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## Internet Supported Cognitive Behavior Therapy to help Students with Shy-socially Isolated Problems

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### Abstract

Shy-socially isolated problem is still a dominating among teenagers. Some researchers found that cognitive distortion and social anxiety are predictors of this, besides the lack of opportunity to practice and involve in social relationship. This article addresses two small studies that examined two models of internet-supported brief cognitive behavior therapy (i-brief CBT) intervention, and self-management (i-SM). The former investigated the effectiveness of i-brief CBT in reducing social anxiety in teenagers. The later tested the i-SM in decreasing cognitive distortion. The main researched aimed to test the increase of Satisfaction with Life (SWL) level of the subjects participating in the Internet-Supported Brief CBT and Self-Management programs.

There were thirty-four high school students participating in the research, fifteen of whom were in the i-brief CBT and nineteen in the i-SM. Among those in the i-brief CBT, seven belonged to its experimental group while the i-SM had eight subjects placed in its experimental group. A quasi-experimental with a mixed design combined with a repeated measure applied in these researches. A mixed ANOVA that used to analyze the data showed that i-brief CBT as well as i-SM were significantly able to reduce social anxiety and cognitive distortion. In addition, both studies reported that these students were satisfied with their lives more than before joining the programs.

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## 1. Background

Shy-socially isolated is still a problem among high school students. Jupp and Griffiths (1990) proposed that there are three main causes of shy-socially isolated problem, namely social anxiety, cognitive distortion and lack of skills needed in building interpersonal relationship. Besides as the indicator of shy-isolated problem, social anxiety and cognitive distortion also constitute problems students often experience and they are often chronic and continuous so that they can have immense negative consequences on quality of life, for example, causing a low satisfaction with their life. This article explains CBT-based intervention supported by Internet for reducing social anxiety and cognitive distortion and expecting that individuals with Shy-socially isolated problem will feel more satisfied with their life.

Social anxiety is characterized by an extreme and consistent fear when someone acts in an embarrassing way, meet new people, supervision existence in a variety of performance and/or interactional situation (Memik, Sismanlar, Yildiz, et al., 2010; Yoshinaga, Ohshima, Matsuki, et al., 2013 ; Russell & Shaw , 2009; Lundh & Sperling, 2002). Hope, Heimberg, & Turk (2010) stated that the situation that triggers social anxiety can be classified into four primary categories, a) formal interactions such as giving speech, lecture, conference presentations, b) non-formal interactions such as meeting with a stranger/foreigner, attending a party; c) Interactions that demand assertive behavior, for example, expressing disapproval, rejecting friend requests; d) being noticed by other people, for example at work, writing, eating, etc. When fear of social situation appears, people with social anxiety usually feel a various physical, cognitive and behavioral symptoms. The physical symptoms felt are trembling, flushed face, sweating, stuttering and other symptoms. Cognitive aspects of social anxiety include maladaptive thinking patterns and irrational fear. Behavioral symptoms that arise are escaping from stressful situations or freezing in place (Muller, Koen, & Seedat, 2005).

Other predictor of shy-socially isolated is cognitive distortion, which is a way of thinking that tends to exaggerate everything or a way of thinking that is irrational about anything. This occurs as result of cognitive deficits that affecting the function of working memory and cognitive control. This cognitive distortion stimulates cognitive triad (Gotlib & Hammen, 2009), negative perspective toward themselves, their world, and future. The condition felt by shy-socially isolated individuals can make them experience disappointment with themselves, feeling not as good as everybody around them and dissatisfaction in their lives.

### 1.1. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) has shown very effective in helping individual with psychological problems such as depression, social anxiety, phobias and stress-related problems (Jupp & Griffiths, 1990; Ito, Roso, Tiwari, et al., 2008; Hope, et al., 2010). Individuals with this problem are dominated by dysfunctional thought, which is the initial formation of automatic negative thought that spontaneously appear and have free association in the form of words images. Most of the time, they are more aware of the emotions that arise as a result of the automatic negative thought. Deeper level of cognition is basic beliefs or core beliefs. It starts from childhood and is learned from personal experience, interaction with others, including parents who criticize them, observations and explicit and implicit messages from the environment (Beck, 2011).

CBT is considered the main psychological treatment for social anxiety either in-group or individual settings (Jupp & Griffiths, 1990; Hope, et al., 2010). However, some psychologists giving CBT service at Public Health Centers in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia, have to face the fact that service given all this time takes time too long if compared with their available practice time and the number of clients in need of the service and the cost spent. The problem is still reinforced by limited availability of CBT therapists in several regions of Indonesia so that this motivates the formation of alternative media delivery and administration of medication. One of low cost alternative face-to-face therapies is the Internet with self-help approach since it allows anonymity presentation of self that makes its users free of social rules and feels not threatened to be criticized by others (Yen, Yen, Chen, et al, 2012). In a number of researches on Internet-Based therapy, CBT is the most used (Andersson & Titov, 2014). The results showed that the effect of treatment via the Internet is comparable to traditional CBT delivered via face-to-face. However, the Internet-based treatment should be seen as a complementary method and not as a substitute for face-to-face CBT (Tillfors, Carlbring, Furmark, et al., 2008).

CBT that is delivered via the Internet certainly has limitations and advantages. The limitations include the lack of rapport or therapeutic sharing and of individual opportunity to directly confront social situations. On the other

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