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APPLICATION OF CBT THEORY USING THE TOUGHT STOPPING TECHNIQUE TO OVERCOME TRAUMA IN ADOLESCENTS WHO ARE VICTIMS OF FRAUD IN JOMBANG

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Abstract

This study aims to apply the tought stopping technique in overcoming or reducing trauma in adolescents who are victims of fraud, and researchers help to build and replace negative victim mindsets into positive thoughts. Friendship is a close relationship between one person and another. Friends are one of the things that have a big influence on a person's behavior and lifestyle. A friendship will give rise to goodness and badness at the same time. That is, if we are friends with good people then we will be influenced to be good, and vice versa if we are friends with bad people then we will be influenced to be bad too. Teenagers are often negligent and less careful in getting to know each other online, because one of the negative impacts is fraud. There are many cases of fraud through online media, such as WhatsApp Phishing. WhatsApp Phishing is an act of cyber fraud carried out by pretending to be a trusted party or official institution to steal personal information or data, credit cards, or blackmail. This must always be watched out for by adolescents because if we are affected and become victims of this case it will have extraordinary effects such as trauma.

Keywords: Trauma, Fraud, Tought Stopping

INTRODUCTION

Friendship or companionship refers to a close relationship between one individual and another. Friends play a significant role in shaping a person's behavior and overall life patterns. Every friendship potentially brings both positive and negative influences. When individuals associate with people who exhibit positive behavior, they are more likely to adopt similar positive traits. Conversely, associating with individuals who display negative behavior can also lead to negative influences in one's life.

During adolescence, forming mature social relationships with peers becomes one of the essential developmental tasks. Friendship relationships are inseparable from the adolescent world, as this phase is characterized by identity exploration and the search for new experiences. Adolescents undergo various transitions that involve biological, cognitive, and social changes, all of

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which influence how they interact with their environment and build relationships (Matondang, 2014).

Adolescence is a crucial stage in human development that requires serious attention because individuals experience numerous changes and challenges. This period is often described as a transitional phase from childhood to adulthood, during which individuals must adapt to new roles, responsibilities, and expectations. These changes frequently create internal conflicts and external pressures that can affect emotional stability.

Adolescents, typically within the age range of 18 to 24 years, are in the process of transitioning into adulthood. At this stage, they actively seek social connections and friendships, both through direct face-to-face interactions and via online media. Each method of forming relationships carries its own advantages and disadvantages. Direct interaction is generally considered safer because individuals can communicate face-to-face and more easily assess the character of others. In contrast, forming relationships through online platforms is convenient and efficient, but it also carries significant risks, including fraud, harassment, and deception.

Many adolescents tend to be careless and insufficiently cautious when forming online relationships. One of the most common negative consequences of online interaction is fraud. Numerous cases of online scams have been reported, including phishing through messaging applications. Phishing is a form of cybercrime in which perpetrators impersonate trusted individuals or official institutions to steal personal data, financial information, or to extort victims. Adolescents must remain vigilant because becoming a victim of such crimes can result in severe psychological effects, including trauma.

Trauma can be understood as a distressing experience that causes deep emotional pain and psychological wounds. It emerges from intense pressure or negative experiences in the past that continue to influence an individual's behavior, often leading to maladaptive or abnormal responses. Trauma disrupts emotional balance and interferes with an individual's ability to process information effectively. As a result, perceptions, emotions, beliefs, and memories related to the traumatic event may become deeply embedded, preventing adaptive psychological functioning.

The situation described above closely resembles the condition experienced by the client in this study. The researcher conducted an in-depth interview with the client on September 10, 2024. The client, referred to by the pseudonym Dudung, is a 21-year-old male adolescent who experiences trauma related to past events. The interview was conducted directly at the client's home, as the client is a relative of the researcher. During the interview and assessment process, Dudung openly shared the fears and emotional distress he has been experiencing. He recounted a traumatic experience related to fraud that has had a lasting impact on his psychological well-being.

