

## Bibliotherapy: An Alternative Therapy in Dealing with Adolescent Problems

Monique Elizabeth Soekamto

Faculty of Psychology  
Universitas Surabaya

Studies in psychiatry and psychology have been conducted to find alternatives of therapies to deal with the adolescent problems. One of the alternatives is bibliotherapy. Recently, the studies of bibliotherapy in Indonesia, especially in Surabaya, have been increasing. The purpose of this article is to explore the effectiveness of bibliotherapy in dealing with the adolescent problems based on theoretical review and results of some studies on bibliotherapy (Novitawati, Rahayu, & Lasmono, 2001; Sukamto, 2005; Hidayat, 2008; Patricia, 2007; Suprapto, 2009). Some studies proved that bibliotherapy was effective in reducing smoking behavior (Novitawati et al., 2001), body image dissatisfaction (Sukamto, 2005), and enhancing self-concept (Patricia, 2007), whereas the other studies (Hidayat, 2008; Suprapto, 2009) still could not prove the significant effectiveness.

**Keywords:** bibliotherapy, adolescent problems, smoking behavior, body image dissatisfaction, self-concept

Beberapa penelitian di bidang psikiatri dan psikologi telah dilaksanakan untuk menemukan berbagai alternatif terapi untuk mengatasi permasalahan pada remaja. Salah satu alternatif terapi adalah *bibliotherapy*. Penelitian mengenai *bibliotherapy* di Indonesia, khususnya di Surabaya, semakin meningkat akhir-akhir ini. Tujuan dari artikel ini adalah untuk mengeksplorasi efektivitas *bibliotherapy* dalam mengatasi permasalahan pada remaja berdasarkan tinjauan teoretis dan beberapa hasil penelitian mengenai *bibliotherapy* (Novitawati, Rahayu, & Lasmono, 2001; Sukamto, 2005; Hidayat, 2008; Patricia, 2007; Suprapto, 2009). Beberapa penelitian membuktikan bahwa bibliotherapy efektif dalam mengurangi perilaku merokok (Novitawati et al., 2001), ketidakpuasan terhadap citra tubuh (Sukamto, 2005), dan meningkatkan konsep diri (Patricia, 2007), sedangkan penelitian yang lain (Hidayat, 2008; Suprapto, 2009) masih belum dapat menunjukkan efektivitas yang signifikan.

**Kata kunci:** *bibliotherapy*, permasalahan remaja, perilaku merokok, ketidakpuasan terhadap citra tubuh, konsep diri

According to Erikson's statement that finding an identity was the major life task of adolescence, researchers have been studying how teenagers go about this process of self-discovery (Berzonsky, Rice, & Neimeyer, as cited in Rice & Dolgin, 2002). According to Offer; Offer and Schonert-Reichl (as cited in Papalia, Olds, & Feldman, 2002), adolescence is a time of increasing divergence between the majority of young people, who are striving for a fulfilling and productive adulthood, and a sizable minority (about 1 out of 5) who will be dealing with major problems.

This article is an updated version of the paper that has been presented at the 5<sup>th</sup> Congress of The Asia Pacific Association of Psychotherapists "Listening to the Heart of the East" on April 5-7, 2008 in Jakarta.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Monique Elizabeth Sukamto, Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Surabaya, Jl. Raya Kalirungkut, Surabaya 60293, Indonesia. E-mail: monique@ubaya.ac.id

Koenig (as cited in Rice & Dolgin, 2002) stated that individuals who have weak self-identities or low self-esteem manifest a number of symptoms of emotional ill health. For example, Abernathy, Massad, and Romano-Dwyer (as cited in Rice & Dolgin, 2002) reported that early smoking may be related to self-esteem and status needs of some youths, whereas Koff, Rierdan, and Stubbs (as cited in Rice & Dolgin, 2002) found that adolescents' physical attractiveness and body image have an important relationship to their positive self-evaluation, popularity, and peer acceptance. The teasing about body weight or body shape by family members could cause an 'ideal' body shape internalization, body image dissatisfaction, dieting behaviors, and eating disorders among the adolescent girls (Moreno & Thelen; Pike & Rodin, as cited in Vincent & McCabe, 1999).