



The Effect of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) on Low Self-Esteem Among Students

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Abstract

For students, low self-esteem is a psychological issue that impacts their academic, emotional, and social development. Research has found that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is one of the most widely used counseling methods to address this issue. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) in improving students' self-esteem and to identify the factors contributing to its success. This research employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method using a structured approach that includes the identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion stages. This procedure was used to systematically identify, select, and analyze 1,087 articles indexed in Sinta and Scopus published between 2016 and 2025. The results indicate that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is effective in enhancing students' self-esteem through cognitive restructuring and anxiety reduction, supported by individual and group interventions as well as enabling factors such as counselor competence and student engagement. These findings suggest that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) can be used by school counselors and guidance counselors as an effective intervention to improve students' self-esteem. Furthermore, this study encourages the development of a more systematic, adaptive, and technology-integrated implementation of CBT in future counseling services.

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INTRODUCTION

Student development is measured not only by academic achievement but also by psychological well-being, one aspect of which is reflected in their level of self-esteem. An individual's assessment of their own worth and value is called self-esteem, which influences how they think, behave, and cope with life's challenges (Mruk, 2006; Nathaniel Branden, 2012; Rosenberg, 1965). Individuals with high self-esteem tend to have a positive view of themselves, are better able to balance their strengths and weaknesses, and are more adaptable to psychological and social pressures (Foddiss, 2016). The development of self-esteem is particularly crucial during adolescence, a critical stage of students'

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psychological development in school. During this period, they face many challenges, including academic achievement, physical changes, social pressures, and the search for self-identity (Bernard, 2013; Pelc et al., 2023; Schlenker et al., 1990; Schneider et al., 1995). High self-esteem can boost students' motivation to learn, enhance their ability to cope with failure, and foster mental resilience (Fernández-Castillo et al., 2022; Moyano et al., 2020). Conversely, low self-esteem can lead to feelings of worthlessness, withdrawal from social environments, difficulties in achieving, and an increased risk of psychological disorders such as anxiety and depression (Schoeps et al., 2020). Therefore, boosting an individual's self-esteem is a crucial component of counseling and guidance services in the educational setting.

In guidance and counseling, counseling services are crucial for addressing various issues faced by students (Zulfa et al., 2025). In cases involving low self-esteem among students, counseling plays a vital role in helping them recognize flawed thought patterns, understand the root causes of their problems, and discover new ways to cope with challenging situations tailored to each individual (Widyatmoko & Purwanta, 2019). One relevant counseling approach is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). The Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) approach emphasizes that a person's thoughts influence their feelings and behaviors; for instance, anxiety, low self-esteem, and despair are often caused by negative thought patterns, such as "I am worthless" or "I am bound to fail" (Rees, 2005). Thus, the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) approach helps identify these erroneous thought patterns, replace them with a more realistic perspective, and build positive self-beliefs. Through Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), students are taught to assess themselves objectively, accept that they are not perfect, and build positive self-beliefs to enhance their self-confidence (Mennin et al., 2013; Rani et al., 2022; Wilson et al., 2012). This aligns with the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) approach to addressing low self-esteem, where CBT employs cognitive restructuring to replace irrational thoughts with rational and realistic ones, thereby enhancing self-esteem (Damayanti & Nurjannah, 2017).

Evidence suggests that many students struggle with low self-esteem, characterized by passive behavior in class, a tendency to give up easily when faced with failure, and a fear of interacting with peers (Isomottonen et al., 2020; Zhylin et al., 2022). Factors such as social pressure and comparison with peers exacerbate this situation (Samra et al., 2022). Internal conflicts often arise due to body shaming, high parental expectations, issues with peers, and academic demands (Jeynes, 2024; Noll & Fredrickson, 1998; S. & Laili, 2024; Schoeps et al., 2020; Zhao et al., 2024). This makes students feel worthless, unworthy, or failing to meet certain social standards, as this situation leads to low self-esteem. Such emotional instability and delays in adolescents' psychosocial development may occur if these conditions are not addressed (Hayati & Tohari, 2022). Therefore, it is crucial to enhance students' self-esteem through counseling methods that not only focus on behavioral improvement but also foster healthy and realistic self-understanding.

