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Optimising Students' Self-Confidence Through Group Guidance Using the Self-Talk Technique

Izwan Ardhan Saragih¹, Nurussakinah Daulay²

^{1,2}Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of group guidance services using the self-talk technique in optimising the self-confidence of eighth-grade students at SMP Swasta Al Washliyah 26 Medan. The study employed a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design using a nonequivalent control group design. The research sample consisted of 14 students with low levels of self-confidence, who were divided into an experimental group and a control group. The research instrument was a self-confidence scale consisting of 36 statement items that had met the validity and reliability requirements. Data analysis was conducted using an independent samples t-test with the assistance of SPSS version 26. The results indicated that all students in the experimental group experienced an improvement in self-confidence from the low category to the high category after receiving group guidance services with the self-talk technique. Statistical testing showed a significance value of 0.004 (< 0.05), indicating a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group. The mean posttest score of the experimental group (116.71) was higher than that of the control group (108.86).

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Corresponding Author:

Izwan Ardhan Saragih

Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, State Islamic University of North Sumatra, Medan, Indonesia

Email: izwan0303203200@uinsu.ac.id

1. INTRODUCTION

Self-confidence is one of the psychological aspects that plays an important role in the development of students, especially at the junior high school level. Self-confidence allows students to recognise and optimise their potential, dare to express their opinions, make decisions independently, and actively participate in the learning process [1]. Students who have high self-confidence tend to exhibit an optimistic attitude, responsibility, and perseverance in achieving both academic and non-academic goals. Conversely, low self-confidence can hinder personal development and students' academic achievement [2].

In the context of education, self-confidence not only affects academic success but also influences students' social and emotional abilities [3]. Students who lack self-confidence

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generally exhibit passive behaviour in class, are reluctant to ask questions or express opinions, fear making mistakes, and have difficulty interacting with peers and teachers. This condition has the potential to lead to further problems, such as low learning motivation, academic anxiety, and a decline in academic achievement [4]. Therefore, developing students' self-confidence becomes one of the important tasks that requires serious attention from the school, especially through guidance and counselling services.

The initial observation conducted on eighth-grade students at Al Washliyah 26 Private Junior High School in Medan showed a significant issue with self-confidence. Several students appeared passive during learning activities, were reluctant to express their opinions in discussions, felt embarrassed when asked to perform in front of the class, and doubted their own abilities. This condition indicates that some students do not yet have optimal self-confidence and therefore require appropriate and systematic interventions to help them develop a positive attitude toward themselves.

One way to optimise students' self-confidence is through group counselling services. Group counselling services are guidance and counselling services that utilise group dynamics to help students understand themselves, develop their potential, and address problems they face together. Through interactions among group members, students have the opportunity to learn to express their opinions, listen to others' perspectives, and build a sense of mutual trust and social support. This process is highly relevant in efforts to enhance students' self-confidence.

To make group counselling services more effective, it is necessary to apply the appropriate techniques according to the characteristics of the students' problems. One technique considered effective in boosting self-confidence is the self-talk technique. Self-talk is a counselling technique that focuses on an individual's internal dialogue, that is, how a person talks to themselves. Negative self-talk often causes feelings of doubt, fear, and low self-esteem in students. On the other hand, positive self-talk can help students replace negative thoughts with statements that are rational, optimistic, and confidence-building.

The application of self-talk techniques in group counselling services provides students with the space to recognise negative thought patterns they have had, and gradually transform them into positive thought patterns through practice and reinforcement within the group. The group dynamics that develop allow students not only to learn from their personal experiences but also from the experiences of their peers, making the process of internalising self-confidence stronger and more meaningful.

Various studies have shown that students with good self-confidence tend to be more active in learning, have high learning motivation, and are able to adapt to the school environment positively. Conversely, low self-confidence can hinder students' participation in learning activities, reduce motivation, and impact academic achievement. One such study by Lutfiah et al. examined the effectiveness of group counselling services in enhancing students' self-confidence. These services are considered capable of facilitating social interaction, openness, and group dynamics that support the psychological development of learners [5]. Rais' research shows that group guidance can significantly increase students' self-confidence through interpersonal communication and social support formed within the

group [6]. However, most of these studies still regard group counselling as a general approach without being specifically combined with particular cognitive techniques.

On the other hand, the self-talk technique as part of the Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT) approach has been proven effective in helping individuals change irrational thought patterns into more rational and positive ones. Research (Mirzah) shows that positive self-talk can increase self-confidence, reduce anxiety, and improve students' emotion regulation [7]. Ayumi & Siregar also emphasise that self-talk has a significant impact on an individual's emotional responses and behaviour, thus having great potential in developing self-confidence [8]. However, these studies are generally applied individually and have not been widely integrated systematically into group counselling services in schools.