According to Dudung's account, he became a victim of fraud perpetrated by someone he met through social media. At that time, he trusted the individual and intended to establish a business partnership, which led him to transfer a sum of money. Unfortunately, the expected outcomes never materialized, and he received no response or accountability from the individual. This experience left Dudung feeling deceived and deeply traumatized. As a result, he has since developed a strong distrust of people he meets through online platforms and social media.

Based on the problems experienced by the client, professional assistance from a counselor is necessary to help him cope with and resolve his psychological difficulties. Considering the client's developmental stage as an adolescent, support is especially important because this phase is highly

vulnerable to obstacles that can hinder healthy development. Adolescents who have experienced unpleasant or distressing events in the past often exhibit symptoms such as anxiety, restlessness, emotional instability, disappointment, and persistent fear. These conditions can negatively affect both psychological and physical well-being and are commonly associated with trauma.

In response to these issues, the researcher proposes the use of individual counseling services with a specific therapeutic technique suited to addressing trauma, namely the Thought Stopping technique. Thought Stopping is a cognitive technique aimed at suppressing and eliminating negative thoughts so that individuals can regain self-control and develop more productive thinking patterns. This technique is part of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and focuses on modifying maladaptive thought processes to influence positive behavioral change (Rofiq, 2022).

The application of Thought Stopping involves guiding the client to consciously interrupt negative thought patterns and replace them with more rational and constructive ones. This process helps prevent negative behaviors that often stem from persistent negative thinking. Through this technique, the counselor provides positive motivation and encourages the client to discontinue habitual negative thoughts, particularly those related to trauma and fear of forming new relationships through online media.

The researcher is interested in examining whether the Thought Stopping technique is effective in reducing the trauma experienced by the client. This technique is frequently applied to individuals who are excessively fixated on past events that cannot be changed. Similar to the client in this study, individuals with unresolved trauma often struggle to let go of painful memories. Additionally, the client exhibits a strong and rigid personality, which necessitates firm and structured guidance from the counselor to effectively interrupt negative thought patterns. For these reasons, the researcher conducted a study entitled "The Application of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Using the Thought Stopping Technique to Overcome Trauma in Adolescent Victims of Fraud in Jombang."

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design to explore the application of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy using the Thought Stopping technique in addressing trauma experienced by an adolescent victim of online fraud. The qualitative approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the client's psychological condition, subjective experiences, and changes in thought patterns following the counseling process. The subject of the study was a 21-year-old male adolescent residing in Jombang who experienced trauma after becoming a victim of online fraud. Data were collected in a natural setting to ensure authenticity and depth of information, allowing the researcher to capture the client's emotional responses, perceptions, and behavioral changes comprehensively (Sugiyono, 2013).

Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted directly with the client to explore the background of the traumatic experience, the emergence of negative thoughts, and emotional reactions related to online interactions. Observation was used to assess behavioral and emotional changes during the counseling sessions, while documentation supported the research process through assessment notes and counseling records. The intervention was carried out through individual counseling sessions using the Thought Stopping technique, focusing on identifying negative thoughts,

interrupting maladaptive thinking patterns, and replacing them with more rational and positive thoughts (M. Sobry & Prosmala Hadisaputra, 2020). Data analysis was conducted inductively by organizing, interpreting, and drawing conclusions from the collected data to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention in reducing trauma and improving the client's cognitive and emotional functioning.

RESULTS

Adolescent Friendship and Vulnerability in the Digital Era

Friendship during adolescence plays a fundamental role in shaping personal identity, emotional development, and social behavior. At this developmental stage, adolescents tend to place great value on peer relationships as a source of acceptance, emotional support, and self-validation. The desire to be acknowledged by others often influences decision-making processes, including how adolescents choose friends and build trust (Alawiyah, 2022). As a result, friendships can become a powerful factor that shapes attitudes, habits, and patterns of interaction, both positively and negatively. Adolescents who are surrounded by supportive and constructive peers are more likely to develop healthy social behaviors, while those exposed to negative peer influences may adopt maladaptive attitudes and risky behaviors.

