

Adaptation of Childhood Emotional Abuse Measurement Instrumen in Indonesia

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Abstract

Childhood emotional abuse has long-term impacts on individuals. A specific measuring instrument to measure the history of childhood emotional abuse in Indonesian adolescents is needed. The current study adapted the Emotional Abuse Questionnaire developed by Momtaz et al. (2022) into an Indonesian version (ID-EAQ). Participants in this study were 100 adolescents aged 17-21 years, selected using a purposive sampling technique. The adaptation was carried out with the guidance of the International Test Commission (2016). The results showed that the ID-EAQ has a high level of validity and reliability with a value of 0.921. It can be concluded that the ID-EAQ is a valid and reliable measuring instrument to measure the history of childhood emotional abuse in adolescent samples.

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, many studies have explored forms of traumatic behavior such as child abuse, such as physical abuse (Ariani & Asih, 2022), sexual harassment (Dwijia, 2021; Napitupulu & Julio, 2023), and emotional abuse (Ren, 2020). The prevalence of child abuse in Indonesia is quite high (Napitupulu & Julio, 2023). Based on the Sistem Informasi Online Perlindungan Perempuan dan Anak (SIMFONI PPA), the data presented during 2023 shows that there were 13,156 cases of sexual violence, 10,500 cases of physical violence, 9,050 cases of psychological violence (SIMFONI PPA, 2023). The data is data collected by KPAI through reports received. This means that there is a possibility that there are still cases that occur but are not recorded and the prevalence of cases of violence against children may be higher. However, although physical and sexual violence are more frequently reported than psychological violence, the results of the study show that psychological violence has the greatest impact compared to physical and sexual violence (Heim et al., 2013; Moeller et al., 1993). Emotional abuse had higher scores for depressive symptoms, compared to those who experienced physical, sexual, or combined physical and sexual abuse (Dye, 2020). In addition, a meta-analysis revealed that children who were abused were approximately 2 times more likely to experience recurrent and persistent depression than those who were not (Nanni et al., 2012).

Psychological violence or mental abuse refers to actions or behaviors that cause emotional or mental suffering to someone. Much literature refers to psychological violence as emotional abuse (Robinson, 2019; Trickett et al., 2009). Child emotional abuse is based on the behavior of parents/caregivers rather than on the child's maladaptive development (Trickett et al., 2009). Parental behaviors that are considered emotionally abusive: rejecting, terrorizing, isolating, exploiting/damaging, denying emotional responses, and mental health/medical/legal neglect. In addition to the quality of emotional abuse, expert psychological and psychiatric opinions on emotional abuse have focused on parental actions including rejecting, isolating, terrorizing, neglecting, damaging, verbally assaulting, and overly pressuring (Thompson & Kaplan, 2016).

There are at least three aspects that are affected when a child experiences emotional abuse, namely a) disturbed psychological development, b) disturbed physical development, and c) mental disorders (Thompson & Kaplan, 2016). Psychological aspects that are disturbed in children who experience emotional abuse, these include aggression, emotional unresponsiveness, emotional instability, impaired social development, dependency, serious social difficulties, incompetence, underachievement, negative self-evaluation and educational failure (Muarifah et al., 2020; Razak & Perveen, 2024; Reswita & Buulolo, 2023; Thompson & Kaplan, 2016). In physical development, this is the most easily measured sequelae of inadequate emotional provision in childhood. It is seen in physical development, behavioral abnormalities including hoarding and stealing of food, pica, enuresis and encopresis (Hymowitz et al., 2017; Mazzeo & Espelage, 2002; Thompson & Kaplan, 2016). Furthermore, children who experience emotional abuse do not always exhibit psychiatric symptoms that are clustered together to permit a formal psychiatric diagnosis. However, early life attachment disorders, unmet developmental needs or impaired psychological development may predispose some children to a range of psychiatric disorders (Thompson & Kaplan, 2016). Emotional abuse has been described in association with three childhood psychiatric disorders: depression, reactive attachment disorder in infancy and multiple personality disorder (Schulz et al., 2017; Wright et al., 2009).

Of the three aspects affected when a child experiences emotional abuse, this will have an impact on the next stage of life until adulthood. Emotional abuse in childhood has an impact on poor adaptation to adolescent life (Thompson & Kaplan, 2016). Childhood emotional abuse has been shown to be associated with low self-esteem in adolescence and adulthood and may be associated with poor physical health. Adults with a history of childhood abuse may be victims or perpetrators of marital violence, and some (but not all) will continue patterns of grossly incompetent, neglectful, or abusive parenting as parents (Thompson & Kaplan, 2016).

