

COGNITIVE EMOTION REGULATION STRATEGIES IN EMERGING ADULTHOOD VICTIMS OF DATING VIOLENCE

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ABSTRACT

Dating violence is one of the most common types of violence experienced in Indonesia. Research reveals that dating violence causes both physical and psychological problems. When individuals interpret violent events negatively which then produces negative emotions, individuals will develop various psychological problems. This cognitive assessment process is called cognitive emotion regulation strategy. This study aims to describe the level of cognitive emotion regulation strategies of emerging adulthood who have experienced dating violence in Indonesia. This study uses quantitative descriptive as a research method. The participants in this study were 116 emerging adulthood aged 18-24 years and were students who had experienced dating violence. The measurement instruments used in this study are The Posttraumatic Cognitive Inventory (PTCI) and Cognitive Emotion Regulation Strategy (CERS-Short). The results of this study were that most victims of dating violence showed moderate levels of adaptive and maladaptive cognitive emotion regulation strategies. Future research is recommended to further examine cognitive emotion regulation strategies in men because there are few male participants. The results of this research are that most victims of dating violence show moderate levels of adaptive and maladaptive cognitive emotional regulation strategies. The results of this research can be a reference in preparing interventions to deal with the psychological impact of the violence experienced. It is recommended that future research further examine cognitive emotional regulation strategies in men because there are few male participants in this study so that male victims can maintain preventive methods that may be different from preventive methods for women.

Keywords: Cognitive emotion regulation strategy, dating violence, emerging adulthood

1. PREFACE

Dating violence is one of the most prevalent forms of violence in Indonesia according to Catatan Tahunan Komnas Perempuan (2022). In the last 5 years, dating violence has always occupied the top 3 most prevalent types of violence in Indonesia. In 2020, there will be 1.309 cases of dating violence, 1.815 cases in 2019, 2.073 cases in 2018, and 1.873 cases in 2017. Dating violence can be experienced not only by women, dating violence can also be experienced by men. However, Jennings et al. (2017) in her research revealed that women are more at risk of experiencing dating violence than men. This is because of the patriarchal culture that develops that men must be more dominant than women (Asikin et al., 2021).

Dating violence is described as abusive, controlling, and aggressive treatment that occurs in the form of previous dating relationships and in the form of psychological, physical, sexual (Park & Kim, 2017), and economic violence (Komnas Perempuan, 2022). Forms of physical violence such as being thrown at, slapped, hair pulled, pushed, kicked, punched, and choked (Asikin et al., 2021; Safitri & Sama'i, 2013; Singh et al., 2015). Forms of psychological violence such as being called inappropriate names, being told hurtful things, being blamed for every argument that occurs, being threatened, berated, shouted at, cursed at, and stalked (Asikin et al., 2021; Safitri & Sama'i, 2013). Forms of sexual violence such as being groped, hugged, kissed, forced to do

something sexual that is considered humiliating or degrading, forced to have sex including refusing to use condoms or other contraceptives (Asikin et al., 2021; Eshelman et al., 2022; Safitri & Sama'i, 2013; Sardinha et al., 2022). Meanwhile, economic violence includes behaviors that control individuals to obtain, use, and maintain economic resources to threaten their economic security (Adams et al., 2008).

A well-known case of dating violence on social media in 2021 occurred to NRW (23), a female student who ended her life by drinking poison next to her father's grave, allegedly stressed and depressed after being forced to have an abortion twice by her boyfriend, RB (Pranita & Dewi, 2021). It is known that NRW had vented through a social media telling her that her boyfriend, RB, had raped her until she became pregnant and asked her to have an abortion (Bhayangkara, 2021). The treatment she received was reported to RB's family, but the RB family's response was that they were not ready to marry NRW because he was still pioneering his careers. Dating violence also occurred to a female student with the initials AS who reported her boyfriend, BJK for threats and physical violence received (Azizah, 2023). AS explained that she had been dragged and forced into a car because AS refused to go home together. AS also reported that the abuse was first experienced on June 7, 2022 and had experienced 5 acts of violence including physical and verbal violence.