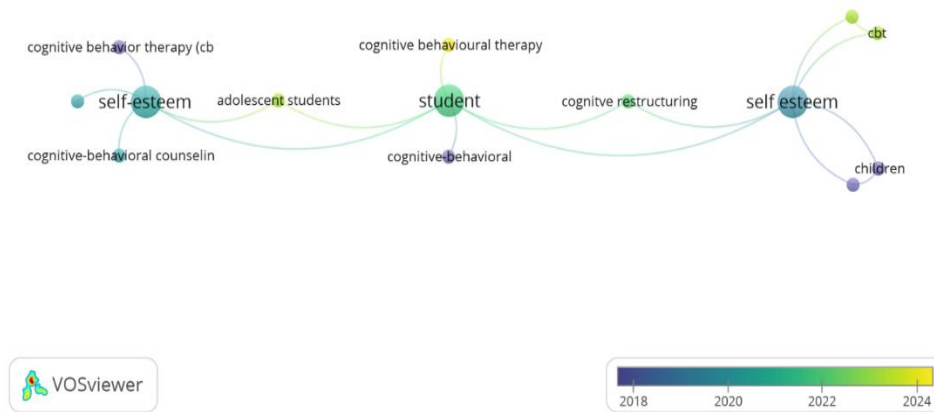


Fig 1. Keywords related to Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and self-esteem in children and adolescents in the field of education, as identified by researchers (based on Sinta and Scopus)

A number of studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) in addressing various psychological issues, such as reducing anxiety and depression and boosting self-confidence (Reaven et al., 2022; Sari et al., 2022). In the field of education, CBT has been shown to reduce social anxiety and improve self-confidence (Nordh et al., 2021; Takdir et al., 2025). However, research on the specific relationship between counseling using the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) approach and improvements in students' self-esteem, particularly at the school level in Indonesia, remains relatively limited in analyzing the effectiveness and supporting factors in the implementation of the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) counseling approach regarding students' self-esteem. Previous studies have only examined how the Cognitive Behavior Therapy approach affects self-confidence and anxiety in students (Chandra et al., 2019; Qudsiyah & Pernama, 2022; Zbukvic et al., 2024).

This study focuses on analyzing the research gap regarding the effectiveness of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) counseling on self-esteem, particularly among students. While previous studies have examined the effectiveness of CBT in improving various psychological aspects, these studies remain limited and have not comprehensively addressed the overall improvement of students' self-esteem, including its mechanisms and supporting factors. Furthermore, few studies have examined this topic using a structured and in-depth Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by comprehensively analyzing the effectiveness of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy on students' self-esteem along with the factors influencing it. The results of this study are expected to serve as a practical reference for guidance and counseling teachers, school counselors, and educational institutions in developing interventions that optimally support students' psychosocial development and create a healthier, more supportive, and adaptive educational environment.

This study aims to analyze previous research on counseling using the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) approach to assess its effectiveness in improving students' self-esteem, as well as to identify the factors that contribute to its successful implementation. This study will also provide theoretical and practical insights for guidance and counseling services in educational institutions.

To make this analysis more focused, the author will formulate two research questions (RQs) to be examined in this article as follows:

RQ 1: How effective is the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) approach in improving students' self-esteem based on the results of previous studies?

RQ 2: What are the factors supporting the implementation of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)-based counseling in improving self-esteem among students according to previous research findings?

METHODS

The research method to be used is a Systematic Literature Review (SLR). This is the process of identifying, evaluating, and interpreting all available research evidence to answer specific research questions (Aryasutha et al., 2025; Diiska & Syafril, 2024; Kitchenham et al., 2009; Qur'ani & Syafril, 2025; Satria et al., 2025). This study involves several stages: keyword identification, data search, article selection, data validation, and data analysis (Abishev et al., 2025; Aini et al., 2019; Busrat et al., 2025; Busro et al., 2021; Engkizar et al., 2024, 2025). The keywords used are "Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, self-esteem, students," tailored to the research focus. The literature search was conducted in the Sinta, Scopus, and Google Scholar databases using the Publish or Perish application, covering the years 2016–2025. The retrieved articles were selected based on inclusion criteria, namely being indexed in at least Sinta 2 or Scopus, having a good academic reputation, being relevant to the research topic, and involving student subjects at the elementary, middle, or high school levels, or adolescents in an educational context. Additionally, the articles must explicitly discuss the relationship or application of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) to self-esteem. The article selection process was conducted in accordance with the PRISMA 2020 guidelines.

