

## The Effectiveness of Individual Counseling with the Reflection of Feeling Technique to Improve Self-Awareness and Self-Esteem

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Article Information	ABSTRACT
Received: February 2025	<p><b>Background:</b> Self-awareness and self-esteem are important aspects of psychological well-being, yet many students show low levels of self-awareness and self-esteem, which can hinder their personal development. <b>Aim:</b> This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of the reflection of feeling counseling technique in enhancing self-awareness and self-esteem among students. <b>Method:</b> The research uses an experimental method with a Single Subject Design (SSD) type A-B-A, where the baseline phase is conducted before and after the intervention across five sessions. In comparison, the intervention phase is carried out over eight counseling sessions. The research subjects are fifth-semester students from the Islamic Guidance and Counseling (BKI) program at IAIN Palangkaraya, selected through purposive sampling. Measurements are conducted using the adapted Situational Self Awareness Scale, Private Self-Consciousness Scale for self-awareness, and the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (CSEI) for self-esteem. <b>Results and Discussion:</b> The study results show a significant increase in self-esteem by 75.3% and self-awareness by 70.3% from the initial condition. The reflection of feeling technique effectively enhanced self-understanding and positive self-assessment among the participants. The stability of changes in the final phase indicates that this intervention has a positive long-term impact. <b>Conclusion:</b> This study concludes that the reflection of feeling technique can be an effective strategy for developing self-esteem and self-awareness in individual counseling.</p>
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**Keywords:** Individual Counseling, the Reflection of Feeling Technique, Self-awareness, Self-esteem



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## INTRODUCTION

Self-awareness is the ability of an individual to recognize and understand their feelings, thoughts, and behaviors, as well as how these aspects affect those around them. It includes understanding personal strengths, weaknesses, values, and motives. With high self-awareness, people can manage their emotions better, make more informed decisions, and interact with others more effectively. Self-awareness can develop through self-reflection, feedback from others, and developing skills to be more aware of bodily and mental reactions in various situations.

Self-awareness allows individuals to understand and accept themselves holistically, enhancing their sense of worth and competence (Klussman et al., 2022; Rosenberg et al., 1995). In line with these findings, Morin (2011) stated that self-awareness is a crucial prerequisite for forming healthy self-esteem (Coutinho et al., 2024). Through self-awareness, individuals can recognize and evaluate themselves objectively, including both positive and negative aspects. A deeper understanding of oneself facilitates self-acceptance and the development of more adaptive self-esteem (Coutinho et al., 2024; Morin, 2011). Research by Rosenberg et al. (1995)

indicates that increased self-awareness can improve self-esteem. When individuals become more aware of their strengths, weaknesses, and uniqueness, they tend to develop a more positive self-assessment (Heine et al., 2024).

Self-esteem is an individual's evaluation of themselves, whether they perceive themselves as worthy, competent, and deserving (Orth & Robins, 2022; Rosenberg, 1965). This concept is a fundamental aspect of self-identity formation and psychological well-being. Individuals with high self-esteem tend to view themselves positively, feel confident, and believe they are valuable (Baumeister et al., 2003; Pignault et al., 2023). They believe they possess the abilities, qualities, and character necessary to face challenges and achieve goals optimistically (Bortolotti, 2018; Sowislo & Orth, 2013).

Conversely, low-emerged individuals tend to view themselves negatively, feel unworthy, and lack confidence (Baumeister, 1999; Kupferberg & Hasler, 2023). They often blame themselves for difficulties and develop feelings of incapacity (Klussman et al., 2022; Rosenberg et al., 1995). This condition can lead to psychological problems, such as depression, anxiety, and harmful behaviors (Bortolotti, 2018; Sowislo & Orth, 2013). Self-esteem is formed from various

sources, such as past experiences, acceptance from the environment, and social comparisons (Harris & Orth, 2020; Leary & Baumeister, 2000). Experiences of success, support from loved ones, and positive self-comparisons with others can increase self-esteem. Conversely, experiences of failure, rejection, and negative self-comparisons can lower self-esteem (Aslan & DemİR, 2023; Leary et al., 1995).

