



Transformative Group Guidance Approaches: The Effectiveness of 'Tic Tac Toe' Simulation Game to Enhance Self-Harm Behavior Understanding

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Abstract

Every individual has their own way of dealing with problems. Adolescence is a vulnerable phase where problems can be channeled negatively. One form of negative expression that often occurs in adolescents is self-harm. The purpose of this study is to determine the effectiveness of group counseling using the tic-tac-toe game in increasing students' understanding of self-harm behavior commonly exhibited by adolescents. This research is an experimental study with a one-group pretest-posttest design. The sample consisted of 8 high school students selected using purposive sampling. The research instrument used was the Questionnaire on Attitudes Toward Self-Harm (QASH) developed by the researchers. Data analysis techniques used the Wilcoxon test with the help of SPSS for Windows. Based on the Wilcoxon test analysis, there was a difference between the pretest and posttest results with positive ranks of 3600. The Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value was $0.012 > 0.05$, which means H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted. Thus, it can be concluded that the hypothesis is proven that there is an increase in students' understanding of self-harm behavior after group counseling is conducted. Therefore, it can be concluded that group counseling using the "tic-tac-toe" simulation game method is effective in increasing students' understanding of self-harm behavior.

Keywords: group counseling; simulation games; self-harm

1. Introduction

Humans, as living beings, inevitably face problems ranging from mild, moderate, to severe. To address these problems, each individual has different ways of coping (Diananda, 2019). Adolescence is a vulnerable phase where individuals are prone to channeling their problems negatively (Cella et al., 2022). Adolescence is a developmental stage in human life (Putri & Dewi, 2023). It is a transition period from childhood to adulthood, filled with conflicts (Santrock, 2014; Insani & Savira, 2023). During this phase, numerous changes occur, including physical, hormonal, and psychological changes (Batubara, 2016).

To become resilient adolescents with a sense of peace and clear thinking, mental health is crucial (Istiana et al., 2023). However, adolescence is also a phase susceptible to various pressures in the process of identity formation and achieving independence. During this process, adolescents face many internal and external pressures (Yuliana et al., 2023; Bariyyah & Latifah, 2019). Several issues arise among students in the school environment (Novianti et al., 2019). In dealing with these pressures, there are two possible approaches. The positive approach typically involves expressing emotions through words rather than engaging in harmful behaviors, participating in enjoyable activities, receiving love from close ones, and other positive actions (Tarigan & Apsari, 2021). On the other hand, negative coping mechanisms include substance abuse, low self-esteem, conflicts with parents, academic issues, conflicts with peers (brawls), and problems with school assignments, ultimately leading to self-harm behavior (Azizah & Yasin, 2022; Bariyyah et al., 2019).

Self-harm, suicidal thoughts, and abuse have become significant issues in several countries (Iob et al., 2020). Self-harm, or self-injurious behavior, is an act of coping with emotional pressure by harming oneself without the intent of suicide (Fitzgerald & Curtis, 2017). Another definition explains that Non-Suicidal Self-Injury (NSSI) is a behavior involving deliberate self-harm causing bruises, bleeding, and pain intended to cause bodily harm without suicidal intent (American Psychiatric Association, 1998). Unlike suicide rates, self-harm incidents reported to hospitals are higher among young women compared to men in most countries (Katrina et al., 2021; Nawaz et al., 2024; Miller et al., 2021).

One reason for self-harm is self-punishment for perceived inadequacies. Other reasons include regulating negative emotions, evoking feelings when feeling numb, using it for distraction or punishment, and seeking attention from others (Whitlock, 2009). Other opinions regarding the causes of self-harm include self-punishment due to unhappiness, feelings of failure, self-dislike, curiosity about others' reactions to self-harm, stress, unexpressed anger, and seeking attention from others (Gillies et al., 2018). In recent years, self-harm incidents have become a trend among teenagers, especially high school students. Generally, self-harm is carried out by making cuts on specific body parts using sharp objects. Other methods include hitting body parts against walls, causing burns, biting, and so on. Self-harm can lead to suicide (Patchin et al., 2023).

Self-harm behavior can recur due to supporting factors. Because of the injury, the surrounding people pay more attention. The perpetrator also feels more satisfied by releasing their pent-up emotions. Additionally, self-harm can alleviate the emotional condition they are experiencing (Riza et al., 2019). Self-injurious behavior is a harmful act directed at oneself (Wong et al., 2023). Self-harm can impact the psychological well-being of adolescents (Hajek Gross et al., 2024). Furthermore, self-harm is a strong risk factor for suicide (Favril et al., 2020; Reichl & Kaess, 2021; Knipe et al., 2022).