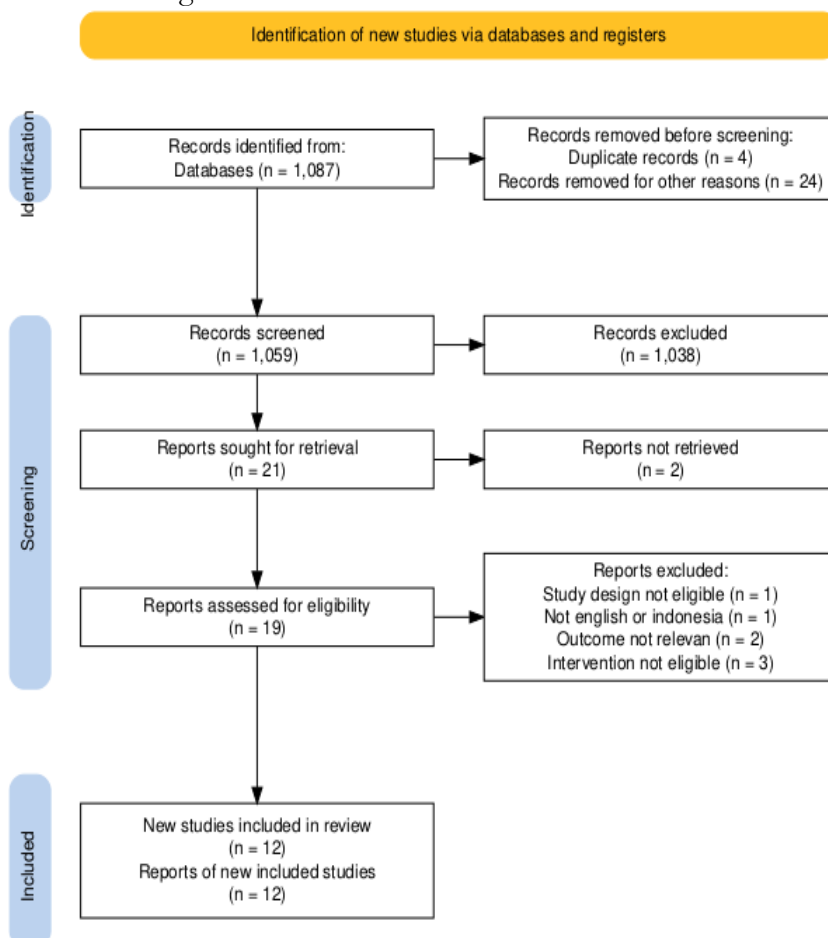


Fig 2. Flow chart of literature selection procedures

During the identification phase, a total of 1,087 records were retrieved through a keyword search for “Cognitive Behavioral Therapy self-esteem students” in the Scopus and Google Scholar databases using the Publish or Perish application. Subsequently, 4 duplicate records were removed using a reference management tool. Additionally, 24 records were eliminated because they lacked complete bibliographic information or had corrupted files. Consequently, 1,059 articles proceeded to the screening stage based on index, title, and abstract. During the screening phase, 1,038 articles were excluded for failing to meet inclusion criteria, such as not being indexed in reputable databases, falling outside the 2016–2025 timeframe, not focusing on student populations, not addressing self-esteem, or not employing a Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) approach. A total of 21 articles then proceeded to the “reports sought for retrieval” stage. Of these, 2 articles were unavailable in full text, leaving 19 articles to be evaluated in the eligibility stage. The results of the assessment showed that 7 articles were excluded, with the following details: 1 article did not use an empirical research design, 1 article was not written in Indonesian or English, 2 articles had outcomes that were not relevant to the measurement of self-esteem, and 3 articles used interventions other than pure CBT (e.g., REBT or MBCT). After completing all selection stages, a total of 12 articles that met the inclusion criteria were identified and analyzed in this systematic literature review.