In addition, self-esteem can also be influenced by cultural and gender factors. Studies show that self-esteem tends to be higher in cultures that value individuality and achievement and among individuals who belong to the majority gender in a culture (Kling et al., 1999; Merino et al., 2024; Schmitt & Allik, 2005). The importance of self-esteem in an individual's life has been widely studied. High self-esteem is associated with various positive outcomes, such as good mental health, better interpersonal relationships, and higher academic or job performance (Baumeister et al., 2003; Orth & Robins, 2022; Trzesniewski et al., 2006). On the other hand, low self-esteem can be a risk factor for various psychological problems and harmful behaviors (Bortolotti, 2018; Sowislo & Orth, 2013). Therefore, efforts to improve self-esteem are important in counseling and everyday life. Techniques such as feeling reflection, positive feedback, and self-development can help individuals build healthier and more adaptive self-esteem, (Carkhuff, 1969; Ivey et al., 2018).

Previous studies have shown that self-esteem can affect self-awareness. Baumeister (1999) argues that individuals with high self-esteem tend to be more open to exploring and understanding themselves more deeply. Their positive self-acceptance and self-confidence encourage them to engage in introspection and develop self-awareness (Baumeister, 1999; Kupferberg & Hasler, 2023). Another study by Carver (1979) also revealed that high self-esteem can serve as a motivator for increasing self-awareness. Individuals with high self-esteem feel safer and more comfortable focusing on themselves, thereby developing a deeper understanding of themselves (Carver, 1979; Yao, 2023).

Thus, it can be concluded that self-esteem and self-awareness have a reciprocal relationship. An increase in self-awareness can drive an increase in self-esteem and vice versa. Understanding the dynamics between these two concepts can help in designing effective interventions to enhance an individual's psychological well-being.

Although many studies have shown a relationship between self-esteem and self-awareness, several areas still need further exploration. In terms of cultural context variation, most studies on the relationship between self-awareness and self-esteem have been conducted in Western countries, such as the United States and Europe (Kling et al., 1999; Merino et al., 2024; Schmitt & Allik, 2005). This presents an opportunity for researchers to explore more studies that consider cultural differences, particularly in non-Western countries, to examine whether cultural factors influence the dynamics between self-awareness and self-esteem.

Understanding cultural variations can provide a more comprehensive insight into the relationship between these constructs. Most of the existing studies are cross-sectional, so they have not yet explained the dynamics of the relationship between self-awareness and self-esteem in the long term (Carden et al., 2022; Trzesniewski et al., 2006). This also serves as a reference for researchers as longitudinal studies are needed to explore how self-awareness and self-esteem influence each other over time. While it is known that self-awareness and self-esteem are interrelated, it is still unclear which intervention strategies are most effective in simultaneously improving both (Carkhuff, 1969; Ivey et al., 2018). Therefore, further research is needed to explore specific interventions, such as counseling techniques, training, or self-development programs, that can simultaneously enhance both self-awareness and self-esteem. The findings from such studies could provide more concrete guidance for practitioners in designing holistic interventions to improve client well-being.

One counseling technique that can enhance self-awareness and self-esteem is the reflection of feeling technique in person-centered therapy. This technique aims to help clients become aware of and understand the feelings they are experiencing (Ivey et al., 2018). According to Rogers (1959), the person-centered therapy approach emphasizes creating a counseling climate conducive to the client's self-development (Fadli et al., 2021). One key element of this approach is the reflection of feeling, where the counselor empathetically captures and reflects the feelings experienced by the client (Fadli et al., 2021; Rogers & Koch, 1959). Previous studies have shown that the reflection of feeling technique can effectively increase the client's self-awareness. When clients are guided to become more aware of and understand their feelings in depth, they can gain better insights into themselves (Ivey et al., 2018). A deeper understanding of oneself can lead to increased self-awareness.

Furthermore, the increase in self-awareness resulting from the reflection of feeling technique can also improve the client's self-esteem. Rosenberg et al. (1995) found that when clients become more aware of their strengths, weaknesses, and uniqueness, they tend to develop a more positive self-assessment (Klussman et al., 2022; Rosenberg et al., 1995). The process of recognizing and accepting oneself as a whole facilitates the formation of healthier self-esteem. Another study by Carkhuff (1969) also showed that the reflection of feeling technique can increase clients' self-esteem, especially when the counselor creates a safe and supportive atmosphere for the client to explore their feelings (Carkhuff, 1969; Li et al., 2022). In such a conducive climate, the client can better understand themselves and build a more positive self-assessment.

