

The Effectiveness of Thought Stopping to Reduce Public Speaking Anxiety for the Students of Counseling Programs

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of thought stopping techniques to reduce the public speaking anxiety for the students of counseling program at the Faculty of Education Science. This study was using a quantitative research approach with the experimental research type. The experiments design was using quasi-experimental design with one group pretest-posttest design. The research populations were the students of class A and B Counseling Program totaling of 85 students. The sampling technique was using purposive sampling, with 6 students as an experiment group. The data collection instrumen was the scale of public speaking anxiety. The instrument validity was using product moment correlation, with results that 4 questions were failed and 38 were valid. The instrument reliability coefficient was calculated with 0.914 alpha formula. The data analysis technique was using nonparametric inferential statistical analysis technique with Wilcoxon test. The results showed that the technique of thought stopping was effective for reducing public speaking anxiety, evidenced by the value obtained from the Wilcoxon test for ($Z=-2.201^a$) with Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) of 0.028. Based on the interviews, also showed that public speaking anxiety decreased after counseling given with thought stopping technique.

Keywords: *Technique Thought Stopping, Public Speaking Anxiety, Counseling Programs.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Students are an intellectual group as the next generation of the nation whose ideas and ideas are highly expected in filling development and advancing the nation. To express these ideas and ideas, one of them is the ability to speak in public. With this ability, students are able to convey their ideas, ideas and knowledge orally, ask lecturers, present assignments and conduct group discussions in class.

In fact, students are prone to anxiety. This is based on the results of interviews with 14 students of the Guidance and Counseling Study Program, 12 of them still feel afraid, tense during presentations, suddenly can't concentrate on what is being said, experience bad sleep the next day for presentations and students walk up and down -walking around for no reason before the presentation. This is based on excessive social demands and cannot be fulfilled by the students concerned, the existence of student achievement standards that are too

high with their abilities, lack of self-confidence, lack of courage in expressing opinions, negative mindsets.

According to Devito, J.A [1], argues that anxiety occurs when speaking in public or in new and different situations, so that a person becomes anxious. Public speaking anxiety is a part of communication anxiety. In communication there is an active reciprocal process between two individuals in giving and receiving information. Aswida & Syukur [2], explaining communication barriers as a form of negative reaction from individuals in the form of anxiety experienced by someone when communicating, whether interpersonal communication, general communication or mass communication.

According to Devito in Ririn, Asmidir, and Marjohan [3] states that public speaking is a variation of a speaker facing a large number of listeners which aims to publish information in a face-to-face situation. This is supported by the results of research conducted by Katz [4] showing 20 to 85% of people experience anxiety

when they speak in public. Motley's research [5] states that about 85% of Americans experience communication anxiety and about 15% to 20% of American students say that communication anxiety interferes with student activities. Research on academic anxiety conducted by Dwiriandy [6] in Semarang City gave an effective contribution of 23.3%. This embodiment is a manifestation of the problem of public speaking anxiety.

According to Wahyuni [7], explaining that there is a significant relationship between public speaking anxiety and self-confidence in students. Furthermore, Saputri & Indrawati [8] shows that public speaking anxiety occurs up to the level of students who, on average, enter early adulthood. In this regard, Nevid, J. S., Rathus, S. A. and Grene, B. [9] stated that public speaking anxiety is usually characterized by physical symptoms such as sweaty hands, fast heart beats and shaking legs. In addition, anxiety in public is also characterized by psychological symptoms, such as fear of making mistakes, uneasy behavior and not being able to concentrate properly [10]. Seeing the reality as mentioned above, it is necessary to provide services to students who experience public speaking anxiety through the implementation of counseling services, namely the behavior approach. One of the techniques in the cognitive behavioral counseling approach that is used to overcome anxiety is the thought stopping technique.

