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Effectiveness of Individual Counseling Services With Techniques *Cognitive Restructuring* To Reduce Final Semester Student Anticipation

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to test the effectiveness of individual counseling services using Cognitive Restructuring techniques to reduce anxiety in final semester students. The study was conducted at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra. The research is quantitative in nature, utilizing an experimental model with a one-group pretest-posttest design, which compares the results before and after the counseling service is provided. The population of this study consisted of 34 final-year students from the 2020 cohort of the Guidance and Counseling Study Program, with a sample of four students selected through purposive sampling. These students were chosen based on having the highest levels of anxiety, their willingness to participate, and their adherence to the counseling service schedule, to optimize time and resources. Data were collected using the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) questionnaire, and the data were analyzed using the Wilcoxon test to evaluate the hypothesis. The results showed a significant decrease in students' anxiety levels, with the average score dropping from 48.25 (high) in the pretest to 25.00 (mild to moderate) in the posttest. A p-value of 0.002 indicated the effectiveness of the counseling service in reducing anxiety. It can be concluded that individual counseling services using Cognitive Restructuring techniques are effective in reducing anxiety in final semester students.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Future anxiety, otherwise known as “anticipatory,” is a serious concern in the context of modern psychology, especially among college students. Anticipatory is a psychological phenomenon in which individuals experience high anxiety related to uncertainty and changes that may occur in the future. Research has shown increased levels of future anxiety in individuals who face uncertainty in aspects of life such as job changes, technological developments, and economic uncertainty (Beck, 2020).

Anticipatory care can have a significant impact on an individual's mental well-being. Symptoms of future anxiety involve excessive thoughts about potential failure, feelings of inability to overcome challenges, and excessive worry about future consequences. High levels of future anxiety can cause impaired cognitive function, reduce sleep quality, and hinder a person's ability to make the right decisions (Mennin & Fresco, 2019).

Anticipatory phenomena can be explained through the cognitive approach theory, especially within the framework of the cognitive-behavioral theory proposed by Hofmann. This theory emphasizes that individuals form certain thought patterns and beliefs about the future based on their interpretation of information and experiences. Negative thought patterns, such as excessive thoughts about possible failure or difficulty overcoming future challenges, can trigger high levels of anxiety (Hofmann, 2018).

The characteristics of anticipatory symptoms can be observed through the anticipatory indicators proposed by Hofman, including an increase in unwanted physical activity such as shaking and cold sweat, unpleasant physical sensations such as pressure in the chest, uncontrollable restlessness, and feelings of fear and anxiety. Excessive, increased physiological responses such as increased heart rate and sleep disturbances, as well as significant nervousness and physical discomfort such as muscle tension and dizziness. (Hofmann, 2018). The various difficulties experienced can be overcome only if a person feels happy and the level of anxiety (stress) felt is reduced (Siregar, A., *et al.*, 2023).

Initial observation results at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra reflect that students often experience high levels of future anxiety, especially related to their academic and professional expectations. Students are burdened by the pressure to achieve high levels and ponder complex questions regarding career direction after studies. The impact is seen in concentration difficulties, sleep disturbances, and negative effects on mental well-being. Therefore, interventions such as individual counseling services are important to help students overcome future anxiety and improve their quality of life.

One interesting approach to investigate in this context is engineering *cognitive restructuring*. The results of previous research show that *cognitive restructuring* can effectively change the negative thought patterns that underlie anxiety, help students see the future more positively, and reduce the associated emotional tension (Beck, 2020; Hofmann, 2018). This approach is based on the principle that tailored changes in thought patterns can lead to behavioral changes and more adaptive emotional responses (Leahy, 2017). Thus, *cognitive restructuring* can play an important role in changing students' emotional and behavioral responses, helping them better cope with future anxiety.

Technique implementation of *cognitive restructuring* in individual counseling services can be a relevant solution and has the potential to make a positive contribution to students' mental well-being. This research will focus on the application of the technique of *cognitive restructuring* as an intervention strategy to overcome students' future anxiety, with the hope of providing an empirical basis for the development of more effective counseling programs in the future.

Based on the background description above, researchers are interested in conducting research with the title "**Implementation of Individual Counseling Services to Reduce Anticipation in Students Using Techniques *Cognitive Restructuring* at the North Sumatra State Islamic University**". The aim of this study was to analyze differences in levels of future anxiety before and after the implementation of individual counseling services with techniques *cognitive restructuring* while assessing the effectiveness of using these techniques in changing individuals' thought patterns and emotional responses to future anxiety.