However, the effectiveness of the reflection of feeling technique in enhancing self-awareness and self-esteem may also be influenced by other factors, such as the counselor's

skills, client characteristics, and cultural context (Carkhuff, 1969; Li et al., 2022; Rogers & Koch, 1959). Therefore, adjustments and further development of this technique may be necessary to provide optimal benefits for the client.

Although previous research has shown that the reflection of feeling technique in individual counseling can help enhance the client's self-awareness (Ivey et al., 2018), its effectiveness in improving self-esteem remains inconsistent (Carkhuff, 1969; Li et al., 2022; Rogers & Koch, 1959). Some studies indicate that increased self-awareness can improve self-esteem (Klussman et al., 2022; Rosenberg et al., 1995), but specific interventions that can enhance both aspects simultaneously have not been fully identified.

Based on the self-awareness theory proposed by Duval and Wicklund (1972), self-awareness is an essential prerequisite for forming healthy self-esteem. When individuals have a deeper understanding of themselves, including their strengths and weaknesses, they tend to develop more positive self-assessments. However, consistent empirical findings have not fully supported this theory, particularly regarding the dynamics between self-awareness and self-esteem in counseling (Carden et al., 2022; Duval & Wicklund, 1972). Furthermore, the person-centered therapy theory developed by Rogers (1959) emphasizes the importance of creating a counseling climate conducive to the client's self-development. In this theory, the reflection of feeling technique is positioned as a key element to facilitate self-awareness and self-esteem. However, its effectiveness in enhancing both aspects simultaneously still requires further testing, especially in more diverse cultural contexts.

Thus, there is a gap between existing theories and empirical findings regarding the relationship between self-awareness, self-esteem, and the effectiveness of the reflection of feeling technique in individual counseling.

As a preliminary study, the researcher conducted observations and initial interviews to obtain an overview of the self-awareness and self-esteem conditions among the client group, as well as the reflection of feeling technique in individual counseling practices. During the initial observation conducted in a group counseling session with students from the BKI program at IAIN Palangkaraya, it was found that most clients demonstrated a low level of self-awareness, as seen in their difficulty identifying and expressing the emotions they were experiencing. Some clients also displayed unhealthy self-esteem, characterized by negative self-assessment, lack of confidence, and a tendency to blame themselves for the problems they were facing. In the initial interview results, most clients also admitted that they still struggled to understand and manage the emotions that arose within them. Several clients stated that their self-assessment tended to be negative, which hindered the achievement of counseling goals.

The findings from this preliminary study suggest the need to further explore the effectiveness of the reflection of feeling technique in improving clients' self-awareness and self-

esteem. This research is expected to provide new insights into counseling strategies that can simultaneously enhance both aspects.

Based on the above description, this study aims to determine and analyze the effectiveness of the reflection of feeling technique in individual counseling in enhancing clients' self-awareness and self-esteem.

## METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with a Single Subject Design (SSD) experimental design. The SSD design was chosen because it aligns with the research objective, which is to test the effectiveness of individual counseling using the reflection of feeling technique in enhancing self-awareness and self-esteem in participants. The type of single-subject design used is A-B-A:

1. A1 (baseline-1): 5 sessions of initial measurement.  
In this phase, the researcher will initially measure the participants' self-awareness and self-esteem before providing the counseling intervention.
2. B (intervention): 8 counseling sessions.  
In this phase, participants will receive individual counseling for eight sessions using the reflection of feeling technique. The researcher will conduct regular measurements of self-awareness and self-esteem throughout the intervention phase.
3. A2 (baseline-2): 5 sessions of final measurement.  
After the intervention phase is complete, the researcher will conduct another measurement of the participants' self-awareness and self-esteem to observe any changes that have occurred.

The population in this study consists of students from the Islamic Guidance and Counseling (BKI) program, semester 5, at IAIN Palangkaraya. Semester 5 students were chosen because, at this stage, they have acquired basic knowledge and skills in guidance and counseling, making them capable of understanding and actively engaging in the individual counseling process. Additionally, fifth-semester students are considered to have sufficient experience during their coursework, allowing them to provide a richer perspective on issues related to self-awareness and self-esteem.

