




The Alignment of Solution-Focused Brief Counseling in Helping to Achieve Resilience: A Comparative Analysis

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Abstract

This review of the literature aims to explain why Solution-Focused Brief Counseling (SFBC) is appropriate as an approach in helping individuals achieve resilience, after experiencing certain traumatic events. This study was motivated by the need for a conceptual explanation of what approaches can be recommended so that recovery of post-traumatic psychological conditions and the achievement of resilience can be carried out with more efficient and effective processes. The method used in this study was comparative analysis, involving a variety of relevant literature to identify alignment concepts between SFBC and resilience. The intended literature includes reference books, reputable scientific journal articles, and various information from credible sources. The results of the study show that there are points of similarity in the two theories, both in terms of basic assumptions and concepts related to the intervention process which confirms the relevance and accuracy of the use of SFBC in helping individuals achieve post-traumatic resilience. This study can then be used as a scientific foothold for the application of SFBC in an effort to increase individual resilience in various contexts.

INTRODUCTION

Constant changing of life in the society brings its own positive and negative consequent. The more sophisticated way of life as a result of the more advanced technology has made life easier for human. However, on the other side, this condition has also led to various potential problems for anyone that may occur at any time. The risks may come from anywhere, not only from physical environment and from real social interaction, but also from cyber space.

The number of traumatic events has increased all over the world as a result of the increasing number of violence cases, terrorist attacks, and news reports that threaten mental health. Nowadays, violence or news about violence can be easily accessed through printed or online media in addition, for the last ten years, natural disaster has also contributed to such news. Human themselves is partly to blame for the occurrence of natural disaster because of their way of life which is harmful for the environment.

In such situation where society lives in amid the news about violence and disaster, resilience has become an important psychological skill for an individual at any range of ages. Even experts said that resilience is one of basic competences in the 21th century (Hendriani, 2018). Resilience which covers the ability to cope with adversity, perseverance in getting through stressful episode, and triumph over trauma (VanBreda, 2001; Kalil, 2003) is the key role to achieve human development which is mentally healthy (Reivich & Shatte, 2002;

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Walsh, 2006). Resilience shows the ability of an individual to respond to adversity and various stressful traumatic situation in a healthy and productive way (Reivich & Shatte, 2002). Therefore, resilience is seen as a basic strength which becomes the foundation of various positive characters in an individual in amid various challenges in life (Hendriani, 2018).

As explained by Cicchetti & Toth (1998), resilience is not a static trait which has been brought by an individual since he/she was born. Resilience does also not automatically stay in an individual self after he/she has successfully achieved it (Meichenbaum, 2008). Resilience is a dynamic process covering positive adaptation in the context of hardship, life threatening situation, or significant obstacles, which can change as time and environment changes (Luthar & Zelazo, 2003; Cicchetti & Toth, 1998). Resilience is a complex interactive process involving roles of individual, family, and wider social environment aspects (Meichenbaum, 2008), which reflects an individual's strength and perseverance to survive and rise from emotionally negative experiences when coping with stressful difficult situation or facing significant obstacles (Hendriani, 2018).

Conceptually, resilience has been widely explained and discussed in order to strengthen society awareness of building it as a preventive action to strengthen the building aspects in an individual self or in regards to post traumatic psychological intervention (Huang, 2009; d'Haenens, Vandoninck, & Danoso, 2013; Przybylski, Mishkin, Sholtbolt, & Linington, 2014; Hendriani, 2016a; Hendriani 2016b). Nevertheless, amidst the various efforts to explain the process of achieving resilience, there is still one question left regarding what possible approach helps performing the process in an efficient, brief, and effective way.

Why so? In part, because it is often in such specific traumatic situations caused by disaster or other sudden events, an individual seeks immediate psychological assistance which will be effective to help an individual recover from stresses and negative emotions although it performs in brief. Iyadurai et al. (2017) also stated that a brief and effective approach in this situation is important in order to prevent further distress after the trauma. Thus, this approach is useful to prevent an individual from potential occurrence of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In facing condition with psychological pressure, an individual also requires a coping strategy which stresses more on an individual's responses and attitude which then will subjectively resolve the problem coming from the traumatic event based on his/ her ability and potential (Mulawarman, Antika, Apriwilida & Kunwijaya, 2019b).

