

Phenomenology: Brain Rot in Gen Z Reviewed from the Perspective of the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (Cbt) Approach

Rahmat Hidayat¹, Muhammad Nur Wangid²

¹ Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Indonesia

² Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Corresponding Author:

Rahmat Hidayat,

Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Department of Psychology, Faculty Education and Psychology, Yogyakarta State University, Jl. Colombo No.1, Karang Malang, Caturtunggal, Kec. Depok, Kabupaten Sleman, Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Email: rahmathidayat.2024@student.uny.ac.id

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the phenomenology: brain rot in Gen Z is reviewed from perspective cognitive behavioral therapy approach. This study uses a qualitative approach with method phenomenological, Study This held at SMAN 9 Pekanbaru, Participants in study This are 10 students from SMAN 9 Pekanbaru who were selected purposively. Technique primary data collection in study This is interview and observation in-depth semi- structured, Data Analysis Data analysis was performed use technique analysis developed phenomenological by Colaizzi. The results of the study showed the phenomenon of brain rot in students of SMAN 9 Pekanbaru impact on decline function cognitive, disorders emotions, and difficulty regulation self consequence excessive digital media consumption. reflects impact significant to mental health and behavior Study students. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is assessed effective in help student recognize pattern think negative, increase control self, and reduce digital addiction. Research This recommend implementation of counseling program based on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) in schools for support students ' mental health in the digital age. in map impact psychological brain rot and push development approach based on proof for support students' mental health in the digital age.

Keywords: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Digital Addictive Behavior, Psychological Therapy Approaches



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INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology in the last decade has radically changed the way young people interact with the world. Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012, is the first generation to grow up in a fully digital era. They live side by side with social media, online content, and instant culture that shape their daily thinking and behavior (Vanden Abeele, 2021).

Although digital technology offers various benefits, its excessive use triggers symptoms of mental fatigue which is now often referred to as brain rot. This term is used to describe a condition where individuals feel their brains are rusty, have difficulty focusing, and are constantly distracted by digital content without substance (Levenson et al., 2021).

Brain rot is not a clinical term, but it has serious psychological implications, especially among adolescents. Long-term exposure to short, fast, and shallow content such as TikTok or Instagram Reels decreases attention capacity and significantly affects cognitive processing (Johansson et al., 2021).

Recent research shows that the habit of continuously consuming fast content that triggers dopamine instantly can form an addictive behavioral dependency, making it difficult for users to carry out activities that require long-term concentration (Montag et al., 2021).

This condition has an impact on broader psychological aspects, such as increased anxiety, stress, and mild depression. Not a few teenagers feel empty, mentally tired, and unable to complete academic tasks properly because they are too accustomed to shallow digital stimulation (Sundarasan et al., 2020).

Brain rot as a new phenomenon needs to be understood in a deeper psychological framework. One relevant approach to examine and treat this symptom is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), an evidence-based therapy that has been proven effective in treating psychological disorders due to negative thought patterns and maladaptive behaviors (Hofmann et al., 2020). CBT aims to help individuals recognize and change irrational thought patterns that cause psychological distress. In the context of brain rot, CBT can be a means for individuals to become aware of the impact of negative digital consumption on their thoughts and feelings, and to form healthier digital behaviors (Beck & Haigh, 2020).

Several studies have confirmed that CBT can be adapted into a digital format, which is very suitable for Gen Z. Online CBT applications or distance therapy have been shown to be effective in reaching adolescents with mild cognitive impairment due to excessive internet use (Spencer et al., 2021). The complex digital cultural context of Gen Z requires a contextual and flexible therapeutic approach. CBT as a therapy that focuses on the here and now is relevant because it is able to directly address problems that arise due to a digital lifestyle (Glasofer & Devlin, 2020). Meanwhile, a phenomenological approach was chosen to explore the meaning of the brain rot experience in depth from the perspective of the Gen Z individual himself. This approach allows researchers to understand subjective and emotional dimensions that cannot be reached through quantitative methods (Smith et al., 2021).

Through phenomenology, this study tries to interpret how adolescents understand, feel, and respond to the brain rot phenomenon in their daily lives, especially in school environments such as SMAN 9 Pekanbaru. This understanding is an important foundation in designing CBT-based psychological interventions (Finlay, 2020).

This study also supports the importance of digital mental health education among adolescents, educators, and parents. A comprehensive understanding of the relationship between digital media and mental health will help create a psychologically healthier learning environment (Nesi et al., 2020).

