

## Cognitive behavior counseling to help victims of cyberbullying: systematic review

Febri Wandha Putra<sup>1\*</sup>, M. Ramli<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia, <sup>2</sup>Institut Agama Islam Sumatera Barat, Indonesia

\*Corresponding author, e-mail: [febri.wandha.2201119@students.um.ac.id](mailto:febri.wandha.2201119@students.um.ac.id)

### Abstract

The impact of technological advances is bullying on social media. As a result of bullying that occurs on social media, many individuals, especially students, are victims. The symptoms possessed by victims of cyberbullying are; feel anxiety, stress, depression, decreased learning motivation, withdraw from the social environment. One of the counselor's efforts in helping victims of cyberbullying is to provide cognitive behavior counseling. This type of research is a qualitative research using a systematic review literature review approach. The steps in the implementation of cognitive behavior counseling are; 1) identify students who are victims, 2) apply a cognitive behavior approach to the counseling process and 3) follow up.

**Keywords:** Counseling, cognitive behavior, victims, cyberbullying

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## Introduction

One of the negative effects of the rapid development of technology is the emergence of cyberbullying behavior. Cyberbullying is an act of repeatedly hurting others using information and communication technology, such as sending harassing messages via text or the internet, posting disparaging comments on social networks, sending embarrassing pictures, threatening or intimidating someone via electronic means (Hinduja & Patchin, 2011; Patchin & Hinduja, 2011). Cyberbully is a serious public health problem for Generation Z because of the negative mental and psychosocial consequences (Huang et al., 2021; Shaikh et al., 2020). Cyberbullying is a relatively new and serious form of bullying, with negative social and emotional effects on both victims and perpetrators (Baldry et al., 2016; Cunningham et al., 2015). Like traditional bullying, cyberbullying is a social phenomenon and often unfolds in an extensive network of observers. Cyberbullying causes psychological harm, pain, suffering, and has been shown to have a traumatic impact on victims (Sam et al., 2019).

The most common forms of cyberbullying are offensive messages and social exclusion. Cyberbullying victims most often report offensive messages and spread rumours (Evangelio et al., 2022). Someone who is a victim of cyberbullying usually has previous problems with the perpetrator, such as the perpetrator having feelings of envy, revenge and hatred for the victim, or maybe the perpetrator is just a joke in cyberbullying. In addition, the most common types of cyberbullying are flaming, making rude comments, spreading rumors, making comments that threaten to hurt online and posting embarrassing photos done online (Ozden & Icelliglu, 2014; Styron et al., 2016).

Based on the description of the theory and phenomena above, we need a solution to improve mental health for victims of cyberbullying. Because, by improving the mental health of cyberbullying victims, someone can avoid immediately unexpected situations. The effort to improve the mental health of cyberbullying victims is cognitive behavioral counseling (Elbedour et al., 2020). Cognitive behavioral counseling services for victims of bullying are services that encourage counselees to behave from irrational to rational and change defective cognitions that can produce positive behavior for victims of cyberbullying.

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## Method

This research is a qualitative research using a literature study approach as a systematic review of literature on cyberbullying articles, and cognitive behavioral counseling to identify cognitive behavioral counseling to improve the mental health of cyberbullying victims. Exclusion criteria are articles that are abstract, articles that do not use English, and articles that are displayed are not full text. Article searches are not limited to articles in Indonesian which are accessed from internet searches from databases, namely: Scopus, ProQuest, Science direct and Google scholar. Articles that met the criteria were collected and explored. It does not limit the search for published literature to the year of publication in order to get the depth of the knowledge studied.

## Results and Discussion

### Cyberbullying victim

Cyberbullying can have a negative impact on the mental, physical and behavioral health status of victims and their families. The impact of cyberbullying on victims does not stop at the depression stage, but has reached a more extreme action, namely suicide. Talpur (2018) mentions that because of cyberbullying, you may experience insecurity, poor school performance, addiction, psychosomatic disorders, retaliatory behavior, emotional distress, suicidal tendencies and others. Like bullying in the real world, cyberbullying will also have a negative impact on the development and growth of victims such as depression, anxiety, discomfort, declining school performance, not wanting to get along with peers, avoiding social environments, and suicide attempts (Elpemi & Faqih Isro'i, 2020). This is also supported by the findings of Okumu et al. (2020), the impact of depression from cyberbullying results in a decrease in the academic achievement of males and females students.

Effects of cyberbullying can be viewed from negative affect (psychological distress) such as its relationship to social anxiety, emotional stress, drug use, depressive symptoms, to ideas and attempts to commit suicide (Mota et al., 2015). Victims suffer from frustration, anxiety, depression, fatigue, feeling of reduced self-esteem, difficulty concentrating, moody, self-blame, irritability to suicide (Donegan, 2012; Nappa et al., 2020). Raskauskas & Stoltz (2007) asked adolescents openly about the negative effects of cyberbullying and 93 percent of victims reported negative effects with mostly feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and helplessness.