The author did further references investigation and found some information (in Mulawarman, 2019a) about an intervention approach based on brief counseling. Brief counseling is more efficient in the use of time, simple in the process, and is observable. It is Solution-Focused Brief Counseling (SFBC), a postmodern counseling approach which focuses on power owned by an individual self to actively find solution from a difficult situation. This approach later becomes one of intervention techniques which is recommended (Corey, 2016).

As many as 43 researches examined by Gingerich & Peterson (2012) have confirmed that SFBC is effective in helping to solve psychological problems such as depression, anxiety, desperation, and some other problematic behaviors caused by unsolved emotional stress. In accordance to a study by Gingerich & Peterson (2012) and Bond, Woods, Humphrey, Symes, & Green (2013) who did a literature study on 38 scientific research journals records that *Solution-Focused Brief Therapy* (SFBT) or also known as Solution-Focused Brief Counseling (SFBC) is effective to be used for helping the recovery of kids with problematic behavior which is caused by certain psychological pressure.

In the following year, Reddy, Thirumoorthy, Vijayalakshmi, & Hamza (2015) performed a test on the effectiveness of SFBT on the recovery of teenagers who experienced depression, and the result found was significant. Paolini (2016) also contributed to the field of

SFBC, especially in helping the recovery of psychological condition of an individual in the context of bullying. In addition, a study by Hendar, Awalya, & Sunawan (2020) confirmed that SFBC is effective for enhancing academic resilience among senior high school students. The results of the researches all confirm that SFBC is a recovery intervention which is effective to be applied in various contexts of psychological issues. It is also confirmed that SFBC has helped individuals who experience problems to rise into a positive change through brief counseling sessions.

Based on the elaborated points aforementioned, it can be concluded that SFBC is a counseling based intervention approach which can be recommended in order to help an individual achieve resilience. There is no doubt that in order to confirm the conclusion, another theoretical or conceptual argument is still needed especially a conceptual argument which can show specifically points of similarity between both theories, SFBC and resilience, as a scientific foothold in its further stages of application. The need for this conceptual argument is then followed up through this study.

METHODS

The approach selected for this literature study was comparative analysis (Walk, 1998). Comparative analysis technique is used to compare two different theories in order to find points of differences and also points of similarities or alignment between both.

The author performed some stages (Walk, 1998) of conducting comparative analysis of the two theories, resilience and SFBC, consisting of 1) Determining the reference frame. This is the basis of grouping the two theories which will be compared. The reference frame can consist of ideas, themes, questions, problems, or components and theories. Walk (1998) explains that a good reference frame should be created based on specific and credible sources, not on the basis of mere thoughts or researchers' observations. In this study, the reference frame used to classify comparisons is a theoretical component that is the basic assumptions and concepts (Hoy & Adams, 2016), related to the intervention process, 2) Determining the reasons to compare in order to ensure that the author has scientific references to do this, not merely compare the two theories based on the author's subjective consideration. The reasons for comparing SFBC with resilience are based on the previous literature review as described in the introduction (Gingerich & Peterson, 2012; Bond et al., 2013; Reddy et al., 2015; Paolini, 2016; Hendar et al., 2020), 3) Formulizing thesis, which consists of points of findings derived from the comparison of both theories which follows under the reference frame, 4) Manifesting the result of comparative analysis based on certain organization scheme which is informative and systematic, 5) Correlating all the finding points resulting in thorough explanation of the analysis result. Step 3-5 from the comparative analysis carried out in this research are outlined simultaneously in the results and discussion sections.