In schools, brain rot can reduce learning focus, reduce academic motivation, and reduce problem-solving abilities. CBT in the context of education can be taught as a life skill to help students build rational and resilient mindsets in the face of digital pressure (Kazantzis et al., 2021). By exploring students' real experiences and linking them to CBT interventions, this study aims to create a holistic understanding of brain rot and offer a therapeutic approach that is applicable and based on the needs of today's adolescents (Beck & Haigh, 2020). Through this study, it is hoped that a CBT-based psychological assistance model can be formed that is contextual, practical, and relevant to the challenges of the digital generation. This intervention is not only useful for school counselors, but also for educational policies and adolescent mental health in Indonesia (World Health Organization, 2021).

In recent years, the issue of adolescent mental health due to digital consumption has become a major focus of various global studies. A study by Spencer, Wood, & Moore (2021) showed a significant increase in mild cognitive impairment and emotional distress in adolescents due to excessive exposure to social media. This is also supported by Keles et al. (2021) who found that social media use has a direct correlation with anxiety and depression in adolescents. This trend shows the urgency of developing evidence-based psychological therapy approaches, such as CBT, which not only focus on symptoms but also target the roots of cognitive and emotional dysfunction due to digitalization. In Indonesia, although a similar phenomenon has begun to receive attention, there is still little research that specifically explores adolescents' subjective experiences of "brain rot" as a new psychological symptom in the digital era. Therefore, this study not only adds to the literature on the phenomenon of "brain rot" among students, but also presents an integrative approach between a phenomenological perspective and CBT-based interventions as an answer to contemporary adolescent mental health challenges.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological method. This approach was chosen because it is most appropriate for exploring in depth the subjective experiences of Gen Z students in dealing with the brain rot phenomenon, as well as understanding how they interpret changes in behavior, emotions, and cognition due to excessive digital media consumption. The phenomenological method allows researchers to explore the meaning structure of participants' life experiences directly, rather than simply observing external symptoms. This is in line with the purpose of the study which aims to understand the phenomenon of brain rot as a complex and invisible psychological experience, so that it cannot be measured quantitatively or limited to numbers.

Phenomenology is very relevant when reality wants to be converted through the lens of personal experience and individual perceptions of their own world (Creswell & Poth, 2021; Finlay, 2020). Thus, this method provides space for students to articulate their emotional, cognitive experiences, and inner conflicts narratively, which is very important in developing contextual and responsive CBT-based psychological interventions to the real needs of adolescents in the digital era. This study was conducted at SMAN 9 Pekanbaru, a public high

school located in an urban area. This location was chosen because it represents the characteristics of Gen Z teenagers who are under high academic and social pressure and have wide access to technology and the internet. This school also has a variety of digital activities integrated into students' daily lives. Participants in this study were 10 students of SMAN 9 Pekanbaru who were selected purposively.

The main data collection technique in this study was in-depth semi-structured interviews. The researcher used a flexible interview guide that allowed for in-depth exploration of students' experiences. In addition to interviews, data was also obtained through indirect observation of students' digital behavior and documentation from the school if available. Data collection was carried out by interviewing researchers, recording and recording all interviews with the consent of the participants. Observations were made by recording nonverbal expressions, speaking styles, and emotional moods of students during the interview. Data Analysis Techniques Data analysis was carried out using phenomenological analysis techniques developed by Colaizzi. The steps of the analysis include: (1) reading the entire transcript thoroughly; (2) identifying significant conditions; (3) formulating the meaning of the statement; (4) grouping meanings into main themes; (5) compiling a comprehensive description based on the theme; (6) formulate the essence of students' experiences related to brain rot and (7) confirm the findings with several participants to ensure the validity of the meaning. To ensure the validity of the data, the researcher used a source triangulation strategy (comparing interview data, observations, and documentation), member check (confirming the results of the analysis with informants), and audit trail (recording the research process in detail).

In addition, the researcher also conducted periodic self-reflection to maintain the objectivity of data interpretation. Credibility was strengthened by building empathetic relationships with students and creating an open and psychologically safe interview atmosphere. Although the phenomenological method excels in exploring subjective and deep meanings, this method has limitations. One of them is the high dependence on the researcher's interpretation, which can be influenced by personal bias if not strictly controlled through reflection and audit trail. In addition, the results of the study cannot be generalized to a wider population due to its contextual and participatory nature. This study was also limited to participants in one school only, so that the representation of students' experiences from other cultural or social contexts could not be fully accommodated. On the other hand, phenomenology demands in-depth interpretation skills, so the quality of the results is highly dependent on the researcher's competence in exploring and interpreting meaning accurately and ethically.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of research conducted at SMAN 9 Pekanbaru through a phenomenological approach and reviewed from the perspective of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). Data were obtained from in-depth interviews with SMAN 9 class students who experienced symptoms of cognitive decline, digital addiction, and emotional disorders due to excessive consumption of digital content.