Aminah (2023) examined dating violence experienced by four men who were college students. The results obtained are that there are several forms of violence experienced by them such as verbal and non-verbal violence. AD is 23 years old and has been dating for approximately 3 years experiencing physical violence such as being hit and thrown with items, verbal violence such as being insulted, and economic violence such as being forced to buy things. TAS is 19 years old and has been dating for approximately 1 year and experienced verbal violence such as being cursed at. BYY is 24 years old and has been dating for approximately 2 years and experienced physical violence such as being hit and slapped, and verbal violence such as being called bad names. MER is 24 years old and has been dating for approximately 4 years and experienced verbal violence such as being insulted and economic violence such as being forced to fulfill daily needs.

The above phenomenon is representative of cases that have occurred in the society, both those that have surfaced on social media and those that are still hidden in many Indonesian societies. This shows that violence is still a rampant issue in Indonesia and there are still many other victims of violence who do not dare to report. According to Komnas Perempuan (2022), most victims who experience violence are in the age range of 18 - 24 years and are students. The age range of 18-24 years according to Arnett (2000) is classified as emerging adulthood which is characterized by identity exploration in the areas of love, work, and worldview.

In emerging adulthood, the exploration of love becomes more intimate and serious. The dating period no longer focuses on recreation and more on emotional and physical intimacy. In addition, emerging adulthood is also a time when individuals enter the world of college as a student. It is also described by Santrock (2014) that romance in college students is very important because at this stage the love they have is passionate love or eros which has a sexual component. It can be concluded that students belong to the emerging adulthood period which has a deeper exploration of love that is more intimate and serious both emotionally and physically, thus making students a group at high risk of experiencing dating violence.

Research about dating violence has been conducted both in Indonesia and abroad. Victims of dating violence generally report injuries, bruises, abrasions, and broken bones due to physical violence experienced (Safitri & Sama'i, 2013). Victims of dating violence also report hurt, trauma, lack of self-confidence (Aminah, 2023), low self-esteem (Ramadhani & Herdiana, 2022), loss of trust, easily suspicious, unable to socialize with the social environment due to the control received from the partner, negative emotions and dysfunctional responses such as crying for a whole month, consuming alcohol and smoking behavior, losing interest in starting a relationship with a new person (Asikin et al., 2021), disruption of sexual life (Choi et al., 2016), stress, anxiety, depression, difficulty concentrating, sleep problems, and suicidal behavior (Safitri & Sama'i, 2013; Van Ouytsel et al., 2017).

Based on several studies about dating violence in Indonesia and abroad, it can be concluded that dating violence can occur anywhere, both in various cities in Indonesia, and around the world. Dating violence can also happen to both women and men, but statistics show that dating violence is more prevalent among women. In terms of age group, dating violence is experienced more by individuals who are in transition to adulthood, especially college students because at this time, college students are in the exploration stage in love, work, and views of the world. Dating violence can have an impact on an individual's physical, psychological, and social life.

Ehlers dan Clark (2000) explained that there are differences in the personal interpretation of trauma and its parts in individuals who develop psychological distress. Some may see the trauma as time-limited, the traumatic experience may not have negative implications for the future, and some may find elements of self-development because of this trauma. Individuals with psychological distress are characterized by negative appraisals of the traumatic events, its parts, or both. These negative appraisals are the rationale for developing psychological distress by producing a sense of threat accompanied by intrusion, arousal, and strong emotions such as anxiety, anger, shame, guilt, or sadness. These negative appraisals also drive a series of cognitive dysfunctions and behavioral responses that have the short-term goal of reducing distress but have the long-term consequence of preventing cognitive change to a more positive state and subsequently maintaining the distress.

According to cognitive appraisal theory, there are two basic forms of cognitive appraisal namely primary appraisal and secondary appraisal (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Primary appraisal involves an evaluation of the event and its relevance to personal goals that includes judgments of irrelevance, harmlessness, or stressfulness. Secondary appraisal involves a complex evaluative process that considers which coping options are available and the likelihood that the individual can implement a particular strategy or set of strategies effectively. Secondary appraisal of coping options and primary appraisal of what is at stake relate to each other in shaping stress levels and the strength and quality of emotional reactions. This suggests that cognitive processes can help individuals to manage emotions and keep control of emotions so as not to become overwhelmed (Garnefski et al., 2001). The cognitive process of managing information intake which in this case is a traumatic experience that arouses emotions is called a cognitive emotion regulation strategy.