To obtain a sample that aligns with the research objectives, the researcher uses purposive sampling in sample selection. The criteria that will be considered in selecting the sample are as follows:

1. Students from the Islamic Guidance and Counseling (BKI) program, semester 5.
2. Demonstrates issues related to self-awareness and self-esteem that align with the focus of the study.
3. Has low self-awareness and self-esteem based on the results of the initial assessment.
4. Is not currently involved in any other counseling process during the research period.

5. Has good communication skills, allowing them to provide information openly and in-depth during the counseling process.

Total Score Interpretation (20-100):

- a. Very Low: 20-35
- b. Low: 36-51

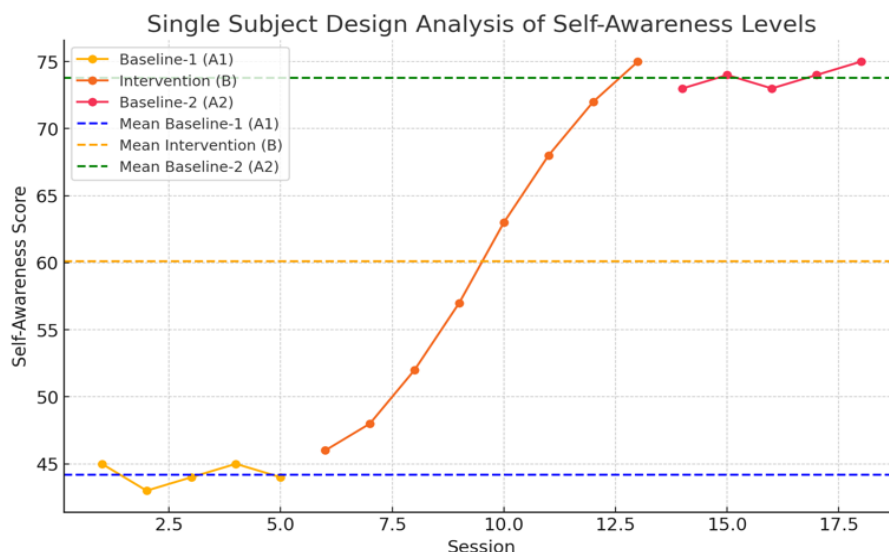


Figure 1. The Visual of SSD Analysis of Self Awareness Levels

6. Is willing and committed to actively participating in the individual counseling process throughout the study.

Considering these criteria, one (1) student from the Islamic Guidance and Counseling (BKI) program, semester 5, was selected as the most suitable participant for the study using the Single Subject Design (SSD) research design. The selection of this single participant allows the researcher to conduct in-depth observation and analysis regarding the effectiveness of individual counseling using the reflection of feeling technique to improve the selected participant's self-awareness and self-esteem.

The measurement of self-awareness uses an adapted scale from the Situational Self Awareness Scale and the Private Self-Consciousness Scale ( $\alpha = 0.89$ ); (Construct Validity)  $r = 0.76$ ; (Reliability)  $r = 0.84$ , (Fenigstein et al., 1975) with 25 items and a 1-5 Likert scale. The aspects included in this scale are divided into five categories: emotional awareness, self-evaluation, self-regulation, social awareness, and present self-awareness.

Total Score Categories:

- a. Very Low: 25-45
- b. Low: 46-65
- c. Moderate: 66-85
- d. High: 86-105
- e. Very High: 106-125

For the measurement of self-esteem, the modified Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (CSEI) was used with the following Validity and reliability indices: Content Validity Index ( $\alpha = 0.92$ ); Construct Validity:  $r = 0.85$ ; Concurrent Validity:  $r = 0.78$ ; Cronbach's Alpha: 0.92; Test-retest reliability:  $r = 0.88$ ; Split-half reliability:  $r = 0.87$ . The inventory consists of 20 items with a 1-5 Likert scale, evaluating four aspects: general self, social self, home parents, and academic self.

