

Identification of Rumination Problems and Their Effects on Guidance and Counseling Services with the *Solution Focused Brief Counseling (SFBC)* Approach

Hasna Agres Nabilah^{1*}, Feren Apitasya Eltian²

Guidance and Counseling, Semarang State University

Corresponding Author: hasnaagresnabilah@students.unnes.ac.id

Abstract. This conceptual article discusses the application of Solution-Focused Brief Counseling (SFBC) in guidance and counseling services to reduce rumination. Rumination, which is the tendency to constantly think about problems or negative feelings without reaching an effective solution, can worsen mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety. This study aims to: 1) Explain how the SFBC approach can be applied in the context of guidance and counseling services to overcome rumination, 2) Assess the effectiveness of SFBC in reducing rumination and improving clients' mental well-being, and 3) Identify SFBC techniques that can be used specifically to address ruminative thought patterns. SFBC focuses on: 1) Future Orientation: Emphasizing on goals that can be achieved in the future, rather than on current or past problems. 2) Client Empowerment: Recognizing clients' resources and abilities to solve their own problems. 3) Clear Goal Setting: Setting specific, measurable, and realistic goals. 4) Solution-Based Questioning: Using questions that encourage clients to look at successes already achieved and how they can be expanded. This study used a qualitative method with a conceptual analysis approach, analyzing relevant literature on SFBC and rumination. The results show that the strength of SFBC lies in its ability to shift the focus from problems to actionable solutions, thus effectively reducing rumination and improving clients' mental well-being. This study emphasizes the potential of SFBC in enhancing guidance and counseling practices for individuals experiencing persistent negative thought patterns.

Keywords: Rumination, Guidance and Counseling Services, and SFBC (*Solution Focused Brief Counseling*).

Abstract. This conceptual article discusses the application of Solution-Focused Brief Counseling (SFBC) in guidance and counseling services to reduce rumination. Rumination, that is, a tendency to constantly think about problems or negative feelings without reaching an effective solution, can worsen mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety. The research aims to: 1) Explain how the SFBC approach can be applied in the context of mentoring and counseling services to deal with rumination, 2) Evaluate the effectiveness of SFBC in reducing ruminations and improving the mental well-being of clients, and 3) Identify SFBC techniques that can be used specifically to address ruminative thinking. SFBC focuses on: 1) Future orientation: Emphasizing on goals that can be achieved in the future, not on current or past problems. 2) Empowering clients: Recognizing the resources and ability of clients to solve their own problems. 3) Clear goal setting: setting specific, measurable, and realistic goals. 4) Questions-based solutions: Using questions that encourage clients to see achievement and how it can be expanded. The research uses qualitative methods with conceptual analysis approaches, analyzing relevant literature about SFBC and ruminations. The results show that the strength of SFBC lies in its ability to shift focus from problems to follow-up solutions, thereby effectively reducing rumination and improving the client's mental well-being. The study emphasizes the potential of SFBC in improving guidance and counselling practices for individuals experiencing persistent negative thinking.

Key words: Rumination, Guidance and Counseling Services, and SFBC (*Solution Focused Brief Counseling*).

INTRODUCTION

Every social being has many experiences and encounters a variety of events in their lives, including good events or life events that can cause various psychological problems. Individuals with negative experiences tend to witness, experience, or feel firsthand events that leave a deep impression

and are not forgotten, such as loss, natural disasters, violence, fights, and so on. This can cause negative emotions or can be said to be rumination which is also a form of maladaptive contemplation (Fadhilah, 2022), in line with Watkins & Roberts' (2020) opinion that rumination is generally considered maladaptive and has a negative impact. Rumination is considered as repeated and prolonged negative thoughts about oneself, feelings, fears, and bad experiences Watkins (in Lask, Henik, et al., 2024). Rumination can also relate to negative thoughts of past events, emotional states that are relatively the same over time (Nolen-Hoeksema S, Morrow J, Fredrickson BL, 1993). *Overthinking* or rumination according to Moore (in Dewajani and Karneli 2020) is a thinking event that characterizes humans, so rumination can be said to be not too bad. Conversely, many studies say that individuals who think too much can be detrimental to themselves (Agustine, 2019), because it can be a barrier to one's action, consumes energy, and is difficult to make decisions. As a result, a person is easily trapped in a passive condition, does not make changes, and forms a barrier to life progress. Individuals are in a passive state because there are irrational desires that influence the mind. Someone who experiences *overthinking* tends to drag on problems without thinking about solutions (Dewajani and Karneli 2020).