Cognitive emotion regulation strategy according to Xue et al. (2023) is an effort to extract information and adapt to the demands of the external environment. Cognitive emotion regulation strategies are very important for individuals in regulating emotions and still controlling the emotions experienced so that they are not overwhelmed (Garnefski & Kraaij, 2016). Garnefski et al. (2001) further divides cognitive emotion regulation strategies into adaptive and maladaptive cognitive emotion regulation strategies. Adaptive cognitive emotion regulation strategies include acceptance, refocus on planning, positive refocusing, positive reappraisal, and putting into

perspective, while maladaptive emotion regulation strategies include blaming others, rumination, catastrophizing (Garnefski et al., 2001), self-blame, negative cognitions about self, and negative cognitions about the world. Acceptance is a functional coping response, leading to thoughts of accepting what has been experienced and surrendering what has happened. Refocus on planning leads to thoughts about what steps to take and how to cope with negative events. Positive refocusing leads to thinking about pleasant things rather than thinking about an event. Positive refocusing is also defined as diverting or refocusing thoughts to more positive issues so as not to overthink the actual event. Positive reappraisal leads to thoughts that place a positive meaning on an event. Putting into perspective leads to thoughts that downplay the seriousness of an event or suppress its relativity when compared to other events.

The first maladaptive cognitive emotion regulation strategy is blaming others leads to thoughts of blaming what is experienced on others (Garnefski et al., 2001). Rumination leads to constant thinking about feelings and thoughts related to negative events. Catastrophizing leads to exaggerated thoughts to suppress the terror of the experience and imagine the worst-case scenario. Self-blame leads to self-blaming thoughts about what is experienced and leads to feelings of guilt, shame, and responsibility for negative outcomes. Negative cognitions about self lead to negative thoughts about the self, persistent change, isolation, hopelessness, self-doubt, and negative interpretations of psychological symptoms. Negative world cognitions lead to thoughts that the world is unsafe and distrust of others.

Previous research about cognitive emotional strategies was conducted on 68 pre-adolescents aged 9 to 12 years (Rahmah et al., 2021). The results show that pre-adolescents use cognitive emotion regulation strategies including rumination, self-blame, other-blame, acceptance, positive refocusing, cognitive avoidance, and refocus on planning. The absence of catastrophizing, putting into perspective, and positive reappraisal strategies is thought to be due to the limited negative events in life in the study, which are related to relational stress events from friends, parents, teachers, and everything related to lessons and grades at school.

Based on the explanation above, emerging adults who have experienced violence in dating use cognitive emotion regulation strategies as a response to the violent events experienced. Thus, researchers are interested in knowing the level of cognitive emotion regulation strategies used in responding to violent events experienced. The results of this study are also expected to provide practical benefits to practitioners, especially psychologists and psychiatrists. The result can be a reference in the preparation of psychological interventions that target maladaptive cognitive processes to deal with psychological distress due to dating violence trauma. Practical benefits are also expected to be given to victims of dating violence so that they do not hesitate to seek professional help so that psychological problems that arise as a result of the event can be addressed immediately.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

Sample comprised 116 college students, being 87.9% female, and ranging from 18 – 24 years of age ($M = 21.14$, $SD = 1.74$). Based on domicile, most participants came from Java (87.9%). Based on the length of the dating relationship, most were in the range of 1 to 2 years, 31.9%. Based on the length of dating violence, most were in the range of less than 1 year, 85.3%. Based on current romantic relationship status, most participants were no longer in the relationship (63.8%). Based on the forms of violence experienced, all participants had experienced psychological violence and most experienced 3 forms of combined violence (34.5%).

Data were collected using The Posttraumatic Cognitions Inventory (PTCI) developed by Foa et al. (1999) and Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ-Short) developed by Garnefski and Kraaij (2006) that adopted into Indonesian version. PTCI uses a Likert scale consisting of 7 answer options with a range of 1 to 7. 1 = totally disagree, 2 = disagree very much, 3 = disagree slightly, 4 = neutral, 5 = agree slightly, 6 = agree very much, 7 = totally agree. Scoring was done by calculating the average score of each subscale and then averaging the average results of each subscale. The *Cronbach's* alpha coefficient for 33 items of PTCI is 0.948 with Corrected Item-Total Correlation for each item above 0.20 (0.226 – 0.754).