In the digital era, the nature of adolescent friendship has undergone significant transformation. Social media and online communication platforms have expanded opportunities for interaction beyond physical boundaries, enabling adolescents to form relationships quickly and effortlessly. Online friendships offer convenience, anonymity, and continuous connectivity, which are particularly appealing to adolescents who are still exploring their identities. However, the absence of direct face-to-face interaction limits the ability to accurately interpret intentions, emotions, and authenticity, increasing the potential for misunderstanding and deception (Pamungkas, 2023). This condition places adolescents in a vulnerable position, as trust is often established based on virtual representations rather than real-life verification.

The vulnerability of adolescents in digital interactions is further intensified by their developmental characteristics. Adolescents are still in the process of developing emotional regulation, critical thinking, and risk awareness. Their tendency to prioritize emotional closeness and optimism can reduce their level of caution when engaging with new individuals online. Consequently, they may overlook warning signs and underestimate potential risks, such as manipulation or fraud. This vulnerability is not merely technological but psychological, as adolescents often lack the experience and cognitive maturity needed to evaluate complex social situations in virtual environments.

Therefore, understanding adolescent friendship in the context of the digital era is essential for identifying potential risks and protective factors. While online platforms can foster social connection and personal growth, they also require adolescents to navigate trust, boundaries, and safety more carefully. Without adequate guidance and awareness, adolescents may become exposed to harmful experiences that negatively affect their psychological well-being. This reality highlights the importance of developing adaptive cognitive and emotional skills to help adolescents maintain healthy friendships and protect themselves from potential threats in digital social interactions.

Psychological Trauma Experienced by Adolescents as Victims of Online Fraud

Psychological trauma in adolescents often emerges as a response to experiences that are perceived as threatening, distressing, or deeply disappointing. In cases of online fraud, the traumatic impact does not only stem from material or financial loss, but also from the emotional shock of betrayal and broken trust. Adolescents who fall victim to online deception frequently experience intense feelings of fear, shame, anger, and helplessness (Puspitasari, 2024). These emotional reactions can persist long after the fraudulent incident has ended, gradually shaping negative beliefs about themselves and others.

For adolescents, online fraud can disrupt their sense of safety and emotional stability. At this stage of development, individuals are still forming their worldview and learning to interpret social experiences. When a trusted online relationship turns into deception, adolescents may develop excessive suspicion and avoidance toward new social interactions. This condition often manifests in symptoms such as persistent anxiety, intrusive memories of the incident, difficulty trusting others, and emotional withdrawal. In some cases, adolescents may also experience sleep disturbances, heightened vigilance, and constant worry when engaging in online activities.

Trauma caused by online fraud also affects cognitive functioning. Adolescents may develop maladaptive thought patterns, such as overgeneralization and catastrophic thinking, where they assume that all new people or online interactions are dangerous. These negative automatic thoughts reinforce emotional distress and limit adaptive behavior, making adolescents reluctant to explore new relationships or opportunities. As a result, social development can be hindered, and the individual may experience isolation or reduced self-confidence (Kartono, 1989).

If not properly addressed, psychological trauma in adolescents can have long-term consequences on mental health and interpersonal functioning. The unresolved emotional burden may interfere with academic performance, social adjustment, and future relationship formation. Therefore, early identification and appropriate psychological intervention are crucial to help adolescents process traumatic experiences, restore emotional balance, and rebuild healthy patterns of thinking and social engagement after experiencing online fraud.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and the Role of Thought Stopping Technique

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a therapeutic approach that emphasizes the interaction between thoughts, emotions, and behaviors in shaping an individual's psychological functioning. CBT assumes that emotional distress and maladaptive behavior are largely influenced by distorted or negative thought patterns. By identifying and restructuring these thoughts, individuals can develop healthier emotional responses and more adaptive behaviors. This approach is particularly relevant for adolescents, as they are in a critical phase of cognitive and emotional development where thought patterns are still flexible and open to change (Supriati, 2010).

