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The effectiveness of solution-focused brief counseling in reducing academic procrastination

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Abstract

Academic procrastination is a behavior of delaying academic tasks that can hurt academic achievement. One counseling approach that can be used to address academic procrastination is Solution-Focused Brief Counseling (SFBC). SFBC is a solution-focused counseling approach that is based on the assumption that clients can solve their problems. This study aimed to analyze the effectiveness of SFBC in reducing academic procrastination. This study used a literature review approach by conducting a comprehensive and systematic examination of existing scholarly publications on the effectiveness of solution-focused brief counseling in reducing academic procrastination. The results of the study showed that SFBC can be effective in reducing academic procrastination. Practical implications and future research directions are also discussed to guide counseling professionals and researchers in integrating SFBC in efforts to address academic procrastination.

Keywords: Academic Procrastination; counseling; effectiveness; Solution-Focused Brief Counseling.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Procrastination is a term derived from the Latin word "pro" meaning "forward" and "castings" meaning "about tomorrow". It means "to put off until tomorrow". Procrastination is the tendency to delay or postpone a task or set of tasks, despite the awareness that this may have negative consequences (Ursia et al., 2013). In the context of modern adolescents, procrastination is often seen as a common habit. In more detail, procrastination is defined as the attitude of delaying the completion of tasks that are considered unpleasant or considered easy. Procrastination can be divided into two forms, namely functional procrastination and dysfunctional procrastination. Functional procrastination is a delaying behavior that has a specific purpose, such as someone delays paying taxes on the specified date. Conversely, dysfunctional procrastination is a delaying behavior without a clear purpose, such as taking negative actions rather than completing tasks that could have been completed much earlier (Schouwenburg, 1995).

Candra et al. (2014) explain that academic procrastination refers to the tendency to constantly delay the completion of academic tasks and experience anxiety associated with procrastination. In other words, academic procrastination becomes an obstacle to completing tasks within the desired deadline or delaying until the last deadline (Gargari et al., 2011). Therefore, it can be concluded from the views of experts that academic procrastination is the habit of deliberately delaying the completion of tasks, which ultimately can hurt behavior and lead to task accumulation (Jamila, 2020).

According to Ghufroon (2003), and Shi et al., (2024), academic procrastination has significant negative consequences. By delaying, valuable time is wasted without satisfactory results. Tasks are left unfinished, and even if they are eventually completed, the results tend to be less optimal. Delaying can also cause someone to miss opportunities and chances that may arise (Codina et al., 2024). Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) is one of the counseling approaches that has a simple and practical concept because it focuses more on discussing how to find solutions rather than uncovering student problems (Kuswidyawati & Setyandari, 2023).

Procrastination can essentially have a significant impact on several aspects, including social, psychological, and academic aspects (Svartdal et al., 2020; Koppengborg, & Klingsieck 2022). From a social perspective, there is a possibility that students will not receive support or sympathy from their friends, and may even be avoided in social interactions. From a psychological perspective, the behavior of delaying or procrastinating can interfere with learning activities and student performance in achieving learning goals (Ernawati & Sumarwoto, 2016; Rahimi et al., 2023; Bakan Kiraç, & Sahnurova, 2022).

Academic procrastination can be a barrier to achieving achievement in the school environment (Rizal & Rosa, 2023). Putting off taking action, especially in completing academic tasks, has the potential to influence the outcome of individual success and failure. If this phenomenon is not addressed seriously, the impact can be detrimental to student achievement and their future (Miyake & Kane, 2022; Liu et al., 2020).

Solution-focused brief counseling (SFBC) is a post-modern approach that believes that humans naturally have mental health and the ability to find solutions to the challenges they face (Ratner et al., 2012; Wettersten et al., 2005; Brownson et al., 2023). SFBC is a future-oriented, goal-oriented approach to brief therapy that was originally developed by Steve de Shazer and Insoo Kim Berg, who worked at the Brief Family Therapy Center in Milwaukee in the early 1980s. The SFBC approach emphasizes the strengths and resilience of the individual by focusing on exceptions to their problems and the conceptualized solution (Corey, 2013). Many figures have contributed to the development of SFBC since the 1970s, such as Steve de Shazer, Bill O'Hanlon, Michele Weiner-Davis, and Insoo Kim Berg. The first writings about brief therapy appeared in the 1970s and early 1980s, and those who made significant contributions were

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Richard Fisch, John Weakland, Paul Watzlawick, and Gregory Bateson, who worked at the Mental Research Institute in Palo Alto, California (Seligman & Reichenberg, 2015).