According to Muhith & Nasir [11], the thought stopping technique is the skill of giving instructions to oneself to stop the flow of negative thoughts through the presence of surprising stimuli. The emergence of negative thoughts can be blocked or disrupted flow with "no" or "stop" instructions. According to Davis, Eshelman, and McKay [12], thought stopping is an effective and fast technique to help someone who is disturbed by negative thoughts and worries that often accompany panic and anxiety disorders. The thought stopping technique is an example of a cognitive-behavioral psychotherapeutic technique that can be used to help clients change their thinking processes. Changing the thought process is important for a therapist to maintain the client's feeling that it can have a strong influence on thinking patterns and processes [13].

According to Bakker [14], the purpose of the thought stopping technique is to control one's cognitive by blocking bad thoughts and entering good thoughts, reducing individual fear and anxiety. The hope, through the use of this thought stopping technique, is to reduce anxiety, help control negative thoughts, become more confident and not easily give up. The results of the study Wulandari, Wihastuti & Suppriati [15] showed that the anxiety of clients who received thought stopping and progressive muscle relaxation decreased from moderate anxiety to mild anxiety, while those who received thought stopping decreased but remained in moderate anxiety. The thought stopping technique has several

advantages, including being easy to manage, usually easy to understand by the counselee and ready to be used by the counselee in managing his or her own attitude. The main steps in the thought stopping technique are rational, stop thinking directed by the counselor, stop thinking directed by the counselee, alternating assertive and neutral thoughts [16].

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of thought stopping to reduce public speaking anxiety in BK study program students. The expected benefits of this research are that the Faculty of Education can become information material for the Faculty of Education to develop mental psychology and increase student potential, for students as additional information to improve thought stopping techniques and students' self-confidence in reducing the level of anxiety in public speaking. For researchers, it can add and improve knowledge about thought stopping techniques and be able to provide reference material in knowledge about thought stopping students. While the theoretical benefits are used as input, especially in the field of educational psychology, to gain new experiences and add to the repertoire of knowledge regarding the effectiveness of thought stopping to reduce public speaking anxiety in students.

2. METHODS

This research is a quantitative research with a quasi-experimental research design. The design used in this study is a one group pretest-posttest which does not have a comparison group, but is given a pretest and a final test (posttest) in addition to treatment [17]. This is reinforced by the opinion of Campbell [18]. In this design, the experimental group and the control group are two different groups which are equally given a pre-test and post-test. This research was conducted at the Guidance and Counseling Study Program Faculty of Education, with the consideration that in general the Guidance and Counseling study program students have almost the same characteristics, namely just entering a new environment and with new people so that the possibility of students experiencing public speaking anxiety is quite high.

The population in this study were Guidance and Counseling students A class and B class of 2019 with a total population of 85 students. This study uses a purposive sampling technique. The criteria for determining the sample in this study were the 2019 class A and B Guidance and Counseling students, who were indicated to have public speaking anxiety. Based on the measurement using the speaking anxiety scale, 6 students who had a low average were given counseling services with the thought stopping technique.

The instrument used in this study according to the scale of public speaking anxiety by McCroskey [19], namely cognitive symptoms, affective symptoms, motor symptoms and somatic symptoms. The speaking anxiety instrument for students is 38 items and has gone through an expert validation process. The process of hypothesis testing was carried out to prove the effectiveness of the thought stopping technique to reduce public speaking anxiety in students. Hypothesis testing in this study was calculated using non-parametric statistics. Therefore, the hypothesis test in this study will be analyzed using non-parametric statistics with the Man Withney (U) test and the Wilcoxon test.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Research Results

The results of the descriptive analysis of 6 subjects for the experimental pretest score obtained an average score (mean) of 126.17; median of 125.50; mode 123, the minimum score is 123, the maximum score is 130 and the standard deviation (SD) is 2,787. Based on this categorization, the frequency distribution table and its ategorization are as follows:

Table 1. Pre-test Results

No	Category	Interval Class	Frequency
1	very low	> 00.00 – 60.79	0
2	low	> 60.80 – 83.59	0
3	currently	> 83.60 – 106.39	0
4	high	> 106.40 – 129.19	5
5	very high	> 129.20 – 152.00	1
	Total		6