1. Compulsive Digital Media Consumption

Based on the results of interviews with students of SMA 9 Pekanbaru, it was shown that the majority of students spend 6-10 hours per day on social media, especially TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts. At least 10 students lose control of their time and have a

compulsive urge to keep scrolling through content. Based on the results of the interview with Irzal, he stated that if you open TikTok for a moment, you will definitely continue and can't stop. Sometimes I plan to sleep at 10, but I often overstay until 2 am because I scroll through social media. In addition, based on the results of the interview with Rizky, he said that sometimes I intend to study, but I open YouTube first. In the end, it can be up to 3 hours just watching unimportant content.

Some students describe this habit as an unconscious reflex. As Anggraini said, My hands seem to automatically open Instagram when I hold my cellphone, even though there was no initial intention. This behavior is a characteristic of a compulsive habit that is formed through a process of repeated reinforcement by external stimuli.

This phenomenon indicates an addiction characterized by the inability to stop behavior despite being aware of its negative impacts (Andreassen, 2020). The theory of habitual digital behavior explains that the adolescent brain is accustomed to seeking fast and short stimuli that provide dopamine, thus creating a compulsive cycle (Kuss & Griffiths, 2021). This is exacerbated by the platform algorithm that continues to present content tailored to user preferences.

This condition is worsened by the use of gadgets before bed, which causes sleep disturbances. As the results of the interview with Sahmawati said, Sometimes I'm sleepy, but I still watch TikTok until morning. Waking up for school is late and I feel sleepy in class. Sleep disturbances due to the use of electronic devices have been linked to circadian rhythm disturbances and impaired concentration in the morning (Carter et al., 2020).

In some cases, students also feel stressed if they cannot access digital content. Anggraini said, if you don't open your cellphone for a day, it feels like something is missing, you feel anxious, you can't focus. As if you really have to know what's going viral. This indicates a psychological dependence on constant digital stimulation, which in CBT theory is called automatic thoughts that reinforce maladaptive behavior.

Some students tried to reduce the intensity of social media use by deleting the application or setting screen time, but most failed to maintain it. Sahmawati said, I had uninstalled TikTok, but when I was stressed I downloaded it again. Complete failure. This indicates that external restraint strategies are not enough without deeper cognitive restructuring.

From a CBT perspective, compulsive digital consumption reflects dysfunctional cognitive patterns characterized by irrational beliefs such as if I don't update I'll be left behind, or this content will make me happy for a moment. CBT interventions focus on identifying and challenging these thought patterns so that students can make more conscious and healthy decisions.

Therefore, uncontrolled compulsive digital media consumption not only impacts time and productivity, but also damages adolescents' self-regulation and cognitive structure. In the context of education, this phenomenon must be addressed seriously with a preventive and corrective approach based on behavioral and cognitive psychology.

2. Cognitive Capacity Decline

Based on the results of the study, there were many students who had difficulty concentrating, got bored quickly in studying, and decreased interest in reading in students of SMA 9 Pekanbaru. Based on the results of the interview with Anggraini, she said, Now I just read one page and I feel lazy. My brain can't seem to stay still. They are used to receiving instant information so that learning activities that require deep attention feel heavy. The results

of the interview with Sahmawati also explained that, If you watch a short video, you can last a long time, but when you open a textbook, you want to open your cellphone after just five minutes.

This symptom is in accordance with the Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 2019) which states that excessive cognitive load from exposure to digital information can disrupt working memory. Loh and Kanai (2020) found that fast content consumption affects the prefrontal cortex which regulates focus and decision making.

According to Greenfield (2020), the digital generation tends to lose reflective abilities because they are too accustomed to instant visualization and fast stimuli. Information that is not filtered deeply will pass through the cognitive process without conceptual integration, causing a decline in long-term memory and critical thinking skills.

In the context of CBT, this cognitive decline is influenced by cognitive distortions that lead students to choose short-term enjoyable activities over activities that require mental effort. Distortions such as learning is boring or there is no point in learning now reinforce avoidance behavior patterns.