Solution-focused brief counseling (SFBC) group counseling is a post-modern counseling technique that focuses on finding solutions rather than highlighting the current problems. The SFBC group counseling approach is focused on solutions and a future orientation. The purpose of SFBC group counseling is to help clients develop a sense of direction by acknowledging the client's abilities and discussing solutions with the belief that the client is capable of creating solutions to the problem (Khoiriyah et al., 2021; Sumarwiyah et al., 2015). Solution-focused brief counseling (SFBC) is an approach that is rooted in the potential and strengths of the client, with a primary focus on solutions and the future (Usmawati, 2006). The name "brief" is given because, at the problem identification stage, exploration is shorter, ignoring a comprehensive description of the problem. SFBC, in other words, does not focus on the causes of the problem, but rather on the effort to find solutions to the problem.

Furthermore, Solution-Focused Brief Counseling, as explained by O'Connell (as cited in Utami et al., 2020), is a form of brief counseling that is built on the strengths of the client, helping them identify and build solutions to the problems they face. This approach focuses more on the future than on history or the current situation. In this solution-focused method, the counselor and client spend most of their time building solutions, not investigating the root of the problem. Solution-focused brief counseling uses solution-talk techniques and directly guides the client to the steps that will be taken in the future to address the problems they face (Jerome et al., 2023). As a result, the counseling session becomes short. This technique is based on the optimistic assumption that every individual has the qualities of being resilient, rational, capable, and capable of constructing solutions that can change their own lives (Manulahmi, 2021).

1.1. Purpose of study

The study aimed to assess how Solution-Focused Brief Counseling (SFBC), with its goal-oriented and future-focused approach, impacts students' procrastination behaviors, using synthesized findings from other studies in an organized literature review.

2. METHODS AND MATERIALS

The study used a literature review research method. In this study, the researchers collected data in the form of articles from various research sources on the same topic, "The Effectiveness of Solution-Focused Brief Counseling to Reduce Student Academic Procrastination." This review included studies based on the following factors:

- Full text of articles available
- Articles on the effectiveness of solutions focused on brief therapy on student academic procrastination
- Articles published in 2019-2023

3. RESULTS

In this study, 6 articles were obtained. The search for articles was carried out to obtain literature. Therefore, the search was carried out with the keyword: the effectiveness of "solution-focused brief counseling to reduce academic procrastination". Based on the characteristics of the respondents analyzed in 10 articles, the data characteristics can be described or summarized in Table 1 as follows:

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Table 1

Data characteristics

No.	Title	Authors	Year	Subject	Results
1	Reducing Academic Procrastination Decisions of Students Through Scaled Questioning Techniques in Solution-Focused Brief Counseling	(Kurniawan et al., 2019)	2019	32 junior high school students	The results of the study showed that there were differences in the level of academic procrastination decisions before and after treatment in the form of solution-focused brief counseling with scaled questioning techniques.
2	The effectiveness of Solution Focused Brief Counseling to reduce academic procrastination behavior of students.	(Kusumawide et al., 2019)	2019	3 junior high school students	Based on the research results, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the level of academic procrastination of students before and after being given solution-focused brief counseling (SFBC).
3	The effectiveness of solution-focused group counseling to reduce academic procrastination in class XI students of SMA Negeri 1 Majeyan.	(Setyarini, 2021)	2021	7 senior high school students	Based on the results of the analysis using the Wilcoxon test, it was found that there were differences in the pretest and posttest scores after the treatment. The data analysis results showed a significance of $0.018 < 0.05$, meaning H_0 was rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that solution-focused group counseling is effective in reducing academic procrastination for students in class XI of SMA Negeri 1 Majeyan.
4	Implementation of individual counseling through Zoom Meeting Private to reduce academic procrastination of students in online learning in class 12 IPS2 of SMA Negeri 1 Puri.	(Sucahyono, 2022)	2022	6 senior high school students	The results showed an increase in the scale of cycles 1 and 2 obtained after conducting Solution-focused brief counseling. So, it can be said that this intervention is suitable for reducing the level of academic procrastination