3.1.1 Description of Treatment Results

Prior to the treatment, each subject was conducted a diagnostic interview to determine the hierarchy of anxiety from the most worrisome activity or condition to the most relaxed, which differed from one subject to another. The results of interviews, anxiety between one subject with another subject is different. Counselees Ay and Ys both have the same anxiety, namely when presenting in public because friends focus on seeing it so AY and YS become negative thinking, lack confidence and have difficulty concentrating. More specifically, AY felt that her friends judged her appearance. After being given treatment, AY and YS saw positive changes, namely being able to think positively about other people's judgments, being more confident and enthusiastic when presenting in public. YS's confession was supported by the results of interviews with YS's friends, who said that Ys was able to control her mind and was more confident.

FN counselees experience anxiety in answering questions during presentations because FN doubts their abilities and feels nervous. After FN practiced the thought stopping technique, FN became more daring to

try, confident, not afraid of being judged by others because FN felt that everyone had weaknesses and strengths that others did not necessarily have. NP and DR counselees experience anxiety, namely they are afraid of being ridiculed by their friends if the answers given during presentations are wrong or unsatisfactory, supported by the lecturers who teach they look fierce. This made NP and DR even more tense, breaking out in a cold sweat and panicking. More specifically, DR also has a "must" thought. After NP and DR recognized and practiced the thought stopping technique, NP was able to think rationally and was not afraid to fail even though he had tried because everyone can learn from failure. Meanwhile, DR is able to think positively, optimistically, thinks that not all desires must be achieved and can respect others more.

Anxiety when answering presentation questions in public, occurs in AG counselees. Specifically, because AG wants to try to give the maximum answer, AG takes a long time to think about the answer, AG is afraid that the answer given is wrong and feels inferior. AG, who initially felt inferior and thought others judged him badly, after being given treatment, AG became a more confident, optimistic person, realizing that not everything he wanted was easy without effort and courage, confident and AG was able to think positively in accepting his shortcomings.

3.1.2. Description of Posttest Implementation Results

The results of descriptive analysis are known for the experimental posttest value obtained an average score (mean) of 92.50; the median is 94.00; mode 94, a minimum score of 85, a maximum score of 95 and a standard deviation (SD) of 3,728. Based on the categorization, the frequency distribution table and its categorization are as follows.

3.1.3. Description of Hypothesis Testing Results

Testing research hypotheses to prove the truth of the proposed hypothesis. Testing the hypothesis is to find out the effectiveness of thought stopping to reduce public speaking anxiety in Guidance and Counseling students. Hypothesis testing is done by using the Wilcoxon test.

In this study the Wilcoxon test was used to compare and see the difference between pretest and posttest data. The criteria for changes are if the value of sig is from 0.05, while if the sig is from 0.05 then there is no change after being given treatment. The Wilcoxon test

Table 2. Post-test Results

No	Category	Interval Class	Frequency
1	very low	> 00.00 – 60.79	0
2	low	> 60.80 – 83.59	0
3	currently	> 83.60 – 106.39	6
4	high	> 106.40 – 129.19	0
5	very high	> 129.20 – 152.00	0
	Total		6

on the variable of public speaking anxiety was conducted to determine the difference in the results of the pretest and posttest data.

Table 3. Test Statistics Result

	Post - Pre
Z	-2.201 ^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.028

- a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test
- b. Based on negative ranks.

Based on the results of the analysis, it can be obtained the value of z count -2.201 with a probability of 0.028. If the error level is 5%, then z table is 1.96 because the value of z count is 1.96 smaller (z count -2.201 < z table 1.96) thus Ho is rejected. This means that the thought stopping technique is effective in reducing anxiety in public speaking for the 2019 BK study program students.

