

IMPLEMENTATION OF INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING OF COGNITIVE DISPUTE TECHNIQUES TO IMPROVE THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

IMPLEMENTASI KONSELING INDIVIDU TEKNIK DISPUTE KOGNITIF UNTUK MENINGKATKAN KESEJAHTERAAN PSIKOLOGIS SISWA SMP

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Abstract

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengimplementasikan dan mengevaluasi efektivitas konseling individu dengan teknik dispute kognitif dalam meningkatkan kesejahteraan psikologis siswa SMP di Pesanggaran. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kuantitatif eksperimental dengan Fase dasar (A) dan fase intervensi (B) terdiri dari desain A-B dan metodologi penelitian subjek tunggal (SSR). Subjek penelitian dipilih secara purposif, yaitu siswa kelas tujuh yang memiliki tingkat kesejahteraan psikologis yang buruk berdasarkan hasil pengukuran pertama. Intervensi diberikan dalam bentuk konseling individu menggunakan teknik dispute kognitif. Hasil penelitian ini diharapkan dapat menunjukkan adanya peningkatan pada aspek kesejahteraan psikologis siswa setelah diberikan intervensi, seperti meningkatnya rasa percaya diri, kontrol diri, makna hidup, dan hubungan positif dengan orang lain. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga memberikan gambaran praktis tentang penerapan teknik konseling kognitif dalam konteks pendidikan dan bimbingan di sekolah. Penelitian ini tidak hanya berkontribusi dalam bidang bimbingan dan konseling, tetapi juga menjadi referensi bagi guru BK dan praktisi pendidikan dalam mengembangkan layanan konseling berbasis pendekatan kognitif untuk mendukung kesehatan mental peserta didik secara menyeluruh.

Abstract

This study aims to implement and demonstrate the effectiveness of individual counseling using cognitive disputation techniques in improving the psychological well-being of junior high school students in Pesanggaran. The research method used is a quantitative experimental one with a baseline phase (A) and an intervention phase (B) consisting of an A-B design and a single-subject research methodology (SSR). The research subjects were purposively selected, namely seventh-grade students who had poor psychological well-being based on the results of the first measurement. The intervention was provided in the form of individual counseling using cognitive disputation techniques. The results of this study are expected to show an improvement in aspects of students' psychological well-being after being given the intervention, such as increased self-confidence, self-control, meaning in life, and positive relationships with others. In addition, this study also provides a practical overview of the application of cognitive counseling techniques in the context of education and guidance in schools. This research not only contributes to the field of guidance and counseling, but also serves as a reference for guidance and counseling teachers and education practitioners in developing counseling services based on a cognitive approach to support students' overall mental health.

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INTRODUCTION

The learning process is carried out face-to-face between teachers and students. So that in this process, the psychological well-being of students in the school environment is very important for the smooth learning process in the classroom and in the school environment. Therefore, the psychological well-being of students is very important for students in facing any problems. Conditions like this can raise concerns about the continuity of student learning, which of course really needs companions and supervisors in learning.

Psychological well-being, according to Ryff (1989), is the full realization of a person's capacity to accept themselves as they are, build loving relationships with others, manage their environment, set goals for their lives, and realize their own potential. In their quantitative study using the WHO-5 Welfare Index, Hutagalung, Arianto, and Sinaga (2022) defined psychological well-being as a state of mind that is healthy, constructive, and operates optimally. Kartikasari & Priscella (2021) in a study of high school adolescents in Cisarua stated that psychological well-being is a positive psychological state that allows individuals to function optimally and achieve their expected life goals. Icha Lestari et al. (2024) through research on orphanage adolescents in Aceh concluded that psychological well-being is the ability to master the environment and achieve personal growth. Keyes and Haidt (2002) define psychological well-being as a blend of good psychological function and positive emotions, such as satisfaction, meaning of life, and social engagement, that allow individuals to live meaningfully and productively. Therefore, psychological well-being can be defined as a positive and healthy state of mental health that allows people to perform at their best, achieve their goals, control their environment, and live a meaningful life with others.

