

Research Article

**Existential Approach Counseling in Dealing with
Adolescent Identity Crisis: A Literature Review****Sasrianis**

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Abstract

Identity crisis is a common problem experienced by teenagers, where they often experience confusion regarding self-meaning and life goals. This phenomenon can cause significant emotional and social distress. This research aims to review the effectiveness of counseling with an existential approach in helping teenagers face identity crises. Through a systematic literature review method, this research analyzes various studies that explore the role of existential counseling in supporting adolescent identity development. The research results show that the existential approach is effective in helping teenagers find the meaning of life, increase self-acceptance, and reduce existential anxiety. Additionally, this counseling encourages independence and personal responsibility, which are important in building a strong and healthy identity. The implications of this research indicate that an existential approach can be a useful strategy for counseling practitioners in supporting adolescents to overcome identity crises and improve their psychological well-being.

Keywords: Counseling, Identity Crisis, Teenagers.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a phase of life known for very significant changes, both physically, emotionally and socially (Suryana et al., 2022). According to Erikson, (1968), teenagers are in the identity search stage, where they begin to form a unique and independent identity (Nurhayati, 2016). This stage can be said to be the identity crisis period of adolescence, which is an important period in an individual's psychosocial development (Netrawati, Khairani, et al., 2018). In this process, teenagers often face various challenges that can affect their mental well-being (Amalia et al., 2023; Lubis & Mahendika, 2023; Netrawati, Karneli, et al., 2018; Rahma & Cahyani, 2023). Based on data from the Ministry of Health, the prevalence of mental health problems in adolescents shows an increase, with around 15-20% of adolescents experiencing mental disorders, including depression and anxiety (Health, 2022). These conditions illustrate the importance of the right support to help them get through this critical phase.

Identity crises in adolescents are often characterized by role confusion, where they try to discover who they really are in a broader social context (Awang et al., 2021). Adolescents in this stage begin to question their values, life goals and social roles (Syifa'ussurur et al., 2021). (Santrock, 2019) explains that failure to resolve this identity crisis can result in various psychological problems in the future, including anxiety disorders, depression, and decreased self-esteem. Therefore, appropriate interventions are needed to support adolescents in facing these challenges and help them build a strong and positive identity.

The existential approach in counseling offers a unique and effective method in helping individuals face identity crises, including adolescents (Engel et al., 2017; Suranata et al., 2022). (Yalom, 2020) explains that this approach emphasizes understanding individual existence, searching for the meaning of life, and accepting personal responsibility. With a focus on subjective experience, this approach provides space for teens to explore fundamental questions about themselves and the world around them. (Rollo May & Ellenberger, 1958) added that this approach helps individuals to understand their existence more deeply, as well as identify the values and life goals that are important to them.

Furthermore, in the context of a teenager's identity crisis, existential counseling can function as a means to help them overcome role confusion and build a more authentic identity (Rahayu, 2022). (Van Deurzen, 2012) explains that teenagers feel more comfortable and encouraged to open up when the approach used is supportive and not rigid. Existential counseling provides the flexibility necessary to adapt to each individual's unique needs, thereby having a significant positive impact on their development.

The urgency of this research lies in the increasing need for effective interventions in dealing with identity crises in adolescents. As a group vulnerable to a variety of social and emotional stresses, adolescents need appropriate support to help them navigate this transition. Studies conducted by (Frankl, 2006) show that through exploring the meaning of life, individuals can find hope and goals that can help them face various existing challenges. In this context, existential counseling

plays an important role in helping teenagers find meaning in their life experiences and build a strong foundation for their future.

The existential approach in counseling also allows teenagers to interpret identity crises as part of the maturation process, not as something that must be avoided (Lesmana, 2021). This crisis is seen as an opportunity for personal growth, where individuals can explore various aspects of themselves and re-evaluate their values. Through this process, teenagers can build a stronger and more authentic identity, which in turn will help them better face life's challenges in the future.

This research aims to review existing literature regarding the effectiveness of existential approach counseling in helping teenagers face identity crises. By reviewing various previous studies and findings, it is hoped that a deeper understanding of the benefits and challenges of this approach can be gained. Thus, this research can contribute to mental health practitioners in designing appropriate interventions for adolescents experiencing identity crises, as well as providing new insights in the development of counseling theory and practice. By understanding the right approach, practitioners are expected to be able to provide more optimal support for teenagers facing an identity crisis. This study will also explore the challenges that may be faced during the counseling process, so that it can provide practical guidance for counselors in overcoming obstacles that arise.

Through this study, it is hoped that new insights can be found regarding the existential approach in adolescent counseling, as well as its contribution in helping individuals overcome identity crises. This research is not only useful for academics, but also practitioners directly involved in adolescent counseling, so that it can improve the quality of services provided and help adolescents reach their full potential.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a systematic literature review method to analyze and synthesize various studies that have been conducted regarding the effectiveness of existential approach counseling in dealing with adolescent identity crises. This review aims to identify key themes, empirical findings, and gaps in the existing literature. Data sources used in this research include scientific journals, books and articles relevant to the topic. A literature search was conducted through online databases such as Google Scholar, PubMed, and JSTOR, using keywords such as "existential counseling", "adolescent identity crisis", and "existential approach".