5	The implementation of SFBC (Solution Focused Brief Counseling) to reduce academic procrastination behavior of high school students.	(Aziza et al., 2023)	11 senior high school students	among high school students. The results of a study on the application of solution-focused brief counseling (SFBC) to reduce the academic procrastination behavior of class XI students at SMA Negeri 5 Enrekang.
6	Solution-focused brief group counseling to reduce academic procrastination of junior high school students.	(Wardana et al., 2023)	11 junior high school students	The data analysis results showed that the significance value of 0.02 is less than 0.05, meaning the research hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that solution-focused brief group counseling has a significant effect on reducing academic procrastination of students in class VII of SMP Negeri 6 Malang.

Based on the data above, it can be concluded that solution-focused brief counseling is a promising intervention for reducing academic procrastination in students. The results of the researcher's analysis showed that one article used the scaling question technique and one article used the exception question technique, while the other four articles did not use any specific techniques. The analysis results showed that students procrastinate by sleeping, playing, and watching TV. Due to their perception that academic assignments are boring and hard to finish, students put them off and find more fun activities to do instead. Some students acknowledge that they work extremely hard to do their projects precisely and on time, but they sometimes forget when they're supposed to turn them in (Suchayono, 2022).

4. DISCUSSION

The analysis shows that SFBC intervention is very suitable for reducing academic procrastination. SFBC can be done individually or in groups. This approach believes that each individual has a solution to solve their problems, but sometimes they forget the potential they have because they keep focusing on the problem (Corey, 2016). This is in line with the condition of individuals with high levels of academic procrastination, where they consider delaying or academic procrastination behavior as common. Although this behavior is done consciously, the impact is seen in the academic aspect. Even so, they have not tried to find a solution to this problem. The SFBC approach is applied to students who experience academic procrastination and believe that sustainable change can help them reduce their level of academic procrastination.

4.1 Procedure for implementing SFBC

The steps in the Solution-Focused Brief Counseling (SFBC) approach that can be optimally utilized, as explained by Seligman (2006), are as follows:

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Establishing Relationship: This involves building a positive relationship between the counselor and the client using neutral topics. This aims to create collaboration and open up opportunities to identify the potential and strengths of the client to build solutions.

Identifying a Solvable Complaint: The counselor asks the client questions to find out the cause of the negative academic self-concept. This also helps the counselor understand the client's background so that they can offer various possible solutions to change the academic self-concept to be positive.

Establishing Goals: The counselor uses the miracle question, such as "What would you feel if you had good grades?" to establish the client's goals in improving their academic self-concept.

Designing and Implementing Intervention: At this stage, the client is given an intervention designed to improve their academic self-concept. This could involve identifying certain situations that can help the client find solutions to improve their academic self-concept, and the client's tasks to implement the solution.

Termination, Evaluation, and Follow-up: At this stage, the counselor uses a scaled question to evaluate the improvement of the student's academic self-concept before and after counseling. In addition, an agreement is made regarding the possibility of follow-up counseling if necessary to achieve the established self-concept improvement goals.

4.2 Techniques in SFBC

Some of the techniques of SFBC according to Efford (2016) are:

Scaling technique. The scaling technique, or scaling, is a way to change abstract concepts (thoughts and feelings of the client) into concrete ones that are directed towards achievable goals. Here, the client is asked to use a scale ranging from 1 (low) to 10 (high) to evaluate how deep the problem they are experiencing is. Scaling helps the client understand the condition of the problem they are experiencing, and what needs to be done to achieve their goals realistically.

Exception technique. The exception technique (exception) is the assumption that all problems have exceptions that can be used to facilitate solutions. In this case, one of the solution-focused techniques to help clients construct their goals is to look for exceptions for situations in which the problem does not exist or is not so severe.

Problem-free talk technique. George, Iveson, and Ratner establish problem-free talk (problem-free talk) as one of the important and useful solution-focused techniques for building relationships with clients. Like other solution-focused techniques, a problem-free talk is a tool designed to generate conversations that reveal various strengths and resources.

Miracle question technique. The miracle question or miracle question is a technique that focuses on formulating goals so that the client is helped to develop a clear and concrete picture of what they expect through counseling. According to Erford Bradley T, this technique emphasizes hope for a better future, develops the client's sense of responsibility, and encourages the client to try to gain clarity about what they want.