- c. Moderate: 52-67
- d. High: 68-83
- e. Very High: 84-100

The data obtained from the measurements of self-awareness and self-esteem were analyzed visually by comparing the patterns of change between the phases (A1, B, A2). The analysis focused on changes in the data level, trend, and stability in each phase. Additionally, the researcher conducted a statistical analysis using paired t-tests to compare the baseline scores (A1) with the post-intervention scores (end of phase B) for each participant. This was done to determine the significance of the changes that occurred in self-awareness and self-esteem. This study uses visual analysis to monitor self-awareness and self-esteem score changes during each counseling session.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

#### Self-Awareness

The study results show a significant improvement in self-awareness after implementing individual counseling using the reflection of feeling technique. In the Baseline-1 (A1) phase, the subject's self-awareness score remained stable, with an average of 44.2, obtained through five measurements over ten days. After the intervention began, the Intervention (B) phase consistently increased scores in each counseling session, starting from 46 in the first session and reaching 75 in the eighth session, with an average of 60.1. This significant

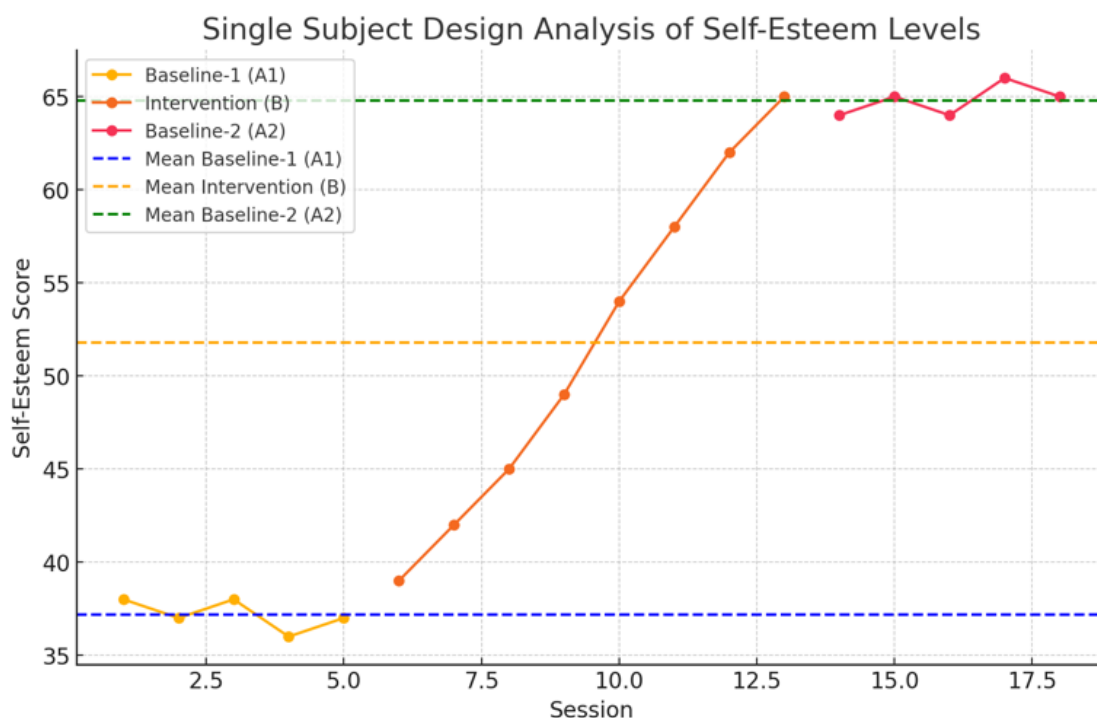


Figure 2. The Visual of SSD Analysis of Self Esteem Levels

feeling technique in promoting deeper self-awareness. In the Baseline-2 (A2) phase, conducted one week after the intervention, the self-awareness score remained high, averaging 73.8, indicating the stability of the intervention's results. Visual analysis indicates a strong upward trend during the intervention phase, with a level change of +31 points (70.3%) from the initial baseline and stability in the final baseline. These findings meet the success criteria with a minimum 50% improvement and score stability, demonstrating that the intervention successfully improved and maintained the subject's self-awareness. Below is the visual analysis graph for the self-awareness variable using the SSD design:

The visual analysis of the graph above shows significant changes in self-awareness scores between the Baseline-1 (A1), Intervention (B), and Baseline-2 (A2) phases:

1. Baseline-1 (A1) Phase: The self-awareness score remained relatively stable, ranging from 43 to 45, with an average of 44.2. This indicates the initial condition before the intervention, which remained constant.
2. Intervention (B) Phase: After the intervention began, scores significantly increased from session to session, starting at 46 and reaching 75. The average score in this phase sharply increased to 60.1, indicating the strong influence of the intervention on self-awareness.
3. Baseline-2 (A2) Phase: After the intervention ended, the scores remained higher, ranging from 73 to 75, with an average of 73.8. This indicates that the improvement in self-awareness achieved during the intervention phase persisted even after the intervention stopped.

significant positive effect on self-awareness, with the improvement sustained at a higher level in the Baseline-2 (A2) phase, reinforcing the long-term effectiveness of the intervention. The visual analysis results indicate a significant increase in both variables after the counseling intervention was administered, with the score improvements persisting even after the intervention phase ended. These findings suggest that the reflection of feeling technique effectively promotes the sustainable development of self-awareness and self-esteem in clients undergoing individual counseling.

### Self-Esteem

The study results indicate a significant improvement in self-esteem scores after intervention using the reflection of feeling technique. In the Baseline-1 (A1) phase, the average self-esteem score was 37.2, with stable scores across the aspects of general self, social self, home-parents, and academic self, measured every two days. Following the intervention, the Intervention Phase (B) showed a gradual increase with an average score of 51.8, where each session focused on reflecting on positive experiences and mapping personal strengths. One week after the intervention, the improvement continued into the Baseline-2 (A2) phase, with an average score reaching 64.8. Visual analysis showed a continuous upward trend with a level change of +28 points, or 75.3%, from the initial baseline phase. The increase occurred consistently across all self-esteem aspects, meeting the research success criteria with a minimum 30% improvement and score stability achieved in the final phase. Below is the visual analysis graph of the self-esteem variable with the SSD design:



The visual analysis of the graph above shows a significant change in self-esteem scores between the Baseline-1 (A1), Intervention (B), and Baseline-2 (A2) phases.

1. Baseline-1 Phase (A1): The self-esteem scores remained relatively stable, ranging from 36 to 38, with an average of 37.2. This indicates the stability of the initial condition before the intervention.
2. Intervention Phase (B): After the intervention began, self-esteem scores showed a significant and consistent increase from session to session, starting at 39 and reaching 65 in the final session. The average for this phase sharply increased to 51.8, indicating the positive effect of the intervention on self-esteem.
3. Baseline-2 Phase (A2): After the intervention ended, the scores remained high, ranging between 64 and 66, with an average of 64.8. This suggests that the improvement achieved during the intervention phase persisted even after the intervention was stopped, demonstrating the long-term effect of the intervention.

This visual analysis indicates that the intervention significantly impacted self-esteem, with the improvement persisting until the Baseline-2 (A2) phase.

## DISCUSSION

### Effectiveness on Self-Awareness

This study demonstrates a significant increase in participants' self-awareness after undergoing intervention using the reflection of feeling technique. Participants' self-awareness showed a baseline level before the intervention in the initial phase. After eight counseling sessions, a sustained improvement was observed through the post-intervention phase, aligning with the theory that the reflection of feeling technique consistently positively impacts participants' self-awareness (Anderson & Ascher, 2000; Liu et al., 2025; Rogers, 1951). The stability of the scores at the final phase also indicates that the changes achieved were long-lasting, meeting the research success criteria.

The intervention aimed to enhance participants' self-awareness through deep reflection on various emotional aspects and self-acceptance. During the initial sessions, the focus was on building rapport and exploring basic emotions, where participants showed initial resistance to the reflection process, in line with the theory that early barriers in reflection are common due to low self-awareness and self-confidence (Liu et al., 2025; Rogers, 1961, n.d.). As the sessions progressed, participants became more open to identifying their feelings, reflecting a continuous improvement in each subsequent intervention session. By the third session, when participants were encouraged to explore deeper emotions, they demonstrated enhanced self-awareness, indicating increased openness to the reflection process.