Furthermore, in this study, thematic analysis was used to identify, group, and synthesize the main themes that illustrate how Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) affects students’ self-esteem. This method was chosen because it is capable of capturing recurring patterns of meaning in previous research findings. This method is also suitable for qualitative synthesis in systematic literature reviews (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis was conducted by reading the results and discussion sections of each article. Then, themes were coded and grouped based on conceptual similarities and consistent emergence across several articles. Themes were selected only if they were directly related to the research questions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to analyze the use of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) in improving students’ self-esteem. The study conducted a comprehensive review of 12 relevant research articles. The analysis was conducted by grouping key findings regarding the effectiveness of the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) counseling approach in improving students’ self-esteem, analyzing the factors supporting the success of its implementation, and examining the procedures, stages, and implementation techniques of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) used in interventions to enhance students’ self-esteem. The following table summarizes the 12 articles selected from the 1,087 articles analyzed.

Table 1. Article Analysis

Author's Name	Article Title	Country	Index
(Faith, 2016)	The Effectiveness of Group Counseling Using the Spirituality Cognitive Restructuring Technique in Improving Students’ Self-Esteem	Indonesia	Sinta 2

Author's Name	Article Title	Country	Index
(Bana et al., 2017)	The Efficacy of Cognitive Behavioral Play Therapy on Self Esteem of Children With Intellectual Disability	Iran	Scopus Q3
(et al., 2018)	Effect of Cognitive-behavioral Play Therapy in the Self-esteem and Social Anxiety of Students	Iran	Scopus Q3
(Amalia, 2018)	The Application of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) Principles to Improve Self-Esteem in Adolescent Girls	Indonesia	Sinta 2
(Amin et al., 2020)	Effectiveness of a culturally adapted cognitive behavioural therapy-based guided self-help (CACBT-GSH) intervention to reduce social anxiety and enhance self-esteem in adolescents: a randomized controlled trial from Pakistan	Pakistan	Scopus Q1
(Farjantoky et al., 2020)	The effects of cognitive-behavioral counseling on <i>self-esteem</i> and tendency of mobile phone addiction	Indonesia	Scopus Q1
(Epel et al., 2021)	The Effect of Cognitive Behavioral Group Therapy on Children's Self-esteem	Israel	Scopus Q2
(Rani et al., 2022)	The Effectiveness of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) Group Counseling Using Cognitive Restructuring Techniques in Improving Self-Esteem Among Students	Indonesia	Sinta 2
(Syam, 2023)	Analysis Of Group Islamic Counseling Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) Approach To Improve Students' <i>Self-esteem</i> At SMPN 6	Indonesia	Sinta 2
(Rita Nurmaliah Lubis & Alfin Siregar, 2023)	The Effectiveness of Group Counseling Services Using Cognitive Behavioral Therapy to Improve Self-Esteem Among Students at MTs YPI Batang Kuis	Indonesia	Sinta 2
(Hamdan, 2023)	Reducing social anxiety and boosting self-esteem among adolescent girls: the impact of a behavioral-cognitive counselling programme	Yordania	Scopus Q3
(De Silva et al., 2024)	Effectiveness of a cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)-based intervention for reducing anxiety among adolescents in the Colombo	Sri Lanka	Scopus Q1

Author's Name	Article Title	Country	Index
	District, Sri Lanka: cluster randomized controlled trial		

RQ 1: How effective is the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) counseling approach in improving students' self-esteem, based on the results of previous studies?

The results of the analysis indicate that the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) counseling approach effectively improves self-esteem among students of various ages and in various educational contexts. This effectiveness is achieved through (i) cognitive restructuring, (ii) reduction of anxiety and stress, (iii) individual-based application, (iv) group-based application, (v) adaptation of CBT interventions, and (vi) the role of teachers. Understanding the effectiveness of the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) counseling approach in improving self-esteem serves as the primary foundation for analyzing student outcomes. This study highlights the effectiveness of cognitive behavioral therapy in improving students' self-esteem, as presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2. The effectiveness of the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) counseling approach in improving self-esteem among students