CERQ-Short uses a Likert scale consisting of 5 answer options with a range of 1 to 5 with information, 1 = not at all, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = very much. Scoring was done by calculating the average score of each subscale. The *Cronbach's* alpha coefficient for 16 items of CERQ-Short is 0.810 with Corrected Item-Total Correlation for each item above 0.20 (0.289 – 0.588). Data were collected using an online questionnaire.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data obtained in table 1, participants are classified into three groups based on the empirical mean. The data shows that 12.9% participants have high adaptive cognitive emotion regulation strategies. Participants with high adaptive cognitive emotion regulation strategies will view the violence experienced with acceptance, positive refocusing, positive reappraisal, refocus on planning, and planning on perspective. The data also shows that 16.4% participants have high maladaptive cognitive emotion regulation strategies. Participants with high maladaptive cognitive emotion regulation strategies will perceive the violence experienced with negative cognitions about the self, negative cognitions about the world, self-blame, other-blame, catastrophizing, and rumination. However, most of the participants are in the moderate category.

Table 1
Descriptive Analysis of Cognitive Emotion Regulation Strategy

Variable	Mean	Standar Deviation	Score Range	Categories	Frequency (n = 116)	Percentage (%)
Cognitive Emotion Regulation Strategy	3.72	0.65	< 3.076	Low	14	12.1
			3.076 - 4.371	Moderate	89	76.7
			> 4.371	High	13	11.2
Adaptive Cognitive Emotion Regulation Strategy	3.61	0.74	< 2.873	Low	11	9.5
			2.873 - 4.346	Moderate	90	77.6
			> 4.346	High	15	12.9
Maladaptive Cognitive Emotion Regulation Strategy	3.81	0.85	< 2.967	Low	21	18.1
			2.967 - 4.670	Moderate	76	65.5
			> 4.670	High	19	16.4

Furthermore, descriptive analysis was carried out on each dimension of the cognitive emotion regulation strategy in table 2. In acceptance, there are 12.1% participants with high acceptance, they will tend to direct thoughts to accept the experience of violence experienced and surrender it while participants with low acceptance as much as 13.8% will tend to reject the violent events experienced. There are 18.1% participants with high positive refocusing will tend to direct to more positive thoughts and not drown in the experience of violence experienced while

participants with low positive refocusing as much as 11.2% will tend to think negatively and drown constantly in the experience of violence experienced.

Table 2*Descriptive Analysis of Cognitive Emotion Regulation Strategy Dimensions*

Variable	Mean	Standar Deviation	Score Range	Categories	Frequency (n = 116)	Percentage (%)
<i>Acceptance</i>	3.23	1.22	< 1.609	Low	16	13.8
			1.609 - 4.004	Moderate	86	74.1
			> 4.004	High	14	12.1
<i>Positive Refocusing</i>	3.54	1.05	< 2.491	Low	13	11.2
			2.491 - 4.579	Moderate	82	70.7
			> 4.579	High	21	18.1
<i>Positive Reappraisal</i>	3.89	1.04	< 2.852	Low	15	12.9
			2.852 - 4.924	Moderate	71	61.2
			> 4.924	High	30	25.9
<i>Refocus on Planning</i>	3.96	0.92	< 2.480	Low	7	6.0
			2.480 - 4.382	Moderate	65	56.0
			> 4.382	High	44	37.9
<i>Putting into Perspective</i>	3.43	0.95	< 2.480	Low	14	12.1
			2.480 - 4.382	Moderate	78	67.2
			> 4.382	High	24	20.7
Negative Cognitions about Self	4.06	1.37	< 2,696	Low	20	17.2
			2,696 - 5.429	Moderate	77	66.4
			> 5.429	High	19	16.4
Negative Cognitions about the World	5.43	1.13	< 4.301	Low	16	13.8
			4.301 - 6.563	Moderate	85	73.3
			> 6.563	High	15	12.9
<i>Self-Blame</i>	3.89	1.28	< 2.616	Low	21	18.1
			2.616 - 5.171	Moderate	73	62.9
			> 5.171	High	22	19.0
<i>Rumination</i>	3.31	1.09	< 2.224	Low	22	19.0
			2.224 - 4.397	Moderate	68	58.6
			> 4.397	High	26	22.4
<i>Catastrophizing</i>	4.06	0.65	< 3.415	Low	48	41.4
			3.415 - 4.711	Moderate	51	44.0
			> 4.711	High	17	14.7
<i>Other-Blame</i>	2.81	1.20	< 1.609	Low	16	13.8
			1.609 - 4.004	Moderate	86	74.1
			> 4.004	High	14	12.1