Based on a review of previous research, several research gaps can be identified. First, there is still limited research integrating group counselling services with self-talk techniques as a structured intervention. Second, research specifically focusing on 8th-grade students is still relatively scarce, even though early adolescence is a period vulnerable to self-confidence issues due to significant psychological and social changes. Third, there is not much research examining the application of group counselling with self-talk techniques in the context of private schools with a religious value-based curriculum, particularly at SMP Swasta Al Washliyah, which has unique cultural characteristics and religious values.

Based on this research gap, the novelty of this study lies in the integration of group guidance services with systematic self-talk techniques to optimise the self-confidence of eighth-grade students at SMP Swasta Al Washliyah 26 Medan. This study not only assesses the quantitative improvement in students' self-confidence but also emphasises the process of changing students' mindsets and attitudes through group dynamics and guided positive self-talk exercises. In addition, this study presents a different empirical context by conducting the research in a private school with religious characteristics, thereby providing a new contribution to the development of contextually relevant and student-need-based guidance and counselling services.

Thus, this research is expected to provide a theoretical contribution in enriching the study of guidance and counselling, particularly related to the effectiveness of integrating self-talk techniques in group counselling services. Practically, the results of this study are expected to serve as a reference for guidance and counselling teachers in designing more innovative and effective services to enhance the self-confidence of students at the junior high school level.

2. METHOD

The approach used in this study was quantitative, and the type of research was experimental. The research design employed was a quasi-experimental design in the form of a nonequivalent control group design, which involved two groups: an experimental group and a control group. The experimental and control groups were not selected randomly. Both groups were given a pretest to determine their initial conditions, followed by a posttest to identify differences between the experimental and control groups. In this design, only the experimental group received the treatment [9].

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<https://doi.org/10.58421/gehu.v5i1.1169>**Table 1. Research Design**

Group	Pretest	Treatment	Posttest
Experimental Group	O ₁	X	O ₂
Control Group	O ₃	—	O ₄

Notes:

O₁ = Experimental group given the initial assessment (pretest)

X = treatment in the form of group guidance

O₂ = Experimental group given the final assessment (posttest)O₃ = Control group given the initial assessment (pretest)O₄ = Control group given the final assessment (posttest)

The study was conducted at SMP Swasta Al Washliyah 26 Medan. Population refers to the total number of research subjects [10]. The population of this study consisted of 54 eighth-grade students at SMP Swasta Al Washliyah 26 Medan. A sample is a subset of the population selected for research purposes [11]. In this study, the sample consisted of 14 students selected using purposive sampling, in which participants were chosen based on the researcher's criteria, namely, students whose level of self-confidence was categorised as low.

The measurement instrument used in this study was a self-confidence scale adapted from the research conducted by Nur Wahyuni. The self-confidence scale consisted of 36 statement items. The validity test results using SPSS indicated that all 36 items were valid, with item correlation values below 0.30. The reliability test showed a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0,988. Data analysis was performed using the independent samples *t*-test to determine whether there were differences in mean scores between two independent groups [12]. The data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 26.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

This study measured students' self-confidence as the research variable, which consisted of five indicators: belief in one's own abilities, optimism, objectivity, responsibility, and rationality. A Likert scale was used to measure each statement item with four response options ranging from scores 1 to 4. The highest possible score was 144, while the lowest score was 36. The determination of the maximum score, minimum score, range, and interval width was calculated as follows:

- Maximum score = $4 \times 36 = 144$
- Minimum score = $1 \times 36 = 36$
- Range = $144 - 36 = 108$
- Interval width = $108 \div 3 = 36$

Table 2. Categories of Students' Self-Confidence Levels

Category	Interval	Frequency
High	109–144	0
Moderate	73–108	0
Low	36–72	14

Based on Table 2, the pretest results indicate that all 14 students were classified as having low self-confidence. Subsequently, these 14 students were divided into two groups: the experimental group and the control group.

Table 3. Pretest and Posttest Results of the Experimental Group

No	Initials	Pretest Score	Category	Posttest Score	Category
1	BK	65	Low	121	High
2	DTA	71	Low	118	High
3	FMS	72	Low	115	High
4	SE	69	Low	118	High
5	KH	67	Low	114	High
6	SA	72	Low	120	High
7	YA	64	Low	111	High

Based on Table 3, all seven students in the experimental group were initially categorised as having low self-confidence. After receiving group guidance services using the self-talk technique, the posttest results showed that all seven students moved into the high self-confidence category.