The literature content involved in the analysis process covers explanation including the theory of resilience and SFBC obtained from various sources either electronically or non-electronically. Electronic literature was obtained from a search in ScienceDirect database and GoogleScholar, published in the last 10 years period, in the range of 2010-2020. Keywords used in the literature search are "solution-focused brief counseling" and "resilience". Based on the literature search, a total of 65 research articles were obtained.

The screening was conducted on 65 articles found by setting inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria set include research on phenomena or topics in psychology or counseling. The exclusion criteria set by the researcher include; 1) English articles, 2) full-text can be downloaded, and 3) research article or review report (peer reviewed article). Screening results through inclusion and exclusion criteria then continued with the selection of abstract contents of published research articles in journals and books. The main sources of references used in this comparative analysis study consist of nine books containing

theoretical-conceptual explanation about resilience and SFBC, five journals explaining the relevance of SFBC in helping to achieve resilience, and nine other literature sources in the forms of article journals or books.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the comparative analysis, there are five points of alignment between resilience and SFBC were found. These findings have strengthened the argument stating that SFBC is an appropriate approach to be used to help an individual achieve resilience, through effective and efficient process. These five points of alignment includes two assumption categories (assuming optimism and positive oriented), and three concepts related to intervention process (emphasizing the importance of process, collaborative and self-empowering, and conscious based).

No	Categories	Points of similarity between the content theories
1	Basic assumption	Assuming optimism
2	Basic assumption	Positive oriented
3	Concept related to intervention	Emphasizing on the importance of process
4	Concept related to intervention	Collaborative and self-empowering
5	Concept related to intervention	Conscious based

Table 1. Similarity of Theoretical SFBC and Resillience
(extracted from [Hendriani, 2018](#); [Mulawarman, 2019a](#))

Assuming Optimism

SFBC assumes optimism, meaning that each individual is healthy and competent and has the capacity to build, design, and construct solution oriented steps that can improve his/her life ([Mulawarman, 2019a](#)). This also applies for resilience which believes that every individual has potential to be able to face difficulty, to be tough in dealing with stress, and to rise from the trauma he/ she experiences ([Luthar & Zelazo, 2003](#); [Hendriani, 2018](#)). With the similarity in terms of optimism, counselors will consistently see an individual as powerful figures in every counseling session performed.

Positive Oriented

SFBC is an approach which is positive oriented, focusing on all aspects leading to positive changes in an individual's self. The therapeutic process involved gives space for an individual to focus more on the healing, recovery, and finding solutions, instead of focusing on the talk about the problem. In the counseling process performed, both counselors and counselees make effort to find certain strength inside the counselees so that he/ she can transform from problem oriented effort to solution oriented effort ([Mulawarman, 2019a](#); [Bolton, Hall, Blundo, & Lehmann, 2017](#)).

Meanwhile, resilience has also closely related to positive psychology view, which emphasizes on human power and wisdom in order to understand and facilitate every process of positive changes in an individual. Resilience reflects perseverance to be able to bounce back after the fall and after experiencing significant psychological pressure ([Hendriani, 2018](#)). By having this same orientation, this indicates that the intervention process performed under SFBC procedure will not go against resilience, a positive attribute of an individual.

Emphasizing on the Importance of Process

An optimal and solution oriented process in counseling session will determine the success of SFBC. The intended process starts with the speaking ability of a counselor. The counselor is expected to be able to give various constructive questions which contain

stimulant to think in solution based way. Although the session is brief, minute by minute in a counseling session is precious, meaningful to facilitate positive changes and to empower the counselee to use his/ her sources of power to solve his/her conflict (Lines, 2006; Mulawarman, 2019a). Therefore, an effective process becomes one of principle that has to be made in SFBC.

Furthermore, resilience also emphasizes on dynamic process when an individual rises from negative psychological situation to the positive one. In this process, an effective coping and proper adaptation determine whether resilience will be achieved or not (VanBreda, 2001; Luthar & Zelazo, 2003). One thing needs to be taken into account here is that in helping an individual to be able to achieve resilience after such a traumatic event he/she experiences, constructive facilitating steps, strengthening of coping ability and adaptation are necessary (Hendriani, 2018). These steps can be applied in SFBC sessions with brief stages patterns.