No	Findings	Jumlah Artikel (n)	Persentase (%)	Description
1	Cognitive Restructuring	9	75%	Transforming negative thoughts into more realistic and adaptive ones.
2	Anxiety & Stress Reduction	11	91,7%	Indirectly enhancing self-esteem.
3	Individual-Based Application	2	16,7%	Providing more focused handling tailored to the personal needs of students.
4	Group-Based Application	8	66,7%	Offering peer support and fostering positive social dynamics.
5	Adaptation of CBT Interventions	5	41,7%	Facilitating acceptance of interventions through religious, cultural, and play-based adaptations to improve effectiveness.
6	Teacher's Role	5	41,7%	Supporting the sustainability of CBT counseling implementation in schools.

As shown in table 2, the counseling method known as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) has been proven effective in boosting students' self-esteem across various educational levels. According to an analysis of twelve research articles, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) works by changing students' negative thought patterns, helping them adapt, and providing them

with therapeutic experiences that help them build a more positive self-perception. This method not only produces short-term cognitive changes but also fosters long-term psychological resilience in students.

Empirically, most studies show that students who receive Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) interventions experience a significant increase in self-esteem compared to the control group. [Farjantoky et al., \(2020\)](#) found that students' self-esteem scores increased significantly from 28.16 on the pretest to 47.33 on the posttest, indicating a substantial change in students' self-esteem levels. [Hamdan, \(2023\)](#) also stated that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) programs can account for 76.5% of the variation in self-esteem improvement among adolescent girls. On the other hand, [Faith, \(2016\)](#); [Syam, \(2023\)](#); [et al., \(2018\)](#) found similar patterns, namely that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) has a significant effect on improving students' self-esteem in various educational contexts.

From a psychological perspective, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) enhances self-esteem through the process of cognitive restructuring ([Faith, 2016](#); [Hamdan, 2023](#)). Students are guided to identify negative automatic thoughts, such as the belief that they are unimportant and worthless, incapable, or inferior to their peers. [Amalia, \(2018\)](#) demonstrates that cognitive restructuring helps adolescent girls transform their negative thoughts into more realistic self-evaluations. [Rani et al., \(2022\)](#) state that cognitive restructuring enables students to engage in positive self-talk, which directly impacts the enhancement of their self-confidence. Various studies also indicate that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) interventions whether through structured sessions, the use of thought diaries, or culturally-based self-help manuals consistently reduce anxiety, decrease maladaptive behaviors, and enhance self-esteem among adolescents and students ([Amin et al., 2020](#); [De Silva et al., 2024](#); [Epel et al., 2021](#); [Farjantoky et al., 2020](#); [Lubis & Siregar, 2023](#)).

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) not only brings about internal changes but also successfully addresses the external psychological factors that contribute to low self-esteem, according to research by [De Silva et al., \(2024\)](#); [Hamdan, \(2023\)](#) found that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) in schools helps adolescents reduce stress and anxiety, which indirectly boosts their self-esteem. Furthermore, [Amin et al., \(2020\)](#) state that culturally adapted CBT-based guided self-help not only enhances self-esteem, but also reduces social anxiety, which is the root of low self-confidence among school-aged adolescents. This aligns with findings by [Hamdan, \(2023\)](#); [Syam, \(2023\)](#), who demonstrated that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) helps adolescents with high social anxiety overcome evaluated fears, improve social communication, and boost self-esteem. [Atayi et al., \(2018\)](#) found that Cognitive Behavioral Play Therapy (CBPT) can improve social competence and reduce social anxiety in students, including those with intellectual disabilities. With the reduction of psychological barriers such as anxiety and stress ([Farjantoky et al., 2020](#)), students become more emotionally stable, enabling them to build stronger self-esteem ([Amalia, 2018](#); [Epel et al., 2021](#); [Rani et al., 2022](#)).

In practice, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is highly effective in individual counseling, allowing interventions to be fully tailored to the client's unique needs. The findings of [Farjantoky et al., \(2020\)](#) indicate that individual counseling using Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) can significantly improve self-esteem. In [Amalia, \(2018\)](#) study, which employed a single-subject research design, this effectiveness was further substantiated. The study involved ten pre-intervention sessions, eight core sessions, and a post-intervention session provided to a teenage girl with low self-esteem. During individual sessions, the

counselor could tailor cognitive restructuring methods and behavioral exercises to the client's specific needs. The findings indicate that individual Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) interventions are effective in addressing personal cognitive distortions and emotional issues, particularly those related to self-assessment regarding academic performance and appearance. The results demonstrate that individual Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) interventions have a more profound positive impact on students.