Experiences of childhood emotional abuse have been shown to have deleterious effects among college students. Childhood emotional abuse contributes unique variance to subsequent symptoms across internalizing and dissociative domains (Hunt et al., 2017). Experiences of childhood emotional abuse will emerge as independent predictors of anxiety and depressive symptoms in adulthood (Hornor, 2012). Even after controlling for gender, family income, exposure to parental alcoholism, and all other forms of child maltreatment, childhood emotional abuse was correlated with schemas of vulnerability to harm, self-victimization, and defect/shame.

However, although emotional abuse in children has an impact in adult life, there is no measuring instrument that specifically measures the history of emotional abuse in childhood that has been developed in Indonesia. Previous studies have looked at the history of child abuse through reports from survey institutions and child protection (Fallo & Sumarni, 2022), qualitative study (Napitupulu & Julio, 2023). In addition, other studies that look at the history of emotional abuse in childhood as a whole with other forms of abuse, such as physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, even physical and psychological violence against children (Hamarman et al., 2002).

The current study will attempt to validate the Indonesian version of the Emotional Abuse Questionnaire (ID-EAQ) scale translated from its original form (Momtaz et al., 2022). To find out whether emotional abuse occurs in childhood, it can be seen from several aspects based on the five categories of bad behavior of caregivers (Momtaz et al., 2022). The adverse behaviors referred to are (a) emotional neglect, unavailability, and unresponsiveness; (b) hostile, insulting, rejecting, or blame-shifting interactions with the child; (c) excessive developmental expectations from parents and inappropriate expectations from the child, unstable discipline, and conflicting and confusing interactions with the child; (d) use of the child for the caregiver's needs, terrorizing, exploiting, and emotional black-spotting (i.e., forcing the child to follow orders by exploiting their weaknesses or revealing their secrets); and (e) exclusion or denial of the child's appropriate peer interactions through excessive control (Glaser, 2011).

Considering this categorization (Momtaz et al., 2022) prepared several items representing each type of abusive behavior. Questions were designed to assess (a) verbal abuse (belittling, insulting, scolding, teasing, accusing), (b) emotional rejection, (c) excessive dictating, (d) unstable dictating, (e) lack of control, (f) isolating, (g) inflated expectations; and (h) terrorizing. However, of the eight categories, the categories "excessive control" and "isolating" were combined and "unstable control" and "lack of control" were combined. Thus, the focus of the 6 categories as subscales of measuring childhood emotional abuse.

The EAQ was used because it specifically measures history of childhood emotional abuse in adolescents (Momtaz et al., 2022). Unlike other measuring instruments that measure all trauma experienced in childhood, including emotional abuse, emotional neglect, physical abuse or neglect, and sexual abuse such as The Childhood Trauma Questionnaire - Short Form (CTQ-SF) which has been used in several previous studies (Beyarslan & Uzer, 2022; Karakurt & Silver, 2013; Qasim & Muzaffar, 2021; Schulz et al., 2017).

Rationale of the Study

This research will validate the Indonesian version of the Emotional Abuse Questionnaire. By considering the complexity of violence/abuse against children, and the need to look at the history of childhood emotional abuse in adolescent samples, this research will be one solution to provide a measuring tool in measuring child abuse that focuses on the issue of a history of emotional abuse in childhood, children in a sample of teenagers in Indonesia. Ultimately, this research will be useful in efforts to determine the history of childhood emotional abuse in a sample of adolescents.

Objectives

This research aims to test the validity and reliability of the Indonesian version of the Emotional Abuse Questionnaire in a sample of teenagers..

METHODS

Participant

Participants were selected using purposive sampling technique. Participants involved in this study amounted to 100 teenagers consisting of 53 males and 57 females with an age range of 17-21 years. Participants filled out the questionnaire via the google form link through the media devices they each owned. In addition, before participants filled out the questionnaire, participants were asked to fill out an informed consent.

Research Prosedures

This research procedure refers to the adaptation stages of the ITC Guidelines for Translating and Adapting Tests (International Test Commission, 2017). The first stage is Pre-condition where the researcher submits a request for permission to the owner of the original instrument via e-mail and together with the expert reviews the instrument to ensure that the instrument can be used according to the research context. The second stage of Test Development is carried out by conducting forward-backward translation carried out by expert translators from the language laboratory center. The third stage is Confirmation, namely the research tests the validity of the content through 2 experts; improving items according to the language and cultural context; making clear instructions; testing validity and reliability. The fourth stage is Score Scales & Interpretation, the researcher interprets the data obtained. The last stage is Documentation, the researcher does documentation.