There are six markers of psychological well-being, according to Ryff (1989, 2014; in Ryan & Deci, 2001), Ryff and Keyes (1995), and Ryff and Singer (1996, 2008). These are as follows: a) Self-acceptance. Self-acceptance is the ability to accept oneself; b) Good interpersonal interaction. People's ability to build positive relationships with those around them is known as positive relationships; c) Autonomy. The ability to be free while controlling one's life and behavior is referred to as autonomy; d) control over one's environment. The ability to control one's environment is referred to as environmental mastery; e) Purpose in life. According to this dimension, having a purpose in life shows that people are confident in their ability to achieve their goals and have a clear understanding of the direction of their life; f) Personal progress. In this dimension, personal growth is defined by a balanced sense of personal progress, in which individuals perceive themselves as constantly evolving individuals.

The phenomenon of declining psychological well-being among junior high school students is increasingly becoming a concern in the world of education, especially in the Integrated Islamic School (IT) environment which also has a strong approach to character and spirituality education. At Pesanggaran IT Junior High School, several problems were found that indicated the low psychological well-being of grade 7 students. The results of initial observations and interviews with BK (Guidance Counseling) teachers and homeroom teachers showed that some students experienced social anxiety, lack of confidence, felt unwelcome in a friendly environment, and were unable to manage academic pressure. Some students also tend to withdraw, exhibit passive behavior, and experience protracted inner conflicts.

These problems, if left unchecked, can have a negative impact on psychological development, learning achievement, and even students' mental health. Therefore, appropriate and systematic interventions are needed to help students improve their psychological well-being. One of the approaches that can be used in such interventions is through individual counseling services with the application of cognitive dispute techniques. Individual counseling is a form of counseling service that is personal and face-to-face between counselors and counselees. This service allows counselors to understand students' problems in depth and provide more specific and targeted help. In practice, individual counseling is very effective in dealing with students' personal, emotional, and cognitive problems because of the existence of a safe and empathetic space for exploration.

One of the techniques that can be used in individual counseling to deal with students' cognitive and emotional problems is the cognitive dispute technique. This technique is part of the Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) approach developed by Albert Ellis. Cognitive dispute is a technique used to challenge and replace irrational thoughts or unhealthy beliefs with more rational, logical, and adaptive thoughts. Corey (2013) describes *cognitive dispute* as the main technique in REBT that is used to help clients identify, evaluate, and replace illogical beliefs with more adaptive minds. This dispute is carried out by means of an active dialogue between the counselor and the client. Neenan and Palmer (2001) emphasize that *cognitive dispute* is not just about replacing negative thoughts, but also shaping a more rational way of thinking through Socratic dialogue. Hakim, Netrawati, and Karneli (2024) explain that the *cognitive dispute* technique in REBT counseling is a systematic method to identify, challenge, and change irrational beliefs. Beck (1976) in the framework of cognitive therapy states that the dispute over negative automatic thoughts is at the core of cognitive restructuring. This process helps individuals recognize cognitive biases and challenges negative assumptions that distort perceptions of reality. Therefore, it can be concluded that cognitive dispute is a systematic technique in counseling to challenge and replace irrational thoughts or beliefs through active and reflective dialogue, in order to form a more rational and adaptive mindset.

The following procedure is used to carry out the stages of individual therapy Ellis (2003) using cognitive conflict techniques: The next step is to replace irrational thoughts with more objective and calming rational thoughts. a) Identifying irrational thoughts or beliefs that lead to negative emotions, such as excessive fear or feelings of worthlessness; b) Analyze and question these thoughts using logical questions, such as "Are these thoughts realistic?" "Is there any evidence to support these thoughts?" and "Are these thoughts helping or harming me?"

By conducting a dispute process against negative or maladaptive thoughts that students believe, students are expected to form a new and healthier perspective on themselves, the environment, and their future. The application of cognitive dispute techniques in individual counseling aims to turn negative beliefs such as "I will never be acceptable to friends," or "I always have to be perfect to be happy," into more realistic beliefs that support self-growth, such as "it's okay if I haven't been accepted by everyone, the important thing is that I remain who I am," or "I don't have to be perfect to feel valuable. In addition to lowering mental stress, this procedure improves psychological well-being traits such as autonomy, healthy relationships, and self-acceptance.

Various previous studies have shown the effectiveness of cognitive dispute techniques in improving students' psychological conditions. For example, research by Saputri & Sulastomo (2021) shows that the application of REBT with cognitive dispute techniques is effective in reducing academic anxiety and increasing the confidence of junior high school students. Another study by Nurhayati (2020) proves that counseling interventions with the REBT approach are able to increase the dimensions of environmental mastery and self-development in high school students. However, research on the implementation of cognitive dispute techniques that specifically target efforts to improve overall psychological well-being, especially in 7th grade IT junior high school students in rural areas such as Pesanggaran, is still very limited. This is an important gap that needs to be further researched, considering the social, cultural, and spiritual context in the Integrated Islamic school environment which also plays a role in shaping the psychological dynamics of students.