There is also a model for implementing Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) in a group setting; previous research indicates that group-based Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) helps students significantly improve their self-esteem by leveraging social mechanisms and peer support that cannot be obtained individually (Bana et al., 2017; De Silva et al., 2024; Rani et al., 2022; Lubis & Siregar, 2023; et al., 2018). Epel et al., (2021) state that group dynamics allow students to share experiences, build empathy, and receive emotional support, which enhances cognitive restructuring of negative thoughts. Faith, 2016; Syam, (2023) also state that spiritual-value-based group Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) can create a welcoming religious environment, allowing students to feel more accepted and to develop a more positive sense of self. This demonstrates that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) counseling can be conducted individually or in groups; teachers or school counselors can implement it according to the needs of the client or student.

Some studies indicate that incorporating spirituality into Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is effective in helping students improve their self-esteem, as shown in study (Faith, 2016) and similar findings in Syam, (2023); both studies demonstrate that group counseling services using spiritual-cognitive restructuring techniques result in a significant increase in self-esteem. Spirituality provides meaning, life purpose, and moral values that reinforce the cognitive restructuring process, making this method effective. The religious values used in the intervention also function as a belief system that reinforces self-acceptance, inner peace, and a sense of worth in the presence of God. This makes the internalization of cognitive changes easier (Faith, 2016; Syam, 2023).

In addition to CBT with the addition of spirituality, Bana et al., (2017); et al., (2018) demonstrated that an adaptation of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) through play known as Cognitive Behavioral Play Therapy (CBPT) which combines play activities and cognitive restructuring tailored to the developmental stage of the students, has proven effective in enhancing self-esteem. This method allows students to play in a beneficial way and naturally change negative beliefs. The cultural adaptation of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy was also studied by Amin et al., (2020), who found that culturally adapted Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) significantly improved self-esteem among school-aged adolescents in Pakistan over eight sessions, because culturally adapted Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) interventions are designed with local values, language, and ways of thinking in mind, making them easier to understand and internalize; culturally adapted Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) has proven effective in enhancing adolescents' self-esteem. These results indicate that cultural adaptation makes Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) more accessible and more effective in building self-esteem in a deep and sustainable manner.

The research findings also indicate that the involvement of guidance counselors or school counselors is a key factor in the success and sustainability of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). Teachers help enhance the legitimacy, urgency, and credibility of the cognitive-behavioral skills being taught, encouraging students to follow CBT procedures and protocols (Bana et al., 2017;

De Silva et al., 2024). Specialized training has demonstrated that teachers can lead Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) sessions, including group counseling. The results are comparable to interventions facilitated by professionals, and they can also create an environment that supports the development of positive attitudes, the strengthening of self-esteem, and adaptive behavioral changes (Epel et al., 2021; Syam, 2023). Furthermore, multi-stakeholder support strengthens the implementation of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) in students' academic and social lives, so guidance and counseling teachers work more effectively when collaborating with schools and parents (Lubis & Siregar, 2023). Overall, these results indicate that trained, collaborative, and consistent teachers are key components in ensuring the success of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) interventions in educational settings.

Overall, the results of 12 studies indicate that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a highly effective, comprehensive, and flexible psychological intervention. Its effectiveness lies in the fact that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) significantly improves students' self-esteem through cognitive restructuring mechanisms, promotes adaptive behavior, supports individuals and peer groups, fosters teacher involvement, and facilitates spiritual and cognitive adaptation through relevant games and cultural elements. This method produces tangible and sustainable changes in students' perspectives.

RQ2: What factors contribute to the effectiveness of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) in improving students' self-esteem?