Within the CBT framework, the Thought Stopping technique is designed to help individuals interrupt repetitive and intrusive negative thoughts that arise from traumatic experiences. Adolescents who experience trauma due to online fraud often become trapped in recurring memories, fears, and negative assumptions about others. Thought Stopping works by increasing awareness of these negative thoughts and deliberately halting them when they emerge. Through repeated practice, adolescents learn to regain control over their thinking process rather than being overwhelmed by distressing memories or anticipatory fears.

The application of Thought Stopping involves guiding the individual to replace interrupted negative thoughts with more rational, realistic, and positive alternatives. This cognitive shift helps reduce emotional distress and prevents the development of avoidance behaviors. For adolescent trauma victims, this technique supports the restructuring of beliefs such as excessive mistrust or self-blame into more balanced perspectives. As a result, individuals begin to perceive past experiences as manageable life events rather than defining failures or permanent threats (Pamungkas, 2023).

Thought Stopping is particularly effective for adolescents who tend to ruminate on past events and struggle to disengage from negative cognitive cycles. Its structured and directive nature allows counselors to provide clear guidance while empowering adolescents to practice self-regulation independently. Over time, this technique contributes to improved emotional stability, reduced anxiety, and the development of healthier coping strategies, making it a suitable intervention for addressing trauma related to online fraud.

Effectiveness of Thought Stopping in Reducing Trauma and Rebuilding Social Confidence

The implementation of the Thought Stopping technique in individual counseling shows meaningful effectiveness in reducing trauma symptoms among adolescents who have experienced online fraud. Through structured counseling sessions, adolescents are guided to recognize intrusive negative thoughts that emerge from past traumatic experiences. As these thoughts are consciously interrupted and redirected, emotional reactions such as fear, anxiety, and excessive suspicion gradually decrease. This process allows adolescents to gain greater control over their internal responses, preventing traumatic memories from dominating their daily functioning.

The reduction of negative thought patterns also contributes to emotional stabilization. Adolescents who previously exhibited avoidance behaviors and heightened anxiety begin to demonstrate improved emotional regulation and a more balanced perception of social interactions. By replacing fear-based assumptions with rational and positive thoughts, individuals can reinterpret their experiences without excessive emotional distress (Widya Asmara, Sihabudin M. Amin, 2023). This cognitive change plays a crucial role in diminishing the intensity of trauma-related symptoms and supporting psychological recovery.

In addition to reducing trauma, the Thought Stopping technique supports the rebuilding of social confidence. Adolescents who once avoided new relationships, particularly those formed through online platforms, gradually become more open to social engagement. They develop a renewed sense of trust, not through naivety, but through improved self-awareness and cognitive control. This enables them to establish healthier boundaries while interacting with others, both online and offline.

Overall, the Thought Stopping technique serves as an effective CBT-based intervention for adolescent trauma victims by fostering adaptive thinking patterns and strengthening coping abilities. Its application not only alleviates trauma-related distress but also promotes resilience and social competence, empowering adolescents to navigate social relationships more confidently in the digital era.

CONCLUSIONS

Adolescence is a vulnerable developmental stage in which social relationships, particularly friendships, play a crucial role in shaping emotional and psychological well-being. The rapid expansion of digital interaction has increased adolescents' exposure to online relationships, which, while offering social connectivity, also present significant risks such as fraud. Experiences of online deception can lead to psychological trauma characterized by fear, anxiety, distrust, and maladaptive thinking patterns that interfere with healthy social development and emotional stability.

The application of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy through the Thought Stopping technique proves to be an effective intervention in addressing trauma experienced by adolescent victims of online fraud. By helping individuals consciously interrupt negative automatic thoughts and replace them with more adaptive cognitions, this technique supports emotional regulation, reduces trauma-related symptoms, and rebuilds social confidence. Ultimately, Thought Stopping not only assists adolescents in overcoming the psychological impact of traumatic experiences but also equips them with cognitive skills that promote resilience, healthier social interactions, and improved mental well-being in navigating the challenges of the digital era.

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