Table 4. Pretest and Posttest Results of the Control Group

No	Initials	Pretest Score	Category	Posttest Score	Category
1	AP	63	Low	106	Moderate
2	BE	64	Low	109	High
3	HY	70	Low	110	High
4	KDB	63	Low	100	Moderate
5	RA	70	Low	112	High
6	SFM	71	Low	111	High
7	SL	67	Low	114	High

Based on Table 4, all seven students in the control group were initially categorised as having low self-confidence. The posttest results indicate that five students reached the high category, while two students remained in the moderate category.

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3.1.1. Normality Test

The normality test was conducted to determine whether the data were normally distributed, with the criterion that the significance value (Sig.) must be greater than 0.05.

Table 5. Results of the Normality Test

Group	Kolmogorov–Smirnov Statistic	df	Sig.	Shapiro–Wilk Statistic	df	Sig.
Pretest Experimental	0.197	7	0.200*	0.895	7	0.304
Posttest Experimental	0.213	7	0.200*	0.952	7	0.745
Pretest Control	0.242	7	0.200*	0.845	7	0.110
Posttest Control	0.227	7	0.200*	0.909	7	0.390

Based on Table 5, the significance values of both the Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk tests for the experimental and control groups were greater than 0.05. Therefore, the data in this study were normally distributed.

3.1.2. Homogeneity Test

The homogeneity test in this study used Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances. The sample is considered homogeneous if the Sig. Value based on Mean is greater than 0.05.

Table 6. Results of the Homogeneity Test

Test Method	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Based on Mean	0.113	3	24	0.952
Based on Median	0.059	3	24	0.981
Based on Median and Adjusted df	0.059	3	16.319	0.981
Based on Trimmed Mean	0.086	3	24	0.967

Based on Table 6, the Sig. Value based on Mean (0.952) is greater than 0.05, indicating that the data from the experimental and control groups were homogeneous.

3.1.3. Independent Samples t-Test

To determine the significance value and the difference in mean posttest scores between the experimental and control groups, an independent samples t-test was conducted, with the criterion that Sig. (2-tailed) < 0.05.

Table 7. Results of the Independent Samples t-Test

		Levene's Test For Equality Of Variances		T-Test For Equality Of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-Tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval Of The Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Hasil	Equal Variances Assumed	,126	,729	3,563	12	,004	7,857	2,205	3,052	12,662
	Equal Variances Not Assumed			3,563	11,232	,004	7,857	2,205	3,015	12,699

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Based on Table 7, the Sig. (2-tailed) value was 0.004, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the research hypothesis was accepted. After the implementation of group guidance using the *self-talk* technique, students' self-confidence showed a significant improvement. Thus, group guidance with the *self-talk* technique is effective in optimising the self-confidence of eighth-grade students at SMP Swasta Al Washliyah 26 Medan.

Table 8. Group Statistics

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Hasil	Posteks	7	116,71	3,546	1,34
	Postkontrol	7	108,86	4,634	1,752

Based on Table 8, the mean posttest score of the experimental group was 116.71, while the mean posttest score of the control group was 108.86. These results indicate that the experimental group achieved a higher average posttest score compared to the control group.

3.2. Discussion

The research results show that the level of self-confidence of eighth-grade students at SMP Swasta Al Washliyah 26 Medan was entirely in the low category before any treatment was given. This finding indicates that the students have not yet developed confidence in their own abilities, optimism, objectivity, responsibility, or adequate rational thinking patterns. This condition aligns with the findings of Ilma et al., which state that low self-confidence in middle school students is characterised by passivity, hesitation in taking action, and fear of expressing opinions during the learning process [13].

After receiving group guidance services using the *self-talk* technique, students in the experimental group showed a very significant increase, where all students moved from the low self-confidence category to the high category. This finding supports the research results of Sarri et al., which confirm that group guidance is effective in improving students' self-confidence because it utilises group dynamics that encourage openness, courage in expressing opinions, and social support among group members [14]. The interactions that occur in group guidance provide a space for students to learn from their own experiences as well as the experiences of their peers, thereby fostering stronger self-confidence.

Furthermore, the difference in outcomes between the experimental group and the control group indicates that the integration of *self-talk* techniques contributes more optimally compared to services without specific treatment. Although the control group also experienced an increase in self-confidence, some students were still in the moderate category. This suggests that the improvement was natural or influenced by external factors, but not as optimal as the experimental group. These findings are in line with the research by Zuhairi & Iskandar, which states that positive *self-talk* can transform negative internal dialogue into rational and constructive thoughts, thereby directly impacting the increase in self-confidence [15].