Several key interrelated factors support the use of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) to improve students' self-esteem. Based on an analysis of 12 synthesized research articles, it was found that the following factors influence the success of CBT: (i) the effectiveness of the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) approach, (ii) the counselor's competence, (iii) the students' characteristics and readiness, (iv) support from family and school, and (v) a structured and adaptive intervention design. Working together, these five components enable students to experience sustainable behavioral, cognitive, and affective changes. This study highlights the factors supporting the implementation of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) in successfully improving students' self-esteem, as presented in table 3 below:

Table 3. Factors Supporting the Implementation of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) in Improving Self-Esteem Among Students

No	Findings	Number of Articles (n)	Percentage (%)	Description
1	Effectiveness of CBT Method	12	100%	CBT consistently enhances self-esteem through cognitive restructuring and adaptive behavioral changes.
2	Counselor Competence	5	41,7%	The success of CBT is determined by accurate assessment and effective therapeutic relationships.
3	Readiness and Activeness of Clients (Students)	5	41,7%	Student motivation and active involvement accelerate improvements in self-esteem.

No	Findings	Number of Articles (n)	Percentage (%)	Description
4	Family and School Support	4	33,3%	Structured and adaptive CBT programs lead to stable and sustainable changes.
5	Structured and Adaptive Intervention Design	6	50%	Facilitates acceptance of interventions.

As shown in table 3, regarding the effectiveness of the methods, the study by [Lubis & Siregar, \(2023\)](#) found that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)-based counseling significantly improved students’ self-esteem, particularly in terms of self-acceptance, social relationships, and self-evaluation. The study also indicates that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) targets the primary source of low self-esteem: negative thought patterns stemming from maladaptive past experiences. Furthermore, the study suggests that negative experiences such as a lack of parental attention, difficulties adapting at home or school, and sometimes high academic pressure [De Silva et al., \(2024\)](#) can lead to maladaptive core beliefs. Therefore, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) can help correct cognitive distortions; this aligns with [Hamdan, \(2023\)](#) research, which demonstrated that cognitive restructuring contributes to improved self-esteem, with a 76.5% increase in the experimental group, proving its effectiveness. These results are reinforced by the findings of [Faith, \(2016\)](#); [Rani et al., \(2022\)](#), who found that cognitive restructuring has the ability to improve self-esteem by identifying and changing negative automatic thoughts that previously increased feelings of low self-esteem.

As explained by [Amin et al., \(2020\)](#); [Farjantoky et al., \(2020\)](#), Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) not only boosts self-esteem but also reduces social anxiety and addictive behaviors, both of which are factors frequently associated with low self-esteem. This has also been demonstrated by studies conducted across various populations, such as junior high school students, middle school students, and students with special needs [Amalia, \(2018\)](#); [Bana et al., \(2017\)](#); [Epel et al., \(2021\)](#); [et al., \(2018\)](#), all reaching the consistent conclusion that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) techniques can significantly improve self-esteem. This confirms that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) techniques are effective across various educational levels and student characteristics, not just in a single situation. In line with Beck’s theory, [Syam, \(2023\)](#) study states that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) can address and improve self-esteem issues among students.

Supporting factors also lie in the counselor’s competencies, particularly the ability to thoroughly assess students’ psychological conditions. According to [Amalia, \(2018\)](#), the success of interventions increases when school counselors fully understand the client’s or student’s background, including the sources of low self-esteem. Research indicates that counselors capable of conducting comprehensive assessments and applying Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) methods tailored to students’ personalities yield more stable outcomes ([Atayi et al., 2018](#)). The ability to establish a safe and supportive therapeutic relationship is part of a counselor’s competencies ([Epel et al., 2021](#)). [Faith, \(2016\)](#); [Syam, \(2023\)](#) state that for Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) to be successful in counseling by incorporating spiritual values, counselors must be able to effectively integrate spiritual principles so that students feel more accepted and

more open to changing their irrational thoughts; thus, school counselors or counselors possess strong competencies.