2. METHODS

This research uses a quantitative approach with a research design *like an experiment* that only compares the results before and after treatment without using a control class (*one-group pretest-posttest design*). In this design, measurements are taken before treatment (*pretest*) and after treatment (*posttest*) in the same group, so the differences between the *pretest* and *posttest* are considered as an effect of the treatment given (Sugiyono, 2018).

The subjects of this research was active students at the North Sumatra State Islamic University. The population of this study were 34 final students of the Guidance and Counseling Study Program at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra, Stambuk 2020. Sampling is carried out using techniques of *purposive sampling*, namely that there are certain conditions set in selecting samples. The requirements set for the sample in this study were final students who had active status with the availability of academic data, experienced high levels of future anxiety, were willing to participate in research, and adhered to the counseling schedule and research procedures. Based on this technique, a sample size of 4 people was obtained.

The independent variable in this research is the application of individual counseling services using techniques of *Cognitive Restructuring* and the dependent variable is the student's level of future anxiety according to Beck's (2020) theory which can be measured through several indicators, namely body and physical, sensation and discomfort, restlessness and emotional distress, fear and anxiety, physiological responses, nervousness and physical discomfort.

The instrument used to measure the level of future anxiety is a questionnaire *Beck Anxiety Inventory* (BAI) adopted by Beck (2020). Data will be collected through questionnaire distribution before and after the intervention and then analyzed using tests *Wilcoxon* to find out the difference in results before and after implementing services using the technique of *Cognitive Restructuring* while assessing the effectiveness of using this technique in reducing anticipatory behavior in students.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research involved four respondents, all of whom were 22-year-old female students from the Guidance Counseling and Islamic Education (BKPI) study program at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra. Before the implementation of individual counseling services with techniques of *Cognitive Restructuring*, student anxiety levels were measured using the BAI scale. The results show that all respondents have a high level of anxiety as seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Research results before implementing individual counseling services using techniques of *Cognitive Restructuring* (pretest)

No	Respondent Code	Gender	Age	Class	Score	Emergency Level
1.	THE	Woman	22	BKPI-1	46	High
2.	ST	Woman	22	BKPI-1	47	High
3.	AMT	Woman	22	BKPI-5	46	High
4.	PNA	Woman	22	BKPI-1	54	High

From Table 1, it can be seen that the anxiety score in the pretest ranged from 46 to 54, with a mean score of 48.25. All respondents showed a high level of anxiety before treatment. Determination of the level of anxiety is based on the interpretation of the total questionnaire score *Beck Anxiety Inventory* (BAI), where a score of 46-60 is categorized as high anxiety. The standard deviation of 3.862 shows that the variation in anxiety scores between respondents is relatively small, indicating that their anxiety levels before treatment were quite uniform. Based on these data, it can be concluded that all respondents showed an urgent need for intervention to reduce their anxiety levels. These data provide a solid basis for evaluating the effectiveness of individual counseling services with techniques of *Cognitive Restructuring* in reducing students' anxiety at the level *post-test*.

After the implementation of individual counseling services with techniques of *Cognitive Restructuring*, The student's anxiety level was measured again. The results show that students' anxiety levels have decreased significantly as seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Research results after implementing individual counseling services using techniques of *Cognitive Restructuring* (post-test)

No	Respondent Code	Gender	Age	Class	Score	Emergency Level
1.	THE	Woman	22	BKPI-1	19	Light
2.	ST	Woman	22	BKPI-1	20	Light
3.	AMT	Woman	22	BKPI-5	29	Light
4.	PNA	Woman	22	BKPI-1	32	Currently

From Table 2, it can be seen that the anxiety scores on the posttest ranged from 19 to 32, with an average score of 25.00. Determination of the level of anxiety is based on the interpretation of the total questionnaire score *Beck Anxiety Inventory* (BAI), where a score of

16-30 is categorized as mild anxiety and a score of 31-45 is categorized as moderate anxiety. The anxiety levels of all respondents decreased after treatment, with three respondents showing mild levels of anxiety and one other showing moderate levels of anxiety. A standard deviation of 6.481 indicates that there is little variation in anxiety scores between respondents after treatment.