Thus, the research entitled "Implementation of Individual Counseling with Cognitive Dispute Techniques to Improve the Psychological Welfare of Grade 7 Students of SMP IT Pesanggaran" aims to examine in depth how the process of applying cognitive dispute techniques in individual counseling can provide positive changes to the psychological well-being of students. This research is also expected to be a reference and inspiration for BK teachers, counseling practitioners, and schools in developing appropriate, effective, and contextual intervention approaches to help students face the various psychological challenges they experience.

METHOD

This type of research is an experimental quantitative research with a Single Subject Research (SSR) approach. This study aims to determine the effect of the application of individual counseling using *cognitive dispute* techniques in improving students' psychological well-being in depth and focused on specific individuals. According to Sudjana (2005), the SSR approach is used to systematically examine behavioral changes in one subject or small group through repeated observations. Thus, this study is suitable for determining psychological changes in subjects before and after intervention.

The design used is a Single Case Design pattern A-B, which consists of two phases, namely phase A (Baseline) and Phase B (Intervention). Phase A (baseline) is the initial measurement phase of the subject's psychological well-being before the intervention is given. In this phase, repeated observations and measurements were carried out (at least three times) to obtain stable data on the initial condition of the subject. Phase B (Intervention) is a phase of providing intervention in the form of individual counseling with cognitive dispute techniques to selected subjects. During this phase, psychological well-being measurements are carried out periodically to monitor the changes that occur as a result of the intervention. According to Sugiyono (2018), the A-B design in SSR allows researchers to observe changes in behavior or conditions in individuals directly due to the treatment given, so that the effectiveness of the intervention can be tested even with limited subjects.

The research subject is an individual who is the target of the research. Matters related to the research subject are population and samples. The population in this study is all students in grade VII of SMP IT Grafika Pesanggaran. This population was chosen because early adolescence is a developmental phase that is prone to experiencing psychological well-being disorders due to the transition from childhood to adolescence. Based on the findings of the assessment using a validated psychological well-being scale, the sample was deliberately selected to include students with low psychological well-being scores, such as the *Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scale*. The subject was chosen by one student according to the needs of the SSR design, namely the student with the initials

OS. According to Notoatmodjo (2012), the purposive sampling technique is used when the researcher has known the characteristics of the subject that are relevant to the research objectives, so that the sampling becomes more targeted and on target.

The Psychological Well-Being Scale is the instrument used in this study. This scale was developed based on Carol D. Ryff's (1989) theory of psychological well-being, which includes six main dimensions: (1) self-acceptance, (2) positive relationships with others, (3) autonomy, (4) mastery of the environment, (5) life purpose, and (6) personal growth. The questionnaire is a Likert scale with four answer choices very inappropriate (1), inappropriate (2), inappropriate (3), and very appropriate (4) consisting of 78 statements that proportionally represent all six components of psychological well-being.

The validity test was carried out using the content validity technique carried out by expert lecturers and empirical validity through the Pearson Product Moment *correlation test* for each statement item. The validity test of the content was carried out by one guidance and counseling expert who assessed the suitability of the contents of the item to the theoretical indicators of psychological well-being. The results of the empirical validity test showed that of the 78 items tested, as many as 46 items had a significance value of less than 0.05, so they were declared valid. Invalid items, as many as 32 items, were then revised and not used in the collection of research data.

Table 1. Psychological Well-Being Category Table

Yes	Psychological Well-Being Outcome Score	Category
1	159-184	Very High
2	131-158	Tall
3	103-130	Keep
4	75-102	Low
5	46-74	Very Low

Cronbach's Alpha technique was used to test the internal consistency between statements in a psychological well-being questionnaire as part of an instrument reliability test. A very high level of reliability is indicated by the value of the reliability coefficient of 0.927 obtained from the analysis results. Ghazali (2018) states that if an instrument's Cronbach's Alpha value is higher than 0.90, the instrument is considered to have excellent reliability. Therefore, this research instrument is considered very reliable and appropriate to be used in assessing students' psychological health on a regular basis. Thus, the psychological condition of students who are the subject of the research can be determined accurately, consistently, and representative using this psychological well-being questionnaire.