In addition to the counselor's competence, the students' readiness and cooperation are crucial factors in determining the effectiveness of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). According to [Amalia, \(2018\)](#), students who are highly motivated, actively engaged in counseling sessions, and consistently complete their homework assignments which consist of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) exercises (such as thought recording and cognitive restructuring) experience a greater increase in self-esteem than passive participants; therefore, students who are active in the intervention positively influence the improvement of self-esteem ([Amin et al., 2020](#)). This finding aligns with [Syam, \(2023\)](#), who states that awareness of personal issues including acknowledging low self-esteem helps individuals accept feedback and apply Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) strategies in daily life. Thus, a cooperative attitude, self-awareness, and the ability to objectively accept feedback are essential prerequisites for the success of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) interventions. Students who are proactive and committed at every stage of the intervention tend to experience faster and more sustainable cognitive and behavioral changes, while less proactive students tend to experience slower changes ([Amalia, 2018](#); [Rani et al., 2022](#)).

The success of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) in improving students' self-esteem is greatly influenced by support from families and schools. [Amalia, \(2018\)](#) found that parental involvement particularly that of mothers in psychoeducational sessions can accelerate improvements in students' self-esteem. This is because there is a connection between counseling interventions and parenting methods at home. Thanks to this support, students can receive consistent positive reinforcement during counseling sessions and in their daily lives.

In line with research conducted by [Bana et al., \(2017\)](#); [Atayi et al., \(2018\)](#), Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)-based programs that utilize play techniques known as Cognitive Behavioral Play Therapy demonstrate effectiveness when schools provide an environment where students can express themselves through play, healthy social interactions, and other exploratory activities, followed by an assessment of the students' age. Schools that allow students to practice social skills safely provide opportunities for students to apply the skills they learn during counseling. Additionally, [De Silva et al., \(2024\)](#) found that, compared to interventions conducted separately from the school context, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) programs integrated into the school environment demonstrate greater improvements in self-esteem. This is achieved through monitoring by guidance counselors, support from the principal, and the provision of a safe space for students. Peer support is also crucial in group counseling as it can facilitate behavioral and cognitive changes. Therefore, the success of CBT interventions is significantly influenced by the social interactions among the family, school, and the student's environment. This also aids the process of internalizing the adaptive skills and mindsets learned during counseling sessions.

A structured and adaptive Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) intervention design is the final component identified in the analysis of articles on supporting factors. Compared to unstructured interventions, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) delivered through structured sessions (8–18) is more effective at improving self-esteem. This is demonstrated by numerous studies. [Hamdan, \(2023\)](#) notes that the systematic and comprehensive use of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) can even result in a 76.5% increase in self-esteem in

the experimental group. Stable results through the follow-up phase were also found in other studies conducted in the form of several weekly sessions (Rani et al., 2022; et al., 2018). This suggests that for behavioral and cognitive changes to be sustained in the long term, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) requires gradual internalization and consistency (De Silva et al., 2024). International studies such as those by Amin et al., (2020); Epel et al., (2021) reinforce these findings by demonstrating that a well-designed program, the selection of appropriate techniques (role-play, cognitive restructuring, and problem-solving), and the alignment of techniques with participants' needs are all critical factors for success. In children, Cognitive Behavioral Play Therapy (CBPT) which incorporates play activities such as card games, magic tricks, or ball games was found in the study by Atayi et al., (2018) to enhance positive experiences, improve adaptive skills, and foster a sense of competence, all of which are key components in the development of self-esteem.

Overall, the results of the synthesis of 12 articles indicate that the success of CBT in improving students' self-esteem depends not only on the therapeutic method but also on a supportive environment comprising the counselor's competence, the students' readiness, support from family and school, and a well-planned program design that promotes development. Thus, for Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) to be used effectively and sustainably, these elements complement one another and form a comprehensive framework.

CONCLUSION

As a complex psychological issue, low self-esteem among students requires a systematic, evidence-based intervention approach. Studies show that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) improves self-esteem through cognitive restructuring, reduces stress and anxiety, and encourages adaptive behaviors that support the development of positive self-evaluation. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is more effective when applied to both individuals and groups. This also makes it suitable for the cultural, spiritual, and developmental needs of students. Therefore, guidance and counseling services in educational institutions must support the systematic implementation of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), with support from experienced counselors, structured intervention designs, and collaboration between families and schools. Although these findings provide a strong empirical foundation regarding the role of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) in improving students' self-esteem, there remain research gaps, particularly regarding the long-term effects of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), the development of more inclusive intervention models for students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, and the use of technology to support the sustainable implementation and evaluation of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) counseling.

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