The experience of cyberbullying can have a significant impact on the emotional and psychological well-being of adolescents. Research has found that cyberbullying offenses are associated with negative emotions, such as sadness, anger, frustration, shame, or fear (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010, 2011; Ybarra et al., 2012). Research conducted by Huang et al. (2021) also states that victims of cyberbullying lead to negative mental health such as increased anger and sadness. Victims of cyberbullying feel lonely, feel less accepted by peers, decrease optimism, and have fewer friendships (Zalaquett & Chatters, 2014). Victims of cyberbullying experience increased depression, emotional symptoms such as sadness, fear, anger, and behavioral problems, as well as problems with peers (Farhangpour et al., 2019). Research conducted by Kim et al. (2016) found that there is an adverse impact on victims of cyberbullying in terms of mental health.

Based on Microsoft's research that measured the politeness level of internet users throughout 2020. As a result, Indonesia was ranked 29th out of 32 countries surveyed. With these results, Indonesia became the country with the lowest level of politeness in Southeast Asia. A survey from the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2018 showed Indonesia was in the top fifth in the world in terms of the number of victims of bullying in schools (OECD, 2019). According to research results from APJII (Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers) in 2019, there were 49 percent of the 5,900 respondents who were victims of cyberbullying. The high consumption of internet use certainly triggered this high number by children and the lack of parental supervision. Data from the Commissioner for the Child Protection Commission has recorded the incidence of cyberbullying from 2011 to 2019 bullying on social media has increased with the number reaching 2,473 reports. In 2019, the incidence of cyberbullying has reached 67% (25 cases) in elementary school students, 5 cases at the junior high school level, 6 cases at the high school level and 1 case at college.

Individuals who are considered weak have a greater risk of cyberbullying in line with Merrill & Hanson's (2016) study of 13,583 adolescents aged 12-18 years in the United States which revealed that black (8.8%) and Hispanic (13.19%) were less likely to be bullied compared to whites (17.79%) and other racial groups (17.25%) (Merrill & Hanson, 2016). The results of research conducted on 231 participants

aged 16 to 20 years, showed that there was a significant difference between the disability group and the non-disabled group, where 50.4% of non-disabled participants experienced cyberbullying while in the disabled group it was 72.9% (Kowalski & Toth, 2018). This shows that someone who looks weak is very vulnerable to cyberbullying, while those who seem more courageous and don't want to be a victim have a slight chance of becoming a victim of cyberbullying.

### Cognitive Behavioral Counseling to Help Victims of Cyberbullying

Cognitive behavioral theory views that human development is based on the different learning experiences of each individual, the unique experiences provided by the environment and the individual's understanding of the cognition of the world (Capuzzi & Stauffer, 2016). Beck (1979) defines cognitive behavioral counseling as a counseling approach designed to resolve the counselee's problems that deviate, negative thoughts and uncomfortable feelings can lead individuals to more serious psychological problems, such as anxiety disorders and even depression.

The focus of cognitive behavioral lies in the thoughts, assumptions, and beliefs. With cognitive behavioral counseling, individuals are directed to identify, evaluate, and challenge wrong or maladaptive thought patterns (Muslim et al., 2019). By changing the status of thoughts and feelings, individuals are expected to change their behavior from negative to positive. This approach is counseling that wants to see individuals not only understood through their visible behavior, but behind the behavior that appears, there is an internal process that is actually the result of cognitive thinking (De Arellano et al., 2014).

Aaron T. Beck explains that human nature focuses on cognition, where in this case it is further explained that 1) an individual's internal communication can be accessed through introspection, 2) individual beliefs have a very personal meaning, and 3) this interpretation is only can be found by the individual himself not by others/counselors (Chao, 2015). In principle, the model of this cognitive behavioral approach is under Figure 1.

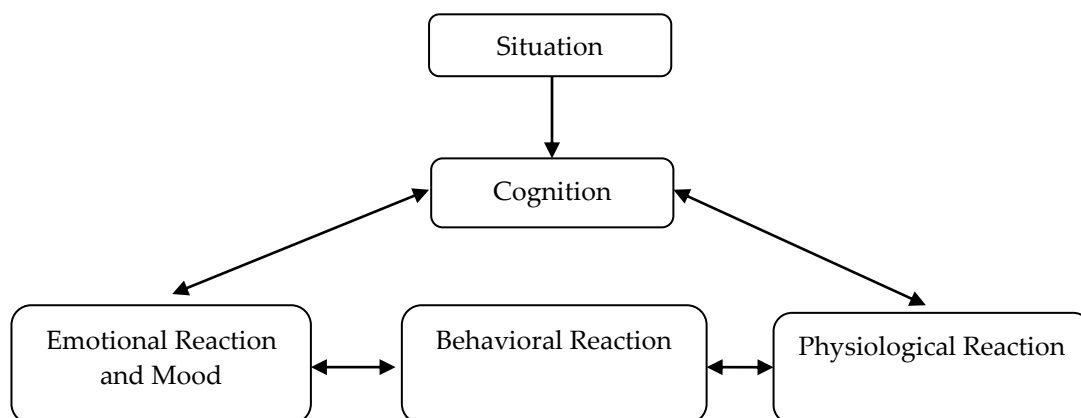


Figure 1. Basic Cognitive behavioral Model (Wenzel, 2017).