Because this study uses a single-subject research design, data analysis was conducted separately. A quantitative descriptive approach is used to analyze the data. The purpose of quantitative descriptive research is to characterize a phenomenon. or certain conditions objectively using numerical data. This approach does not look for cause-effect relationships, but rather presents facts based on the results of measurements on the variables studied. Data analysis was carried out with descriptive statistics such as average, percentage, and frequency. The results of this study provide an accurate overview of the characteristics of the population or sample being studied (Sugiyono, 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The initial condition of counseling before the intervention was in the form of *cognitive dispute* techniques, the psychological welfare condition of OS students was in the low category with a score of 96. At this stage, students show various characteristics of psychological discomfort such as excessive feelings of anxiety, low self-confidence, difficulty in managing emotions, and negative views of themselves and the future. Students tend to be trapped in irrational thoughts that worsen their psychological condition and hinder academic and social functioning in the school environment.

After students participated in a series of individual counseling sessions with *cognitive dispute* techniques, there were significant changes in various aspects of their psychological well-being. This technique gradually helps students to recognize and evaluate irrational thoughts that have been affecting their perception and emotional responses. In the counseling process, students are guided to identify unfounded negative beliefs, such as "I can't afford it," "I'm worthless," or "I'll always fail." These thoughts are then rationally reviewed and replaced with more realistic and positive thoughts, such as "I can try again," or "Failure is not the end of everything."

These changes began to be seen from the initial session of the intervention, marked by an increase in psychological well-being scores from 96 to 101 in the first intervention. Over time, students show progress in managing emotions, such as being able to calm down when feeling anxious or disappointed, and begin to show an open and confident attitude when interacting with friends and teachers. In the second and third interventions, scores increased significantly to 118 and 128, reflecting positive developments in aspects of self-esteem, self-acceptance, and interpersonal relationships.

At its peak, in the fourth intervention, the psychological well-being score reached 140 which was included in the high category. At this stage, students look more emotionally stable, have a positive self-perception, and are able to place life's challenges as something that can be faced, not avoided. He also showed a stronger motivation to learn and was more active in social activities at school. Overall, *cognitive dispute* techniques have been proven to be effective in helping students improve psychological well-being, both cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally. The value can be seen in the image below.

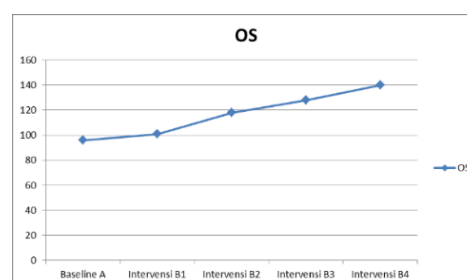


Figure 1. Graph of Changes in Psychological Well-Being Values of OS Students

Discussion

Based on the findings of the study, seventh grade students at SMP IT Grafika Pesanggaran received psychological benefits from individual counseling using a cognitive conflict approach. The student's psychological well-being score at baseline was 96, which is in the low range. Based on this,

children experience unwanted psychological conditions such as anxiety, self-destructive thoughts, difficulty establishing social relationships, and lack of self-control in dealing with school pressure. Other characteristics of this condition include a tendency to withdraw from social situations, feelings of giving up easily, and a lack of motivation to learn. This is in line with Ryff's (1989) theory which states that psychological well-being encompasses six main dimensions: autonomy, positive relationships with others, self-acceptance, mastery of the environment, life goals, and personal growth. In junior high school students, the lack of development of these aspects can have an impact on difficulties in adapting to the learning environment, establishing social relationships, and regulating emotions. Recent studies also emphasize the importance of psychological well-being in adolescence as a protective factor against stress and decreased academic function (Konu & Rimpelä, 2020). Research by Song, Zhang, and He (2021) shows that the Ryff psychological well-being scale is validly used to assess the well-being of adolescent-age students. The results showed that students with high levels of psychological well-being tended to have better self-esteem and healthy social relationships.