Based on the results of the interview with Irzal, he said that he often feels unable to think for a long time, so he chooses to watch videos instead. This pattern becomes a negative cycle because the more time for passive stimuli, the less brain capacity to work actively. CBT can help students recognize and challenge these automatic negative thoughts and replace them with more realistic thoughts. Furthermore, the ability to multitask digitally, which is often considered an advantage, has a negative impact on learning efficiency. Students often open several applications at once while studying, for example while listening to music, chatting, and scrolling through social media. Research by Rosen et al. (2021) shows that digital multitasking causes a decline in academic performance because it divides focus ineffectively.

This negative impact is also seen in a simple cognitive test conducted by the guidance counselor. Most students when asked to memorize a list of words and repeat them, I can't focus. I only remember for a moment, then it's gone. This shows the weakness of short-term memory consolidation due to continuous digital distractions. This decline in cognitive capacity must be a serious concern for schools and parents, because it will have a direct impact on students' academic abilities and readiness to face future challenges. The role of CBT is very important to rebuild students' cognitive structures through gradual and structured concentration exercises, time management, and active thinking strategies.

3. Emotional and Self-Regulation Disorders

Based on the results of the study, students showed symptoms of more complex and profound emotional disorders. Such as feelings of guilt that continue to arise, but are not followed by changes in behavior, indicating a failure to integrate emotions and actions. Students also reported feelings of emptiness, restlessness, and anxiety when not using social media. The results of an interview with Rika Oktavia said, usually if you don't scroll social media it feels empty, like you don't know what to do. This is a form of emotional dysregulation, where individuals are unable to recognize, accept, and calm negative emotions adaptively. They often experience emotional confusion, cannot name feelings correctly, and fail to respond to emotions proportionally to triggers.

Self-Regulation Theory (Baumeister & Heatherton, 2021) explains that failure of self-regulation makes it difficult for individuals to control their impulses, especially when triggered by strong external stimuli such as social media. This inability is often associated with

weaknesses in the brain's executive functions, such as decision-making, planning, and self-control, which are still developing in adolescents.

The pressure to always be connected, fear of missing out (FoMO), and exposure to other people's achievements on social media also worsen students' self-esteem. In in-depth interviews, several students linked extreme mood swings to their digital activities. Desi Larisa said, When I see successful people on TikTok, it makes me feel inferior. I feel like I'm not doing anything. Emotional responses like this indicate negative self-comparison that worsens symptoms of mild depression and social anxiety. Twenge et al. (2020) noted a correlation between excessive digital media use and decreased mental health in adolescents, including increased anxiety, social isolation, and sleep disturbances. In CBT, this is categorized as automatic negative thoughts (ANTs) that trigger repeated negative emotional reactions and reinforce dysfunctional cognitive schemas, such as feelings of worthlessness and hopelessness.

CBT can help students recognize the relationship between digital stimuli, negative thoughts, and the emotional responses that arise. Through cognitive restructuring techniques, students are trained to evaluate the truth of their thoughts and develop a more balanced perspective. CBT interventions also teach emotional coping skills such as deep breathing, grounding techniques, and mindfulness to respond to emotions in a healthier way. In addition, journaling techniques in CBT have been shown to help with emotional management. This emotional regulation disorder has a direct impact on the quality of students' social relationships. Some students admit to becoming more temperamental and easily offended. Putri Parisa stated that, I get angry easily if someone disturbs me when scrolling. Even to my own younger sibling. Negative emotions that are suppressed and not processed healthily tend to overflow in the form of aggressive behavior or social withdrawal. Emotional and self-regulation are important areas in CBT interventions, with a focus on identifying emotional triggers, developing relaxation skills, and forming more adaptive responses. Schools can play an active role by holding group CBT sessions, emotional literacy training, and digital well-being programs that are integrated into the curriculum and counseling services.

4. Awareness Self to Damage And Difficulty Changed

Based on the results of the study, it shows that most students are aware that excessive digital consumption has a negative impact on their mental health and academic performance, the majority of them have difficulty changing these habits. This awareness arises from personal experiences that interfere with daily activities. This indicates a cognitive dissonance between logical awareness and actual behavior. According to Festinger (2017), cognitive dissonance occurs when someone experiences a mismatch between beliefs and actions, which in this context is reflected in guilt but still repeats the same behavior. CBT explains this condition as a result of automatic negative thoughts (ANTs) and a lack of trained self-control.