In positive reappraisal, there are 25.9% of participants with high positive reappraisal. They will tend to place a positive meaning on the violent events experienced while participants with low positive reappraisal as much as 12.9% will tend to place a negative meaning on the violent

events. In refocus on planning, there are 37.9% of participants with high refocus on planning. They will tend to direct their thoughts to the next steps to be taken and planning to overcome the violent events experienced. Meanwhile, 6% of participants with low refocus on planning will tend to stay still and have no future plans. In putting into perspective, 20.7% of participants with high putting into perspective will tend to minimize the severity of the violence experienced. Meanwhile, 12.1% of participants with low putting into perspective will tend to exaggerate the severity of the violence experienced.

Furthermore, in the dimension of maladaptive cognitive emotion regulation strategies, participants with high negative cognitions about self as much as 16.4% will tend to have negative thoughts about themselves, despair, think that they are alienated, negative self-beliefs, and negative interpretations of the symptoms of psychological disorders that may be experienced. Whereas as many as 17.2% of participants with low negative self-cognitions will tend to have more positive thoughts about themselves, do not feel hopeless, do not think that they are alienated, have more positive self-beliefs, and more positive interpretations of the symptoms of psychological disorders that may be experienced.

In negative cognitions about the world, participants with high negative cognitions about the world as much as 12.9% will tend to have thoughts that the world is unsafe and do not trust anyone. While as many as 13.8% of participants with low negative cognitions about the world still have thoughts that the world is still safe and still put trust in others. In self-blame, participants with high self-blame as much as 19.0% will tend to blame themselves for the violent events experienced, causing guilt, shame, and a sense of responsibility for the events that occur. While participants with low self-blame as much as 18.1% will tend not to blame themselves for the violent events that occur and have more positive emotions.

In rumination, participants with high rumination as much as 22.4% will tend to think continuously about feelings and thoughts about the violence experienced. Whereas as many as 19% of participants with low rumination do not think continuously about feelings and thoughts about the violence experienced. In catastrophizing, 14.7% of participants with high catastrophizing will tend to have exaggerated thoughts about the terror of the violence experienced and imagine the worst scenario. Meanwhile, 41.4% of participants with low catastrophizing did not have thoughts that exaggerated the terror of violence and did not have the worst scenario of the violent events experienced. In other-blame, 12.1% of participants with high other-blame will tend to blame others for the violence experienced while 13.8% of participants with low other-blame do not blame others for the violence experienced. Overall, most participants were at a moderate level in all dimensions of cognitive emotion regulation strategies.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research results that have been obtained, this research can be knowledge about cognitive emotion regulation strategies used in victims of dating violence. In general, both adaptive and maladaptive cognitive emotion regulation strategies in victims of dating violence are at a moderate level. In addition, it can be a reference in the preparation of interventions to deal with the psychological impact of dating violence experienced. Victims of dating violence can be helped to overcome maladaptive coping patterns and acquire new and more adaptive strategies.

Nevertheless, there are several limitations to this study that can be used as suggestions for future research. First, the study was conducted on female and male victims of dating violence with far

fewer men than women. The next limitation is that this study only examines the age group 18 to 24 years who are victims of dating violence so that it cannot be generalized to other age groups.

Suggestions for future research are to be able to examine cognitive emotion regulation strategies in dating violence victims who are male. This suggestion is to get an overview of emotion regulation strategies in male victims of dating violence so that they can get preventive methods that may be different from preventive methods in women. In addition, male victims can get better treatment to deal with the trauma caused by dating violence experienced. Future research is also recommended to examine cognitive emotion regulation strategies in different age groups.

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