Susan Nolen-Hoeksema from Yale University in America, in her theory known as Response Styles Theory (RST), empirically explains the characteristics of rumination and its phenomena (Nolen-Hoeksema, 2002). This theory was then applied in her 2008 research entitled "*Rethinking Rumination*". In the research, Nolen-Hoeksema described rumination as a process of rethinking one's negative emotional experience, trying to understand its causes, the situational factors involved, and its possible consequences. This rumination process goes through three stages. First, individuals often get stuck in repetitive thoughts about painful past experiences, which can lead to feelings of distress. Second, rumination can interfere with one's ability to solve problems properly, often leading to pessimistic and fatalistic thoughts. Third, if left untreated, rumination can damage thinking patterns and worsen emotional states, potentially even leading to depression. In this context, symptoms of excessive anxiety may also appear.

Excessive anxiety can negatively affect a person's mental and physical health, causing both mental and physical exhaustion. Even in severe cases, sufferers may feel extremely depressed. Research by Ellen and Sandy (2016) shows that rumination has a negative impact on academic achievement. This finding is in line with Papageorgiou and Wells' (2004) theory, which states that individuals who experience rumination are at high risk of decreased performance in academics and work. This is due to the impact of rumination which can trigger depression, reduce problem-solving abilities, reduce social support, inhibit cognitive abilities, and reduce productive behavior (Nolen-Hoeksema, Wisco, & Lyubomirsky, 2008; Papageorgiou & Wells, 2004).

Therefore, individuals who experience rumination need guidance and counseling (BK) services to reduce their level of rumination. This article will discuss the types of guidance and counseling services that are effective in reducing rumination. BK services, according to Lestari (2020), are a process of continuous assistance from counselors to guide clients in ways that improve their understanding of their ability to solve problems. Through guidance, individuals can recognize, understand, accept, guide, realize, and adapt to themselves and their environment. Guidance and counseling services provide continuous support to students to achieve self-understanding, so that they can adjust to the needs and conditions in schools, families, and communities. With the help of guidance and counseling, individuals are expected to improve their behavior. BK services are an important element in Indonesian education that aims to help individuals achieve optimal development in accordance with their potential. There are seven types of BK services, namely orientation, information, placement and channeling, tutoring, individual counseling, group guidance, and group counseling.

Solution Focused Brief Counseling is a counseling approach that emphasizes problem solving by finding solutions quickly and accurately. related to the problem of rumination which has a crucial impact on health. This approach has a perspective that can regulate rumination in a person, as SFBC views that humans do not need to fixate on problems, but rather focus on solutions, act and realize the solutions they want (Arjanto, 2011). Therefore, guidance and counseling services with the SFBC approach can be an effective means in helping individuals reduce rumination patterns by applying individual counseling services as one of the strategies that can be used. By using this service, individuals can benefit from developing a more meaningful, productive, and meaningful daily life in their context.

METHODS

This research uses a type of qualitative research with a content analysis approach, namely the conceptual analysis method (Wekke 2020). The conceptual analysis method is an analytical approach to understanding and describing the basic concepts of a phenomenon or theory in a scientific context. The purpose of the conceptual analysis method is to provide a deeper and clearer understanding of complex concepts or ideas, so as to assist researchers in improving the quality and accuracy of understanding of important concepts in the field. This research is sourced from journals, articles, and theses that are relevant to the content of this research. This method analyzes the concept of rumination and its regulation using the SFBC approach.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Overthinking (Rumination) identifies a person's tendency to think or do certain things when under stress (Hoeksema, 2000). Experts say that rumination consists of *brooding* and reflection components. In the *brooding* component involves the process of repetition related to uncertain outcomes or unfavorable events, a person when in the brooding phase tends to show a moody or anxious condition when thinking about something and sometimes thinking negatively if experiencing a certain event (Treyner, Gonzalez, & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2003). Nolen-Hoeksema et al. (2008) explain that a person in the rumination phase often states that they are trying to understand the problem in order to find a solution, when in fact rumination may have blocked the possibility of a reasonable solution and a person wishes to realize the solution (Moore, K. 2015).

Based on a journal entitled *Rumination Syndrome* by Halland (2021), rumination is associated with various psychopathologies such as anxiety disorders, depression, *obsessive compulsive disorder* (OCD), *post-traumatic stress disorder* (PTSD), *adjustment disorder* (AD), and *attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder* (ADHD) (Fadhilah, 2022). Rumination is one of the primary symptoms of anxiety, depression, and acute stress (Dewajani and Karneli, 2020). Rumination is closely related to depressive symptoms because rumination focuses on sustained negative mood and an increase in negative cognitions, Whitmer (in Rodhiyah & Djuwita, 2023). Rumination also focuses on one's own shortcomings that can cause depression and or exacerbate depression experienced by a person. The impact of rumination stated by (Nolen Hoeksema, Wisco, & Lybomirsky, 2008) that rumination can inhibit a person's ability in *problem solving*, weaken social support, reduce cognition, and hinder productivity. Someone who applies the rumination mindset tends to have difficulty taking active steps in overcoming problems, because they are stuck in prolonged contemplation of their problems and feelings.