Collaborative and Empowering individual's self

Considering that the biggest factor determining the success of counseling is the relationship between counselor-counselee as well as the counselee's competence itself (Walter & Peller, 1992). In SFBC, The principle of maintaining collaboration between the counselor and the counselee becomes necessary. Still, with collaborative principle, SFBC emphasizes on the effort to always empower the counselee because he/she is believed that the counselee is a competence individual who has the capacity to manage him/herself well. The control of the changing process is in the hand of the counselee, involving responsibility to achieve better life.

In accordance to the principle applied in SFBC, the theory of resilience also has similarity. How an individual is able to cope effectively and adapt positively in order to rise from negative situation depends on the quality of the collaboration between the individual with the environment and the support system, as well as psychological control in him/her. Without the support from the surrounding, the process to a resilient condition will be less optimum. Meanwhile, without personal strength and psychological control it is impossible to achieve resilience.

In relation of both aspects, environment, whatsoever, only helps provide the support needed for example, by providing or strengthening external protective factor. Furthermore, it is the job of an individual to make an effort to support internal protective factor and to properly cope and adapt to the process of resilience (Hendriani, 2018). Thus, SFBC effort focusing on involving counselee to always be active in seeking solution is aligned with the content of the theory of resilience.

Based on Consciousness

In every session of the counseling, SFBC tries to raise the individual's consciousness of his/her experiences. This will help the individual to understand more that the reality of the problem he/ she is dealing with is not the only reality of the whole of his/ her life. Therefore, the counseling performed is expected to help the counselee to transform the reality he/she initially imagined into more specific and positive goals and practices. Still in regard to consciousness, during SFBC sessions, the counselee will be asked to make conscious choices that will be taken. Because this process need to be properly thought and considered, it also involves various mind skills, either for the counselors whose job is to facilitate the changes or for the counselees (Mulawarman, 2019a).

In the theory of resilience, consciousness also holds an important role as one of internal protective factors which can strengthen an individual's psychology when coping with adversity. Consciousness will also determine the effectiveness of coping to overcome negative situation, and slowly recover the condition. In regard to mind skills, some

researches on resilience (VanBreda, 2001; Hendriani, 2018) have also shown the role of resilience in strengthening protective, coping, and adaptation mechanism.

With the five points of the findings, it is clear that there is conceptual alignment between resilience and SFBC. Therefore, it is relevant if SFBC is used as an approach to help an individual achieve resilience after dealing with hardship or traumatic episode. Moreover, Luthar & Zelazo (2003) also stated that with resilience construct which focuses on using potential power of an individual experiencing adversity in order for him/her to rise and transform into positive changes, the intervention design applied to help the process needs to have an aligned paradigm, as shown by SFBC in this study.

This study uses only two online databases with the consideration that the database contains most of the publications one of them in the field of psychology and counseling. There are other databases that should be considered as online sources to expand the picture related to the topic of studies from social science and education, for example psycINFO and Proquest. Limiting keywords in the search by adding the word "comparative analysis" also needs to be considered to ensure that the same analysis has never been done.

CONCLUSIONS

The result of literature study has fulfilled its aim, elaborating conceptual explanation that strengthen the scientific foothold stating that SFBC can be recommended as an approach to give intervention assistance for an individual who experiences a traumatic event in an effort to achieve resilience. There are points of similarities in terms of basic assumption, goal or orientation, and principles of counseling stages performed. These points confirm the relevance and accuracy of the use of SFBC in psychological healing after an individual deals with adversity. Furthermore, these findings can also strengthen the theoretical foundation of SFBC application in order to enhance an individual's resilience in many different contexts of problems, including the increase of resilience in specific scope, such as online resilience, workplace resilience, academic resilience, parental resilience, family resilience, and so forth.

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All authors conduct the research and write the manuscript together. All authors have agreed with the final manuscript.

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