The results of the independent samples t-test, which showed a significance value of 0.004 (< 0.05), reinforce the empirical evidence that there is a significant difference between

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the experimental group and the control group. The higher average posttest scores of the experimental group compared to the control group indicate that group counselling using self-talk techniques is more effective in enhancing students' self-confidence. These findings are consistent with the research results of Sari et al., which demonstrated that the application of self-talk techniques in counselling services significantly increases students' self-confidence based on statistical analysis [16].

Conceptually, the effectiveness of self-talk techniques in group guidance can be explained through a cognitive-behavioural approach. This technique helps students identify irrational thoughts, such as fear of failure or feelings of inadequacy, and then replace them with positive and rational statements. This process is reinforced through group dynamics, where students receive social reinforcement and validation from other group members. This aligns with the opinion of Annisa et al., who stated that positive self-talk plays an important role in shaping emotion regulation, self-confidence, and an individual's optimistic attitude [17].

The research results indicate that all eighth-grade students at SMP Swasta Al Washliyah 26 Medan were in the low self-confidence category before the treatment was administered. These findings confirm that aspects of belief in one's abilities, optimism, objectivity, responsibility, and rationality have not developed optimally. This condition generally aligns with several studies that do not specifically discuss self-confidence but highlight students' psychological issues, such as low learning motivation, academic anxiety, and lack of student engagement in learning. Although the variables studied differ, these studies suggest a connection between negative psychological conditions and weak cognitive and emotional management in students, which implicitly contributes to low self-confidence.

After receiving group guidance services using self-talk techniques, all students in the experimental group experienced significant improvements, reaching the high self-confidence category. This finding goes beyond previous research that only highlighted the impact of group guidance on other aspects, such as improved study discipline or student adjustment [18]. The difference in focus of these variables indicates that group counselling is not only effective for behavioural and social aspects, but can also enhance intrapersonal aspects such as self-confidence when combined with appropriate cognitive techniques.

Meanwhile, the control group also experienced an increase in self-confidence, although not as optimally as the experimental group, where some students were still in the moderate category. This phenomenon aligns with findings from unrelated research, which state that students' psychological development can be influenced by natural factors, such as learning experiences, social interactions, and age maturity [19]. However, the uneven improvement in the control group indicates that these factors are passive and unstructured, so their impact is not as strong as the group guidance intervention using self-talk techniques.

The results of statistical tests showing that the data are normally distributed and homogeneous reinforce the validity of the analysis of differences between groups. The significance value of the independent samples t-test was 0.004 (< 0.05), confirming a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group. These findings provide a new contribution compared to previous studies, which focused more on the effectiveness of guidance services in general without testing group differences inferentially

[20]. Thus, this study not only reinforces previous findings but also provides stronger empirical evidence through a quasi-experimental approach.

The difference in the posttest mean scores between the experimental group (116.71) and the control group (108.86) indicates that the integration of self-talk techniques in group guidance has a more optimal effect. Although research by [21], while previous studies only discussed self-talk in the context of sports or motivation development, this study extends the application of the technique to the context of guidance and counselling in junior high schools. This confirms that self-talk techniques are cross-contextual and can be effectively adapted in group guidance services to enhance students' self-confidence.

Overall, although some of the journals used as comparisons did not directly study self-confidence or self-talk techniques, these studies are still conceptually relevant in explaining students' initial conditions and the dynamics of the changes that occur. The results of this study complement and expand previous findings by showing that structured, cognitive-approach-based group guidance is proven to be more effective in optimising students' self-confidence compared to services without special treatment.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that group guidance services using the self-talk technique are effective in optimising the self-confidence of eighth-grade students at SMP Swasta Al Washliyah 26 Medan. All students in the experimental group, who were initially classified as having low self-confidence, showed improvement and reached the high self-confidence category after the intervention was implemented. The statistical analysis indicated that the data were normally distributed and homogeneous, and that there was a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group, with a significance value of 0.004 (< 0.05). The mean posttest score of the experimental group (116.71) was higher than that of the control group (108.86). These findings indicate that the integration of the self-talk technique into group guidance services has a positive effect on changes in students' thinking patterns and self-belief. The implications of this study emphasise the important role of school counsellors in developing innovative counselling services based on cognitive-behavioural approaches to enhance students' self-confidence. Nevertheless, this study has several limitations, including a relatively small sample size, a research scope limited to a single school, and the absence of an examination of the long-term effects of the intervention. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve larger samples, be conducted across diverse school contexts, and employ long-term follow-up designs to ensure greater generalizability and stronger scholarly contributions.

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