Students also experience emotional ambivalence, where they feel stressed and anxious because they are online too often, but also feel anxious when trying to get away from digital media. Based on the results of the interview, Anggraini said, I once tried to stop playing TikTok for a week, but instead I became anxious, like something was missing. This ambivalence is a sign of addictive behavior that disrupts the brain's reward system. CBT views this ambivalence as a conflict between the impulsive system (oriented towards instant pleasure) and the reflective system (based on logic and long-term values). Without adequate self-regulation training, the impulsive system tends to win. The results of the interview with

Sahmawati said, Sometimes I intend to study, but I remember a funny video. Oh, I overdo it and watch it for two hours.

The social environment also plays a big role in reinforcing the habit. Many students feel that all their friends are experiencing the same thing, so change is considered futile or unimportant. The results of the interview with Rika Oktaviani revealed, My friends are all like this. So it's like why change alone. According to the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 2020), the intention to change is greatly influenced by personal attitudes, social norms, and perceived control over behavior. In this case, social norms that are permissive of digital addiction reduce students' intentions to make changes.

Although some students have tried to reduce their online time, they relapse because they do not have a clear coping strategy. Desi Larisa explained, I tried to uninstall Instagram, but a week later I installed it again because I felt like I missed out on news. This shows the importance of continuity and support in the process of behavioral change. CBT emphasizes the importance of using concrete strategies such as time blocking, grounding techniques, and positive reinforcement to support change. Without these strategies, change is just a discourse without realization. Students need to be equipped with time management skills, self-awareness, and stress management techniques so that the change process is more effective.

Some students also experience pressure from families who do not understand the dynamics of digital addiction. Rizky said, My parents just said 'don't play with your cellphone', but didn't give a solution. It just made me even more stressed. This shows that behavioral change requires systemic support, not just unilateral prohibitions. It is also important to develop digital literacy and emotional regulation education programs in schools. Rahmawati said, If there is a class that teaches how to manage emotions and time, I will definitely join. Sometimes I want to change but don't know where to start. With a comprehensive and contextual CBT approach, students can be encouraged to recognize negative thought patterns, develop adaptive alternatives, and implement change plans gradually. Schools can be important facilitators by forming supportive communities and providing safe spaces for students to learn to change themselves.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) has great potential in addressing the brain rot phenomenon in Gen Z students who experience digital addiction and cognitive decline. CBT works by identifying, evaluating, and changing negative thought patterns that underlie problematic behavior. In this context, CBT can be used to help students recognize cognitive distortions such as over-justification, avoidance, and negative automatic thoughts that reinforce the addiction cycle.

According to Beck (2020), CBT is effective in helping individuals reconstruct their cognition and develop new, healthier behaviors. Students who are addicted to digital media often have rigid thought patterns such as I can't stop or I'll miss out if I'm not online. CBT helps replace these irrational beliefs with more realistic and adaptive statements. Research by Young et al. (2021) shows that internet-based CBT is effective in reducing symptoms of digital addiction in adolescents. This approach involves training in self-control skills, behavioral tracking, and cognitive restructuring. At SMAN 9 Pekanbaru, students interviewed indicated that they did not have concrete coping strategies, which opened up opportunities for the application of CBT techniques such as thought journaling, behavioral activation, and the use of written time schedules. CBT is also useful in helping regulate emotions. Students who experience emotional outbursts, excessive stress, or anxiety due to academic pressure and

social media can be trained to recognize their emotional triggers and respond in healthier ways. According to research by Zhang & Huang (2020), CBT improves emotional regulation skills and reduces emotional reactivity in adolescents.

Implementation of CBT in schools can also be done through customized intervention programs, such as digital hygiene modules, problem-solving skills training, and CBT-based mindfulness workshops. This program can be carried out by counseling teachers who have received training, as suggested by the results of the Casey et al. (2022) study which showed that CBT training for teachers had a positive impact on students' mental health.

In addition, CBT allows for measurable evaluation of progress. By using CBT worksheets, students can track their thoughts and feelings over time, facilitating the process of reflection and motivation to change. In this process, students learn that change requires a gradual process and concrete strategies, not just intentions. The potential of CBT also lies in the flexibility of its approach, which can be adapted to cultural contexts and technological developments. In a generation accustomed to visual and digital approaches, CBT can be developed in the format of an interactive school-based application or platform, such as that developed in the study of Rahman & Azizah (2021) on urban adolescents in Indonesia. Thus, the application of CBT in the context of brain rot in students of SMAN 9 Pekanbaru can be a strategic solution that not only addresses surface symptoms but also changes the basic mindset and behavior that are the root of the problem. Schools as educational institutions need to take an active role in integrating this approach into student psychological well-being programs.