The findings of this study support the idea that self-awareness can develop gradually through the reflection of feeling technique, where participants are trained to reflect

deeply on their feelings and thoughts. In the later sessions, the focus of the intervention shifted toward reinforcing awareness through reflecting on thought patterns, consistent with the view that deep reflection on thoughts and personal experiences helps participants become more aware of their emotions and mental processes, enabling them to recognize their strengths and limitations, (Anderson & Ascher, 2000; Liu et al., 2025). Significant improvement was observed in the final sessions, where participants fully integrated change. This aligns with the theory that the reflection of feeling technique effectively encourages participants to identify and accept their emotions and internalize the awareness achieved during the counseling sessions (Kaisler et al., 2023; Kegan, 2010).

The stability of the scores in the post-intervention phase indicates that the changes achieved through the intervention had a stable and consistent effect. The success criteria of this research were met, with substantial improvement from the initial baseline and stable scores at the final phase. The consistent upward trend from the initial to the final phase supports the argument that this intervention is not only effective in creating initial changes but also successfully maintains those changes beyond the active counseling sessions, contributing significantly to the understanding of sustainable interventions in developing self-awareness, (Kaisler et al., 2023; Kegan, 2010).

Overall, this study shows that the reflection of feeling technique is effective in improving self-awareness, particularly through a gradual approach that focuses on various emotional aspects and self-acceptance. This systematic approach allows counselors to help clients understand, explore, and accept their emotions and thought patterns, a crucial foundation for developing self-awareness. These findings align with the literature stating that consistent, targeted reflection can help clients develop deep self-awareness, positively impacting their ability to live with greater awareness and acceptance (London et al., 2023; Neff, 2003).

From the discussion above, it can be understood that the reflection of feeling technique has proven to be effective in improving the subject's self-awareness. The improvement reflects the significant impact of the intervention, with supporting factors such as emotional recognition through reflection, accurate counselor feedback, and deep self-exploration.

### Effectiveness on Self-Esteem

This study's results indicate a significant increase in participants' self-esteem after the intervention, as seen from the positive changes between the initial, intervention, and post-intervention phases. This change aligns with self-esteem theory, which explains that counseling interventions using the reflection of feeling technique can build and sustain improvements in self-esteem over time (Liu et al., 2025; Rogers, 1961, n.d.).

The intervention consisted of eight progressive sessions targeting various aspects of self-esteem, such as general self,

social self, home-parents, and academic self. Each session was designed with a specific focus, where the reflection of feeling technique played a key role in helping participants identify and internalize positive values about themselves. This is consistent with the theory that emphasizing gradual reflection has proven effective in promoting the development of different aspects of self-esteem, thus building a stronger foundation for self-worth in subsequent phases (Gendlin, 1968; Liu et al., 2025; Rogers, 1961, n.d.).

The significant improvement in each dimension is also consistent with the multidimensional approach used, supporting the view that a person's self-esteem is influenced by various external and internal factors, including social support, positive family relationships, and academic achievement (Ismail, 2015; Putri & Lutfianawati, 2023). In other words, the improvements in dimensions such as general self and academic self confirm that an approach that considers the participants' psychosocial complexity effectively maximizes changes in each aspect of self-esteem (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Vansteenkiste et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the stability of scores in the post-intervention phase strengthens the argument that the changes produced are not merely temporary but indicate the long-term impact of the intervention. This consistency is supported by the systematic implementation of the reflection of feeling technique, which involves unconditional acceptance, emotional validation, and positive reinforcement as key factors in maintaining the achieved outcomes.

Overall, these findings support the evidence that a gradual and multidimensional approach in counseling effectively improves the various elements that make up overall self-esteem. This study reinforces the view that improving self-esteem requires a comprehensive approach that accommodates the psychological complexity of individuals, consistent with earlier theories emphasizing the importance of emotional support and unconditional acceptance in the self-development process (Bandura et al., 1999; Muris & Otgaar, 2023; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Thus, this intervention model can serve as a valuable strategy for enhancing self-esteem across various cultural contexts and diverse populations.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study shows that individual counseling using the reflection of feeling technique is effective in improving self-awareness and self-esteem, with increases of 70.3% and 75.3%, respectively. Furthermore, the positive changes in both variables were sustained in the baseline-2 phase, indicating the long-term impact of the intervention.

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