Validity and Reliability

The validity test technique used with the Karl Pearson product moment formula is to correlate each item with its total value. In the test, the researcher used the IBM SPSS Statistics 26 program. Furthermore, the total score results of Pearson Correlation (r-count) for each item were compared with the r-table. This study uses a significance level value of 5%, so based on the number of respondents 100, the r-table value is 0.195. If the r-count value is greater than 0.195, the instrument item is valid, conversely if the r-count value is less than 0.195, the instrument item is invalid. Reliability is measured by the alpha coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) and tested with IBM SPSS Statistics 26. In this study, the acceptable reliability score is > 0.7 .

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Based on the results of statistical analysis, it is known that the participants in this study were 100 respondents with an age range of 17-21 years. The number of male and female respondents was almost balanced, namely 53 males and 57 females. Respondents were undergraduate students who had just started their education in semester 1 from representatives of 8 different study programs. In addition, respondents had different domicile backgrounds, but 74% came from Java, the rest from Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Lombok.

Table 1. ID-EAC Validity Test Analysis Results

Item Number	r-Count	r-Table	Information
1	0.434	0.195	Valid
2	0.470	0.195	Valid
3	0.682	0.195	Valid
4	0.513	0.195	Valid
5	0.520	0.195	Valid
6	0.569	0.195	Valid
7	0.587	0.195	Valid
8	0.377	0.195	Valid
9	0.514	0.195	Valid
10	0.281	0.195	Valid
11	0.630	0.195	Valid
12	0.479	0.195	Valid
13	0.701	0.195	Valid
14	0.634	0.195	Valid
15	0.515	0.195	Valid
16	0.414	0.195	Valid
17	0.694	0.195	Valid
18	0.638	0.195	Valid
19	0.670	0.195	Valid
20	0.601	0.195	Valid
21	0.705	0.195	Valid
22	0.646	0.195	Valid
23	0.562	0.195	Valid
24	0.339	0.195	Valid
25	0.493	0.195	Valid
26	0.640	0.195	Valid
27	0.598	0.195	Valid
28	0.730	0.195	Valid
29	0.421	0.195	Valid
30	0.610	0.195	Valid

Content validity was conducted by 2 experts in the fields of psychology and guidance and counseling. The results of the content validity that had been conducted, two experts agreed that the backtranslation instrument was appropriate and suitable for use. Furthermore, the validity of the instrument was conducted using the Karl Pearson product moment formula, namely by correlating each item with its total value. If the r-count value is greater than 0.195, the instrument item is valid, conversely if the r-count value is less than 0.195, the instrument item is invalid. The results of the instrument validity test showed that all items were valid with r-count values in the range of 0.281 - 0.730.

Furthermore, the results of the reliability test were measured by the alpha coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) and tested with IBM SPSS Statistics 26. In this study, the acceptable reliability score was > 0.7 . The results showed that the adapted EAQ-ID measurement instrument had a high reliability value, which was 0.921. This means that the adapted EAQ-ID instrument can consistently measure the history of emotional abuse in childhood.

The results of the validity test above indicate that the EAQ-ID instrument can measure the contracts being measured, namely verbal abuse, emotional rejection, excessive control, inadequate control, excessive expectations, and terror. This is based on the items that are arranged to confirm statements through time descriptions such as "in the past, when I was little, now, before until now". This time description confirms that respondents are asked to recall childhood experiences that have been experienced. In addition, with a high level of reliability, it provides an overview of the reliability of this instrument.

Although the problem of emotional abuse is often combined with other traumatic acts, such as physical-sexual abuse, physical violence, rejection, and neglect (Beyarslan & Uzer, 2022), but these results confirm that emotional abuse can be measured using a specific measuring instrument. Furthermore, researchers hope that with the existence of this Indonesian version of the childhood emotional abuse history measuring instrument, there will be more research that focuses on emotional abuse in children.

Limitation

Furthermore, the measurement results have a high level of validity and reliability, but this study still has many shortcomings. First, the measurement was carried out comprehensively, not on each indicator. Second, the respondents who participated were students, not including the general public with a limited age range.

CONCLUSION

This study produced the Indonesian version of the Emotional Abuse Questionnaire (ID-EAQ). The results showed that the ID-EAQ is a scale consisting of 30 valid and reliable items. Therefore, this scale is well utilized in identifying and measuring the history of emotional abuse in childhood in the adolescent population.

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