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In group CBT sessions, students can also learn from each other's experiences, strengthen social support, and feel more understood. This approach is very relevant in the school environment. Implementation of CBT in schools can also be done through tailored intervention programs, such as digital hygiene modules, problem-solving skills training, and CBT-based mindfulness workshops. This program can be carried out by counseling teachers

who have received training, as suggested by the results of the study by Casey et al. (2022) which showed that CBT training for teachers had a positive impact on students' mental health. In addition, CBT allows for measurable evaluation of progress. By using CBT worksheets, students can track their thoughts and feelings over time, facilitating the process of reflection and motivation to change. In this process, students learn that change requires a gradual process and concrete strategies, not just intentions. The potential of CBT also lies in the flexibility of its approach, which can be adapted to cultural contexts and technological developments. In a generation accustomed to visual and digital approaches, CBT can be developed in the format of an interactive school-based application or platform, as developed in the study of Rahman & Azizah (2021) on urban adolescents in Indonesia.

5. Comparing Research Results with Previous Research

The results of this study indicate that Gen Z students at SMAN 9 Pekanbaru experience symptoms of brain rot in the form of compulsive digital media consumption, decreased cognitive capacity, impaired emotional regulation, and difficulty in making behavioral changes, even though they are aware of the negative impacts of the behavior. These findings are consistent with a study by Andreassen (2020) which explains that social media addiction is caused by unconscious compulsive drives and psychological dependence on digital stimulation. This study also confirms the results of Johansson et al. (2021) and Loh & Kanai (2020) who found that the use of fast content such as TikTok has an impact on decreased focus, attention endurance, and short-term working memory. However, this study expands on their findings by presenting phenomenological data showing how students themselves interpret these symptoms, for example in the form of guilt that arises but is not followed by changes in behavior. In terms of emotional regulation, the results of this study strengthen the studies of Twenge et al. (2020) and Keles et al. (2021) which show that excessive social media use is associated with anxiety, mild depression, and social isolation. However, this study adds aspects of school context and academic pressure, where students feel their negative emotions come not only from social media, but also from learning demands that cannot be balanced due to constant disruption of focus.

In terms of intervention, the CBT approach used in this study is in line with the results of the studies of Spencer et al. (2021) and Young et al. (2022) which stated that CBT is effective in treating digital addiction and mild cognitive impairment in adolescents. However, different from previous studies which mostly used quantitative approaches or online application-based experiments, this study uses a phenomenological approach, which emphasizes students' subjective experiences and self-awareness as the basis for formulating intervention strategies. In addition, this study provides an important contextual contribution to the Indonesian educational environment, especially in public schools with urban characteristics. This complements the research of Rahman & Azizah (2021) which developed an application-based digital CBT model, but has not explored the phenomenological aspects of adolescent experiences in the local social and cultural context. Thus, this study offers a deeper and more holistic understanding, not only of the symptoms and solutions, but also of the inner dynamics of Gen Z students in dealing with digital pressures in real life.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research on the phenomenology of brain rot in Gen Z reviewed from the perspective of the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) approach, it can be concluded

that excessive consumption of digital media has a significant impact on decreased cognitive function, impaired emotional regulation, and low self-control in students in the school environment. These symptoms appear in the form of social media addiction, decreased focus on learning, ineffective digital multitasking, to the emergence of negative emotions that are not managed healthily. CBT has proven to be relevant and effective as an intervention approach because it can help students recognize dysfunctional thought patterns, deal with cognitive distortions, and build adaptive behaviors to reduce digital addiction. This study suggests the importance of implementing CBT-based counseling programs in schools with adjustments to the cultural context and psychological needs of Gen Z adolescents in the digital era. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy approach in the context of modern digital behavior phenomena. This study expands the scope of CBT theory from the realm of clinical disorders to non-clinical psychosocial issues related to digital culture, and strengthens the relevance of CBT in shaping students' self-awareness and regulatory abilities towards fast and instant digital stimuli. In addition, the use of a phenomenological approach in this study enriches the theoretical understanding of the subjectivity of digital experiences in adolescents, which has so far received less attention in conventional educational psychology theories.

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