In the picture above, it can be seen that this cognitive behavioral approach focuses on cognition. Emotional reactions, behavioral reactions, and individual psychological reactions have a relationship with cognition (mutual influence). The situation (environmental conditions) also affects individual cognition. Kendall (Joyce-Beaulieu & Sulkowski, 2015) explains that this cognitive behavioral approach model focuses on how individual cognitions mediate their emotions and how individual behavior responds to situations, which of course will affect in the short term and even the long term.

The main principles of this cognitive behavioral approach are: 1) Accessing the counselee's irrational and maladaptive thoughts, 2) Directing the counselee to be more adaptive or more rational thinking and teaching verbal internal instructional coping strategies, 3) Supporting the counselee when they apply this for the first time and develop abilities in their lives (Flanagan et al., 2015).

This cognitive behavioral approach is based on a psycho-educational model, emphasizes the role of homework, places the responsibility on the counselee to assume an active role both (counselor and counselee) and outside the counseling session, and draws from various cognitive and behavioral strategies that bring about change (Corey, 2012). This approach is used in various psychological conditions, such as depression, anxiety problems, personality problems, drug abuse problems, eating disorders, and couple's distress (Farmer & Chapman, 2016).

In general, empirical evidence is got that Cognitive Behavioral Counseling is effective for dealing with victims of bullying behavior. The effectiveness of cognitive-behavioral counseling can be analyzed in terms of the advantages of Cognitive-Behavioral Counseling. One form of effort given to students to help improve the self-efficacy of cyberbullying victims in social relationships at school is to perform self-instruction techniques using cognitive-behavioral counseling (Apriliana et al., 2019; Saripah, 2010). The primary emphasis of cognitive-behavioral counseling is on restructuring deviant cognitive and belief systems to bring about emotional and behavioral changes for the better. According to Jones et al. (2011) cognitive behavioral is an effort made by the therapist or counselor to train the counselee to replace negative statements about himself with positive task-oriented statements that facilitate coping. This cognitive-behavioral counseling helps students to change negative thoughts and beliefs into more positive ones so that they have good mental health.

The goal of cognitive behavioral counseling for victims of cyberbullying is to eliminate the counselee's view of self-defeating and help them become more tolerant and appear rational. Further explained that, counselees are taught how they incorporate self-defeating beliefs, how they nurture this wrong way of thinking, what they can do to reduce this way of thinking, and how they can teach themselves new ways to think that they themselves will. Lead change based on their own way of behavior and feelings (Agbaria, 2022; Burnham et al., 2011). So that by providing cognitive behavioral counseling services, counselors are expected to help victims of cyberbullying to eliminate irrational thoughts and bring up positive behavior. As expressed by Dobson & Dozois (2010), the advantages of cognitive behavioral counseling are; 1) Cognitive behavioral principles are easy to understand and can be adapted to children of almost all ages and from many cultural backgrounds, 2) Cognitive behavioral counseling is short term and uses brief interventions, which are appropriate in school settings when time is limited, 3) Easy-to-teach concepts can be translated to gain life skills, 4) Children and adolescents can learn emotional and behavioral self-control through understanding the relationship between thoughts, feelings, and behavior, 5) Cognitive behavioral counseling helps participants deal with the things they can change and accept the things they cannot change, and 6) Cognitive principles help empower children and youth in dealing with current problems and anticipating future problems.

The steps that the counselor can take are; first, identify the symptoms of students who experience cyberbullying. Of course in this case, the counselor must have data in the form of observation data, instrumentation, interviews and other data to support the process of analyzing student problems (in this case cyberbullying). After the counselor has complete data, then implement a strategy for implementing a cognitive behavioral approach either through individual counseling or group counseling, depending on the number of students who experience cyberbullying problems.

Second, applying a cognitive behavioral approach in individual counseling to help students who are bullied through social media. Third, follow up. After the counseling process is completed, the counselor continues to monitor the progress of treatment success. This is done by the Counselor so that when the success of treatment is not achieved, they can immediately take other more effective treatment actions.

## Conclusion

Cyberbullying is an action that is carried out repeatedly to victims who are unable to defend themselves, this action is carried out by a group or individual using media in electronic form. The impact of cyberbullying on students is, withdrawing from the social environment, experiencing anxiety, depression, decreased learning motivation, stress and even wanting to commit suicide. One of the efforts that can be done by counselors is to provide cognitive behavior counseling. The benefit of cognitive behavior counseling is that it can help students who experience bullying through social media, students can rise from all the fears experienced by bullying through social media and can live an effective daily life. The counselor's steps in providing cognitive behavior counseling are, first, to identify students who experience bullying on social media. Second, apply a cognitive behavior approach to counseling and the third is to follow up on the counseling that has been given.

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