The data collection process is carried out in several stages, collecting relevant articles and studies through database searches, selecting articles based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria, abstracting important information from each study, including methods, findings and conclusions, Analyzing and synthesizing information from studies to identify key themes and research gaps. The collected data will be analyzed qualitatively. The analysis process involved grouping findings based on emerging themes and comparing results across studies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

From the literature review carried out, it was found that counseling with an

existential approach had a positive impact in helping teenagers face identity crises (Effendi, 1999; Nugraha, 2020; Pranajaya et al., 2020). A study by Van Deurzen (2012) shows that this approach is effective in helping teenagers understand the meaning of life and develop strong personal values. Existential counseling allows teens to articulate deep questions such as “Who am I?” and “What is my life purpose?” —a particularly relevant question in the context of an identity crisis (Akbari et al., 2022; Holliday et al., 2022).

Research by Pyszczynski et al., (2004) and Yalom (2020) also confirms that an existential approach can help teenagers overcome existential anxiety. By facing and reflecting on life's limitations, teenagers can build stronger psychological resilience. This is supported by (Rollo May & Ellenberger, 1958), who noted that existential counseling provides an opportunity for adolescents to discover autonomy and personal responsibility, important elements in healthy identity development.

Furthermore, a study by Cooper (2016) shows that existential counseling can increase teenagers' self-confidence in facing life's challenges. Through exploring meaning and purpose, adolescents become better prepared to face the complexities of their future. Cooper highlights that this process not only increases self-esteem but also builds a stronger sense of independence. From the literature reviewed, some of the main themes that emerged include:

Search for Meaning and Purpose in Life: Teenagers who engage in existential counseling often find meaning in their life experiences. Frankl (2006) suggests that finding meaning is an important aspect in overcoming an identity crisis. Teenagers who can understand their life purpose tend to have a more stable and confident identity. (Wong & Yu, 2021) added that the meaning of life found through existential counseling can provide strong intrinsic motivation for teenagers to achieve their goals.

Self-Acceptance and Authenticity : Existential counseling encourages adolescents to accept themselves as they are (Perls, 1973; Rey, 2018). Van Deurzen (2012) explains that this process is important in helping teenagers feel comfortable with their true identity. This self-acceptance allows them to build healthier relationships with others and reduces the pressure to conform to social expectations.

Increased Independence and Responsibility: One of the main goals of the existential approach is to help individuals develop independence and responsibility. May (1958) emphasized the importance of facing the consequences of personal choices as an important step in identity development. Teenagers who learn to be responsible for their decisions tend to have a more solid identity. Research by (Hutchison & Chávez, 2018) shows that adolescents who engage in this process show improvements in decision-making abilities and decreases in impulsive behavior.

Reduction of Existential Anxiety: facing and accepting life's limitations can help reduce the existential anxiety often experienced by teenagers. By understanding and accepting that uncertainty is a part of life, teens can develop greater resilience. Research by (Wong & Yu, 2021) found that existential counseling helps teenagers overcome fears of failure and death, which are often part of an identity crisis.

Discussion

The existential approach in counseling has several advantages that make it

effective in dealing with identity crises in adolescents (Fitzgerald, 2005). First, the focus on subjective experience and the search for meaning allows adolescents to explore fundamental questions about themselves. This is in line with the views of Frankl (1986) who emphasizes the importance of finding meaning as a way to overcome life's difficulties (Utomo & Meiyuntari, 2015). By understanding the meaning of their experiences, teenagers can find intrinsic motivation to face life's challenges.

Second, this approach encourages self-acceptance and authenticity, which are important in adolescent identity development (Pitaloka, 2020). Adolescents who feel supported to be themselves tend to have higher self-esteem and experience less social pressure (Anindyajati & Karima, 2004). By building an authentic identity, teens can form healthier relationships with others and have a more positive outlook on life.

In addition, existential counseling helps increase adolescent independence and responsibility (Singaraja et al., 2013). Teenagers who are taught to face the consequences of their choices will be better prepared to face life's challenges and have higher self-confidence (Fatoni & Nur Taufiq, 2023). However, there are several challenges in implementing this approach. One of them is the difficulty in helping teenagers who experience resistance to self-reflection (Hartman, D., & Zimberoff, 2004). Some teens may feel uncomfortable or reluctant to engage in deep exploration of themselves. To overcome these barriers, counselors need to create a safe and supportive environment, and use techniques tailored to individual needs. Cooper (2015) emphasized the importance of building a strong therapeutic relationship to overcome this resistance.

Additionally, variations in adolescents' cultural and social backgrounds may influence the effectiveness of existential approaches. Counselors need to pay attention to the cultural context and individual values when implementing these strategies, to make interventions more relevant and effective. Wong (2021) suggests that this approach should be adapted contextually in order to achieve optimal results in various cultural backgrounds.

Overall, this research explains that existential approach counseling can be an effective tool in helping teenagers face identity crises. By focusing on meaning, self-acceptance, independence, and responsibility, teens can develop a strong and healthy identity. This research provides an important contribution to counseling and mental health practitioners in designing appropriate interventions for adolescents experiencing identity crises, as well as providing new insights in the development of counseling theory and practice.

CONCLUSION

Based on literature research that has been carried out, counseling with an existential approach has proven to be effective in helping teenagers face identity crises. This approach allows adolescents to explore the meaning and purpose of life, which is important for stable and healthy identity development. Through this process, teens learn to accept themselves authentically, increase independence, and take responsibility for their choices. By understanding life's limitations, teenagers

can develop psychological resilience and become better prepared to face future challenges. Self-acceptance and the search for meaning are key factors in improving the emotional and social well-being of adolescents.

However, there are challenges in implementing this approach, such as resistance to self-reflection and differences in cultural background. Counselors need to create a supportive environment and consider the youth's cultural context to achieve optimal outcomes. Overall, the existential approach makes important contributions to the field of counseling and mental health, especially in helping adolescents overcome identity crises. This approach not only helps teens understand themselves better, but also equips them with the skills and perspective necessary to face life with confidence and deeper meaning.

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