Flagging the minefield technique. Flagging the minefield is a generalization and relapse prevention technique. This technique helps clients transfer counseling insights and compensatory behaviors, thoughts, and feelings into the world that clients encounter daily. Flagging the minefield is usually used at the end of the counseling process (i.e., at termination).

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Compliments technique. The compliments technique, or giving compliments, is to give written messages to appreciate (praise) the client for their strengths and build confidence in themselves that they can solve the problems they are experiencing. This praise is given before the client is given a task.

4.3 Advantages

The advantages of solution-focused brief counseling (SFBC) have been recognized by several authors, including Gladding (2015) and Seligman & Reichenberg (2015). These advantages include:

Efficiency: SFBC is a brief approach that can be completed in a relatively short period. This can be beneficial in settings where counselors are limited in terms of time or resources.

Flexibility: SFBC is a flexible approach that can be adapted to meet the needs of a variety of clients. This makes it a good fit for a wide range of settings, including schools, mental health clinics, and community organizations.

Strength-based: SFBC focuses on the client's strengths and resources. This can help clients to feel empowered and motivated to make changes.

Focus on change: SFBC focuses on helping clients achieve their desired outcomes. This can be helpful for clients who are struggling with specific problems or challenges.

Compatibility: SFBC can be combined with other counseling approaches, such as existentialism. This can be beneficial for clients who have complex or multifaceted needs.

4.4 Disadvantages

Seligman & Reichenberg (2015) also identified some potential disadvantages of SFBC, including:

Problem definition: Counselors need to be careful in defining the problem. Improper definition of the problem can lead to premature focus on the problem and loss of important issues in providing solutions.

Skill and experience: Although SFBC appears to be easy to implement, it requires a therapist who is skilled and experienced in assessing the problem, setting goals, planning problem-solving, and using techniques and interventions creatively.

Misunderstanding: There is a potential for misunderstanding between the counselor, the client, and other stakeholders regarding the client's need for success in short-term therapy. Improper generalization of this can be dangerous and may lead to the client's failure to accept the counseling provided. Therefore, counselors need to be careful in ensuring that this approach is adequate to meet the needs of the client.

4.5 Implementation of Solution-Focused Brief Counseling in school settings

The use of solution-focused brief counseling (SFBC) can also be applied in school settings (Littrell et al., 1995). With its brief approach and focus on solutions, discussions about concrete steps that students can take become more abundant (Sklare, 2014). Students are encouraged to actively seek solutions rather than simply detailing the problems they face (Mulawarman, 2023). Unlike other modern approaches, solution-focused brief counseling does not require many sessions. SFBC allows for significant changes in the client with just a few sessions.

Corey, (2013) states that the application of SFBC in school settings is very appropriate, and here are some reasons that support this:

- Counseling by school counselors can be done effectively with students in a short time.
- The SFBC approach prioritizes small changes and the formation of shared goals.
- SFBC helps students develop positive goals, shifting the focus from preventing negative behaviors.

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- The SFBC approach has been proven to be effective and practical because it places more emphasis on actions to be taken than on stopping the problem.
- SFBC can be accepting and bridging differences in opinion and belief, which is relevant in school settings with students from diverse backgrounds.
- The SFBC approach has clear concepts and is relatively easy to learn.
- SFBC is stronger in solving problems than direct approaches based on psychological disorders and dysfunctional behavior.

5. CONCLUSION

The analysis of the literature conducted proved that solution-focused brief counseling (SFBC) has been proven to be effective in reducing academic procrastination behavior.

The use of SFBC intervention to reduce academic procrastination behavior in students in schools is highly recommended. Other researchers, can optimize the use of techniques such as miracle questions, exception questions, formula first session tasks, feedback, and precession change questions to achieve optimal results.

Ethical Approval: The integrity and ethical rigor of the research process were ensured by the careful evaluation of ethical issues during the investigation. The study followed ethical requirements when performing a literature review by accurately and methodically reporting the results of previous research. To prevent plagiarism and to recognize the work of the original writers, all sources were properly credited. The studies were chosen and analyzed objectively, without favoritism, and with consideration for the original researchers' intellectual property. Although there was no direct contact with human subjects, the study maintained ethical standards by encouraging openness, truthfulness, and respect for the academic literature it studied.

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest

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