In an effort to help ruminators change their lives for the better, one strategy that can be used is through guidance and counseling services. This service is organized by counselors, namely professionals who are trained and have skills in counseling techniques (Dewajani and Karneli, 2020). One form of counseling guidance service that can be applied is individual counseling. In individual counseling, there are several approaches that can be used by counselors to reduce rumination, as revealed by Loly Daskal (in Agustine, 2019), namely by increasing awareness.

Guidance and counseling services play a crucial role in helping individuals overcome rumination. Experienced counselors aim to understand the client's mindset and help them develop helpful strategies. Traditional approaches may tend to delve deeply into the problem, but in the case of rumination, this can reinforce the repetitive cycle of thoughts. Therefore, more solution-focused approaches such as SFBC are highly relevant and effective. According to Mulawarman (2019), *Solution-Focused Brief Counseling* (SFBC) offers a different approach from traditional therapies that often focus on exploring the past or deeply analyzing future problems. SFBC is based on the assumption that each individual has the potential to identify solutions that enable them to overcome their problems. This approach emphasizes that individuals naturally possess the mental health, competence, and capacity to construct effective solutions.

In the context of rumination or anxiety, SFBC becomes particularly relevant. Anxiety often causes individuals to get caught up in repetitive thought patterns of worries and fears about the future, or even mistakes from the past. SFBC helps to break this cycle by shifting the focus of attention from the problem itself to the search for practical and possible solutions. This is done by guiding the counselee to focus on concrete actions they can take to reduce anxiety or overcome rumination, thereby increasing their ability to deal with emotional challenges more effectively. Additionally, SFBC provides space for the counselor and the counselee to work collaboratively in identifying existing internal resources. These could be personal strengths, skills possessed, or available social support, all of which can be used to overcome anxiety or reduce repetitive thought patterns. By strengthening personal independence and control, SFBC not only helps individuals change the way they view and respond to anxiety issues, but also enables them to feel more confident in managing their daily lives.

The perspective that reality and truth can be constructed (Sumarwiyah, 2015) strengthens the SFBC approach in providing space for individuals to see problems from a more positive perspective and build more effective solutions. With time efficiency in mind, SFBC also offers the advantage of providing quick and solution-focused help, which is particularly important in addressing anxiety that may require immediate intervention. The SFBC approach not only provides an effective counseling approach, but also empowers individuals to overcome anxiety and find practical solutions to the problems they face, thereby improving their overall quality of life.

The SFBC approach usually requires the principle of avoiding the often futile search for the cause of the problem, but instead taking a direct focus on the solution: 1) Future Orientation: Focus on what is desirable and achievable in the future, not on current or past problems; 2) Client Empowerment: Recognizes that clients have the resources and skills to find solutions to their own problems; 3) Clear Goal Setting: Defining specific, measurable, and realistic goals; 4) Solution-Based Questioning: Using questions that encourage clients to look at what is already working and how it can be expanded or improved (Stark, Kim, & Lehmann, 2018).

In its application, the SFBC approach has several special techniques designed to help counselees consciously formulate solutions to the problems experienced including exception questions, *miracle* questions, *scaling* questions (Mulawarman, 2019). With the existence of several special techniques, these can be applied according to the conditions experienced by the counselee. One of them is the application of *scaling questions* to reduce anxiety due to rumination, as stated by Capuzzi and Gross (in Martina, 2017) the *scaling question* technique includes techniques that allow the counselee to pay more attention to what he has done and how he takes steps that lead to the desired changes by providing alternative problem appreciation with his eyes closed and problem level assistance between 0 and 10 to patients who cannot express their problems openly.

In an effort to achieve hope and reduce anxiety levels due to rumination, various techniques can be used, one of which is the scaling question technique. This technique has proven effective in helping individuals measure and identify their anxiety levels in a more structured manner (Martina, 2017). Scaling questions invite counselees to score their anxiety levels from one to ten, with one representing minimum anxiety and ten being maximum anxiety. This process not only helps the counselor to understand the client's anxiety level, but also helps the client themselves to better understand and interpret their feelings of anxiety more clearly.

