignments in the medium category so that it made them disrupted in their daily activities especially when having to deal with school assignments. According to Astuti & Resminingsih, the level of anxiety in the medium category allows one to focus on important issues and put aside other things so that it raises selective attention but can do something directed [5]. Manifestations that occur at this level are increased fatigue, heart rate, increased breathing, increased muscle tension, fast talk with high volume, narrowed perception, able to learn but not optimal, decreased concentration ability, and irritability. The symptoms of anxiety are divided into: 1) Physiological symptoms consisting of anxiety, hands or limbs trembling, sweating a lot, difficulty speaking or trembling voice, palpitations, headaches, shortness of breath; 2) Cognitive symptoms that consist of worrying about something, beliefs that something terrible will happen without a clear reason, feeling threatened, fear of being unable to deal with problems, difficulty concentrating, feeling confused; 3) Emotional symptoms consisting of lack of self-confidence, excessive anger, crying and self-deprecating [8]. This is following the responses experienced by the participants, namely experiencing physiological and psychological responses such as difficulty concentrating, heart palpitations, trembling hands, head dizzy, difficulty breathing, feeling restless, and unable to relax when dealing with school assignments that are considered threatening.

The behavioristic approach focuses on behavioral changes occurring through stimuli that give rise to reactive behavioral relationships (responses). The process of behavior change with learning is a result of the interaction between stimulus and response (27). According to the theory in learning the most important is input in the form of stimulus and output in the form of response. The behavioral approach aims to obtain new behavior, eliminate maladaptive behavior, and strengthen and maintain desirable behavior [10]. Based on the description the main goal in the behavioristic approach is to change the behavior of individuals to match the expected behavior such as when individuals are experiencing anxiety dealing with school assignments. Anxiety can affect student behavior when going to face a school assignment so it needs to be overcome with a behavioristic approach through relaxation training techniques as well. Relaxation training is a skill that must be learned, namely learning to relax. Therefore, practice in a disciplined and orderly manner is important [6]. In group intervention meetings, participants were given relaxation exercises consisting of breathing and muscle relaxation. Before the relaxation exercises begin, participants are taught how to relax and use them in everyday life. Participants were also asked to practice relaxation outside of group meetings for two days so participants could learn to relax quickly.

Relaxation techniques are useful for regulating the emotional and physical individual from anxiety, tension, stress, and others [19]. Physiologically relaxation training can provide a reflex response, which can be identified by decreasing blood pressure, heart rate, and increasing skin resistance [13]. The first technique that is trained is breathing relaxation. This breathing relaxation has a function to relax the body by regulating breathing regularly, slowly, and deeply, because when the condition we feel stressed or anxious, the body will be tense and breathing becomes short [11]. The second technique that is trained is muscle relaxation. Muscle relaxation is the relaxation that starts from the relaxation of the movement of one muscle to another muscle when one muscle has relaxed switch to another muscle until the whole body can relax. Relaxation is an appropriate response to use when a person experiences anxiety because it can provide an opposite response to that feeling of anxiety so that the muscles that were originally tense will relax [29]. This is consistent with the results of the evaluation of group participants after being given relaxation, which can reduce the level of anxiety indicated by the BAI posttest scale score which decreases. Participants stated that they felt less worried about the number of school assignments, became more comfortable, calmer, and more optimistic in dealing with school assignments. Muscle and breathing relaxation also become one of the strategies that support participants to deal with physical reactions that occur when experiencing anxiety. The comfort that is gained when breathing and muscle relaxation is considered to be the daily needs of participants if the body feels restless and tense.

The conclusion of this study is group counseling with relaxation techniques can reduce student anxiety when facing school assignments. Nevertheless, the process that was passed in this group intervention also had obstacles, especially in terms of space and time facilities. In school, there are a Hall and Prayer room which is used as a facility for group intervention. However, the discussion process was less conducive when held in the prayer room because participants were easily distracted by stimulation from outside the room which was quite open. There are also shortcomings in terms of time because they have to adjust to the short school time, so there are certain restrictions. During the implementation process, some obstacles occurred when wanting to evaluate of the independent relaxation task which was originally instructed to be carried out in succession for three days but the participants only did one day.

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