This initial condition was reinforced by the results of brief interviews with students before the intervention, which showed that students tended to feel worthless, afraid of making mistakes, and often felt pessimistic about their own abilities. This shows that negative and irrational thoughts have formed part of children's mindset in reacting to everyday obstacles, both at school and in their social environment. After being given an intervention with *cognitive dispute* techniques, students' psychological well-being scores gradually increased, namely 101 (first intervention), 118 (second intervention), 128 (third intervention), and 140 (fourth intervention), which were included in the high category. Consistent improvement from session to session suggests that the intervention has a gradual impact on students' mental health. Albert Ellis created the Rational Emotional Behavior Therapy (REBT) method, which includes cognitive debate procedures. This method aims to help people recognize, refute, and replace illogical ideas with more reasonable, logical, and practical ones (Ellis & Dryden, 2007). According to Ellis, negative emotions do not arise from the event itself, but rather from the individual's irrational interpretation of the event. Therefore, a change in mindset is the main key to achieving a healthier psychological state.

In counseling practice, students are invited to recognize irrational beliefs such as "I'm always a failure," "I'm not as good as everyone else," or "I have to be perfect to be accepted." This kind of belief is then processed with the counselor using the *ABCDE model* method of REBT, namely: Activating event (trigger event), Belief (belief/thought), Consequence (emotional/behavioral consequences), Disputing (denying negative thoughts), and Effect (the result of thinking changes). This process allows students to reassess their way of thinking and replace it with more rational views such as "I've failed, but I can learn from mistakes," or "I don't have to be perfect to be accepted." When thoughts change, emotions and behaviors also change.

An increase in the score to 140 in the fourth intervention showed that the students had undergone a significant psychological transformation. Students become more confident, able to express emotions more healthily, and have stronger internal motivation to learn and interact. Students also begin to show better social engagement, such as being active in class discussions, being more courageous in expressing opinions, and no longer avoiding challenging tasks.

These findings are reinforced by several previous research results. A study conducted by Pratiwi and Rachmawati (2021) proves that *cognitive disputation techniques* in individual counseling are effective in lowering academic anxiety and increasing the confidence of high school students. Similar results were also found by Dewi and Lestari (2020), where the application of the REBT technique succeeded in increasing self-acceptance and environmental mastery in junior high school students.

Research by Hasanah and Fauziah (2022) also supports these findings, concluding that *cognitive dispute* techniques help students develop rational mindsets, improve emotional regulation, and strengthen internal motivations that support psychological well-being. In addition, a study by Taufik, Mustika, and Hidayat (2023) shows that individual counseling with the REBT approach is effective in reducing academic stress and increasing the resilience of high school students.

In terms of additional theory, Beck (2011) in the Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) approach also states that negative automatic thoughts play a major role in shaping dysfunctional feelings and behaviors. When these negative thoughts are allowed to repeat, then the individual will form an unhealthy thinking scheme. CBT and REBT have similarities in the principle that a change in the way of thinking will bring about changes in emotions and actions. Similarly, Diener and Seligman (2004) in the concept of *positive psychology* emphasize that psychological well-being not only means being free from mental disorders, but also having feelings of satisfaction, optimism, and being able to manage life effectively.

By referring to the overall data, processes, and supporting theories, it can be concluded that *cognitive dispute* techniques in individual counseling not only help reduce negative psychological symptoms, but also reinforce positive aspects in students. Significantly improved psychological well-being reflects the success of interventions in shaping healthier attitudes, improving self-image, increasing resilience to stress, and creating a more positive outlook on life. These findings make an important contribution to guidance and counseling practices in schools, particularly in dealing with students who have difficulty adjusting emotionally and socially. *Cognitive dispute* techniques deserve to be considered as a systematic, structured, and change-oriented approach to long-term change. BK teachers can adopt this technique in individual counseling sessions as part of a responsive service program as well as the maintenance of students' mental well-being in general.

Therefore, the results of this study not only strengthen the theoretical evidence of the REBT approach, but also provide practical direction for the implementation of guidance and counseling services oriented to student empowerment through strengthening rational ways of thinking. In the midst of increasing psychosocial challenges faced by adolescents, counseling with a *cognitive dispute* approach can be a strategic solution to build a generation that is mentally resilient, emotionally healthy, and positive in outlook on life.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the implementation of individual counseling with *cognitive dispute* techniques has proven to be effective in improving the psychological well-being of grade VII students of SMP IT Grafika Pesanggaran. This technique is able to help students identify and replace irrational thoughts with more rational and adaptive thinking, thus positively impacting their emotional, social, and cognitive aspects. The increase in scores from the low category (96) in the initial stage to the high category (140) after the intervention showed a significant change in the psychological well-being of the students. Thus, *cognitive dispute* techniques are suitable for use as one of the intervention strategies in guidance and counseling services to support students' mental and emotional development.

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