Based on the data obtained, the thought stopping technique has proven to be effective in reducing public speaking anxiety in the 2019 UNY Guidance and Counseling study program students. According to Shives [20], thought stopping is an example of a cognitive behavioral psychotherapy technique that can be used to help someone changes the thought process. Therefore, thought stopping is a form of exercise or therapy by looking at the relationship between conscious and unconscious thoughts. The results of this study are in accordance with the research of Badriyah [21] that the application of thought stopping techniques can reduce the level of anxiety experienced by nursing students when practicing in the clinic. In addition, Bakker [22], this study showed that the thought stopping technique was effective in treating anxiety, depression and cases related to obsessive-compulsive disorder.

The study began with giving a pretest to students of the Guidance and Counseling UNY Study Program. The pretest was given before the treatment and the posttest was given after the treatment. The pretest and posttest will be given a public speaking anxiety scale that contains statements, which describe the condition of public speaking anxiety. Based on the results of the pretest, it was found that 6 students of the 2019 UNY Guidance and Counseling study program who were

netted had high public speaking anxiety, namely Ay, Np,

Fn, Ys, Ag and Dr. The six students who had high public speaking anxiety were then given treatment with thought stopping technique. The indicator of success in reducing anxiety in public speaking can be seen by the significant difference in the results of the pretest and posttest measurements.

Counselors help counselees to reduce anxiety in public speaking by stopping negative thoughts with the help of a counselor, stopping negative thoughts on their own direction (overt interruption), stopping negative thoughts on their own direction (cover interruption), forming a positive or assertive mindset. and the existence of homework which is intended to provide the counselee with an opportunity to practice the skills he has acquired and help monitor the development of his ability to overcome problems through a skill, namely thought stopping.

3.2. Discussion

Thought stopping is used to help counselees change their thought processes because thinking habits can shape behavior changes. Thought stopping therapy is an effective and fast technique to help deal with stressful and anxious thoughts [23]. According to Townsend [24], thought stopping is a self-taught technique that can be used whenever an individual wants to remove distracting thoughts or negative thoughts from consciousness. Therefore, this technique is aimed at dealing with a person with a case of anxiety. Habits of thought can shape behavior change, with one thought being automatic and can lead to other threatening thoughts [25]. Thought stopping technique is done by suppressing or limiting the emergence of negative thoughts that sometimes arise in the individual. The advantage of thought stopping is that it is easy to manage, usually easy to understand by the counselee and ready to be used by the counselee in managing his own attitude. The basis of this technique is to consciously command yourself, “stop!”, when experiencing repetitive and unimportant negative thoughts. Then replace those negative thoughts with other positive and realistic thoughts.

The results of the study are supported by the opinion of Videbeck [25] which states that behavioral therapy is considered effective in overcoming anxiety disorders. Various types of behavioral therapy techniques are used as direct learning and practice in an effort to

reduce or overcome anxiety, one of which is thought stopping therapy. The process of disconnecting thoughts is done repeatedly and in various ways, ranging from shouting, in a normal tone of voice, whispering and talking in the heart. This repetition process is one of the learning processes to change the individual's mind which will be accompanied by supportive behavior. Changes in a person's behavior can occur through the learning process. Learning is defined as a process of behavior change based on previous behavior.

4. COUNCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion that has been done, it can be concluded that thought stopping is effective for reducing public speaking anxiety. Data analysis showed significant changes in the 6 students who were the participant of the study. Thought stopping is effective for controlling negative thoughts and turning negative thoughts into positive ones. The purpose of using this technique of stopping negative thoughts is to weaken unwanted behavior by the counselee and stop negative thoughts due to past experiences. The basis of the thought stopping technique is to consciously command yourself by saying "stop!", when experiencing repetitive, unimportant, destructive and self-defeating negative thoughts. Then replace those negative thoughts with other, more positive and realistic thoughts.

The researcher suggests to counselors to be able to use the thought stopping technique as one of the right choices to reduce public speaking anxiety in students and it is hoped that it can help the implementation of guidance and counseling services to overcome social anxiety in public speaking.

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