CONCLUSION

Rumination is a significant psychological challenge, but with the right approach such as Solutions Focused Brief Counseling (SFBC), individuals can be helped to overcome and manage these recurring thoughts more effectively. Through future orientation, client empowerment, and clear goal setting, SFBC provides a strong framework for more effective and sustainable guidance and counseling services. This approach not only helps clients in the short term but also equips them with long-lasting skills to maintain their mental well-being in the future. The Solution-Focused Brief Counseling (SFBC) approach becomes relevant in addressing rumination due to its strong focus on finding practical solutions. SFBC allows counselors and counselees to work together to identify internal resources that can be used to reduce anxiety and overcome repetitive thought patterns. By emphasizing future-orientation and developing clear goals, SFBC allows individuals to view problems from a more positive perspective and build effective solutions. Through this approach, individuals can not only change the way they respond to anxiety and rumination, but also feel better able to manage their daily lives with more confidence. As such, SFBC not only provides an effective counseling approach, but also empowers individuals to improve their overall quality of life.

References

- Agustine, D. (2019, July). "Overthinking" dan Cara Mengatasinya. Kompas. (Retrieved from 16 July 2019)
- Susanto, Ahmad. (2018). *Bimbingan dan Konseling di Sekolah: Konsep, Teori, dan Aplikasinya*. Jakarta: Kencana
- Arjanto, P. (2011). Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT). (Online) tersedia di: <http://paul-arjanto.blogspot.co.id/2011/06/solution-focused-brief-therapy-sfbt.html>
- Dewajani, J. S., & Karneli, Y. (2020). Analisis permasalahan ruminasi dan implikasinya terhadap layanan bimbingan dan konseling. *TERAPUTIK: Jurnal Bimbingan dan Konseling*, 4(2), 339-344. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26539/terapeutik.42415>
- Fadhilah, R., & Hendriani, W. (2022). Faktor Ruminasi: Sebuah Studi Pustaka Sistematis. Prosiding Seminar Nasional Fakultas Psikologi Universitas Airlangga.
- Gauw, E., & Kartasasmita, S. (2016). Pengaruh Rumination Terhadap Academic Achievement Pada Mahasiswa Tingkat Sarjana. *Provita: Jurnal Psikologi Pendidikan*, 7(1).
- Halland, Magnus. (2021) Rumination syndrome. *Clin Gastroenterol Hepatol*, 16(10), 1549-1555. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cgh.2018.05.049>
- Lestari, M. A. (2020). *Bimbingan Konseling Di SD (Mendampingi Siswa Meraih Mimpi)*. Penerbit Deepublish.
- Martina, K. N. D., & Supandi, S. (2017). Konseling Islami dengan Teknik Scaling Question untuk Mengurangi Kecemasan Pasien. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22515/balagh.v2i2.1022>
- Mulawarman. (2019). *Konseling Singkat Berfokus Solusi (Konsep, Riset, Dan Prosedur)*. Semarang: Prenadamedia Group.
- Nolen-Hoeksema, S. (2000). The role of rumination in depressive disorders and mixed anxiety/depressive symptoms. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 109, 504–511
- Nolen-Hoeksema, S., & Harrell, Z.A. (2002). Rumination, depression, and alcohol use: Tests of gender differences. *Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy*, 16, 391–403.
- Nolen-Hoeksema, S., Morrow, J., & Fredrickson, B.L. (1993). Response styles and the duration of episodes of depressed mood. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 102, 20–28
- Nolen-Hoeksema, S., Wisco, B. E., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2008). Rethinking Rumination. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 3(5), 400–424. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-6924.2008.00088.x>
- Papageorgiou, C., & Wells, A. (Eds.). (2004). *Depressive rumination: Nature, theory, and treatment*. New York: Wiley

- Rodhiyah, I., & Djuwita, E. (2023). Difficulty Emotion Regulation as a Predictor of Adolescent Depressive Symptoms Kesulitan Regulasi Emosi sebagai Prediktor Gejala Depresi Remaja. *Jurnal Psikologi*, 12(2), 218-223.
- Stark, M. D., Kim, J. S., & Lehmann, P. (2018). Solution-Focused Brief Therapy Training: What's Useful When Training Is Brief? *Journal of Systemic Therapies*, 37(2), 44–63. <https://doi.org/10.1521/jsyt.2018.37.2.44>
- Sumarwiyah, S., Zamroni, E., & Hidayati, R. (2015). Solution focused brief counseling (SFBC): Alternatif pendekatan dalam konseling keluarga. *Jurnal Konseling Gusjigang*, 1(2). <https://doi.org/10.24176/jkg.v1i2.409>
- Tirto, I. & Moore, K. (2015). Rumination and Self-destructive Thoughts in People with Depression. *Behavioural Sciences Undergraduate Journal*, 2(1), 5–12. <https://doi.org/10.29173/bsuj281>
- Treynor, W., Gonzalez, R., & Nolen-Hoeksema, S. (2003). Rumination reconsidered: A psychometric analysis. *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, 27, 247–259
- Wekke, Ismail Suardi. 2020. "Hasil Dan Pembahasan Untuk Artikel Konseptual." *Jurnal Kelas Menulis Fakultas Ushuluddin* 1(5):1–7.