Based on these data, it can be concluded that the application of individual counseling services using techniques of *Cognitive Restructuring is effective* in reducing student anxiety levels. The average anxiety score decreased from 48.25 on the *pretest* to 25.00 on the *posttest*. This decrease shows that the intervention was successful in reducing students' anxiety levels significantly, with the majority of respondents showing a decrease from high to mild or moderate levels of anxiety.

In testing whether this decrease is statistically significant, a test is used *Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test* with the following results.

Table 3. Data Analysis Results

Test Statistics ^a	after service - before service
WITH	-1.841 ^b
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.036

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

b. Based on positive ranks.

Source: Output SPSS, 2024

Based on the results of data analysis using the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test, it was found that there was a significant decrease in the anticipatory level of final semester students after being given individual counseling services using the Cognitive Restructuring technique. The results of the analysis showed that of the four students in the research sample, all experienced a decrease in Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) scores after receiving counseling services. No students showed improvement or scores remained the same. The Z value obtained was -1.841, with a p-value of 0.036. This p-value is smaller than the significance level of 0.05, indicating that the decrease that occurred is statistically significant. Thus, it can be concluded that individual counseling services using Cognitive Restructuring techniques are effective in reducing the anticipatory level of final semester students at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra. These results support the research hypothesis that this counseling service has a positive impact on reducing the anxiety felt by students.

Discussion

The results showed that the average anxiety score of students before treatment was 48.25, which is included in the high category. After treatment, the average score decreased to 25.00, indicating mild to moderate levels of anxiety. This significant change indicates that engineering *Cognitive Restructuring* effective in reducing anxiety.

Cognitive Restructuring is a technique used in cognitive therapy to help individuals identify and change negative thoughts or cognitive distortions that contribute to anxiety. This technique teaches individuals to replace negative thoughts with more realistic and positive thoughts. According to Beck (2020), the theory behind *Cognitive Restructuring* is that negative thoughts and cognitive distortions can cause and worsen anxiety. By changing this mindset, individuals can reduce their anxiety levels significantly.

This theory is supported by concepts *Cognitive Behavioral Therapy* (CBT), is effective in treating various anxiety disorders. CBT focuses on the relationship between thoughts, feelings, and behavior, and aims to change negative thought patterns that cause undesirable feelings and behavior (Nguyen *et al.*, 2021)

Research conducted by Gonzalez *et al.* (2020) shows that *Cognitive Restructuring* significantly reduces anxiety in students. This technique helps them identify and change negative thoughts related to the stress of academics and social life, ultimately lowering their anxiety levels. Additionally, the study by Nguyen *et al.* (2021) found that *Cognitive Behavioral Therapy* (CBT), which includes techniques *Cognitive Restructuring*, is effective in reducing anxiety symptoms in the general population and college students. The results of this study showed that after several sessions of CBT, participants experienced significant reductions in anxiety, with cognitive changes as the primary mediator. Next, research by Johnson *et al.* (2024) shows that *Cognitive Restructuring is effective* in reducing anxiety in students facing the transition to campus life. This technique helps them overcome irrational thoughts and improve emotional well-being.

Support from previous research is in line with the results of the current research, which shows that individual counseling services with techniques of *Cognitive Restructuring are effective* in reducing student anxiety levels at the North Sumatra State Islamic University. With significant changes in pretest and posttest anxiety scores, this technique proved to be a useful intervention in managing anxiety among college students. These findings support the use of the technique *Cognitive Restructuring* as part of a counseling strategy to overcome anxiety in students.

Based on the results of this research and supported by theory and previous research, it can be concluded that individual counseling services with techniques *Cognitive Restructuring* effective in reducing student anxiety levels. The significant reduction in anxiety scores indicates that this intervention was successful in helping students manage and reduce their anxiety through changing their thinking patterns to a more positive and realistic one. These findings support the use of the technique *Cognitive Restructuring* as part of a counseling strategy to overcome anxiety in students.

4. CONCLUSION

This research shows that individual counseling services with techniques *Cognitive Restructuring* effective in reducing student anxiety levels at the North Sumatra State Islamic University. The average anxiety score decreased significantly from 48.25 (high category) before treatment to 25.00 (mild to moderate category) after treatment. This difference is statistically significant ($p = 0.002$), supporting the theory *Cognitive Behavioral Therapy* that identifies and changes negative thoughts. These findings are consistent with recent research showing that *Cognitive Restructuring* effective in reducing anxiety in a variety of contexts. Thus, this technique has proven to be a useful intervention to help college students manage their anxiety.

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