SMAN 1 Lawang, as a high school institution in Malang Regency, has the responsibility to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to face these challenges. Therefore, the role of guidance and counseling teachers is crucial in providing advice and guidance to students. Through counseling services and supporting activities, it is hoped that students will not engage in self-harm and that such behavior does not escalate to a serious stage. Students are expected to develop their abilities optimally, make appropriate choices, and cope with problems both in and out of school (Yohardini et al., 2017). The aim of this study is to determine the effectiveness of group counseling using the tic-tac-toe game to enhance students' understanding of self-harm behavior commonly exhibited by adolescents.

2. Method

This research is an experimental study with a one-group pretest-posttest design. The population in this study consists of 11th-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Lawang, totaling 300 individuals. The sample consists of 8 high school students selected using purposive sampling. In this study, the independent variable is the tic-tac-toe game, and the dependent variable is the understanding of self-harm behavior among 11th-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Lawang. The research instrument used is the Questionnaire on Attitudes Toward Self-Harm (QASH) developed by the researchers. Data analysis techniques include descriptive analysis and Wilcoxon test analysis with the help of SPSS for Windows. The research hypothesis is as follows: Ho: There is no difference between the pretest and posttest, meaning that group counseling using the simulation game method is not effective in increasing students' understanding of self-harm behavior. Ha: There is a difference between the pretest and posttest, meaning that group

counseling using the simulation game method is effective in increasing students' understanding of self-harm behavior.

The study was conducted on May 21, 2024, with 11th-grade students from MIPA 5 and IPS 2 at SMA Negeri 1 Lawang, totaling 8 students as the experimental group. The main material selected includes the understanding of self-harm, its influence and impact, prevention, and actions to take when encountering friends who engage in self-harm. Before conducting the group counseling, students were given a questionnaire containing 10 questions to be answered as a form of pre-test. Next, the group counseling service using the tic-tac-toe game was conducted, where 8 students were divided into 2 groups, namely group X and group O. These 2 groups competed to answer questions about self-harm as quickly as possible. The group that answered first was allowed to fill in the desired box until forming 4 rows and then declared the winner. After the service, the experimental group was given a final test or post-test, which also contained the same 10 questions as the pre-test

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Result

This study was conducted using a group game method, specifically the tic tac toe game. The study involved 8 selected students based on the results of previously distributed questionnaires. The group guidance service was conducted in one session lasting 60 minutes. The implementation of group guidance must follow the stages of group guidance implementation. According to Hartanti (2022), there are four stages in the implementation of group guidance to ensure it is well-directed, orderly, and on target. These stages include the formation stage, transition stage, activity stage, and termination stage. In the first stage, the formation stage, relationships with group members were established by introducing themselves, dividing the group into two groups (X and O), explaining the purpose of the group guidance service, providing an understanding of group guidance, and explaining the process of the group guidance activity so that students could follow the activity from beginning to end. Before conducting the group guidance, students were given a pretest in the form of essay questions to see their understanding of self-harm before receiving the guidance service.

The pretest results showed that their initial knowledge about the definition of self-harm, its causes, and its impact was quite good but lacked specific details. For example, in response to the question "What causes someone to self-harm?", some students only mentioned one cause, while there are many and varied factors. Furthermore, knowledge about the levels of self-harm and how to stop self-harm behavior was still unclear, as many students left these questions blank or provided incorrect answers. Here is a description of the group guidance activities conducted to enhance students' knowledge of self-harm.

After all the students completed and submitted their pretests, the second stage, the transition stage, involved explaining the rules of the game to the students and checking their readiness to follow the activities according to the explained rules and procedures. Before proceeding to the third stage, it was necessary to ensure good relations among students by engaging in simple ice-breaking activities to enhance their ability to create a conducive atmosphere for group guidance activities.

The third stage, which is the core stage of group guidance activities, had students gather with their respective groups and line up facing the tic tac toe board provided at the front of the class. The counseling teacher then asked several questions about self-harm randomly, and each group representative had to quickly raise their hand to answer the question. This was done alternately; once a question was correctly answered, the group

member who answered was allowed to place their marker on the tic tac toe board. The representative then moved to the back of the line, and the next member took their place. The group that managed to place four markers in a row won a point. The game ended when the time was up, and the group with the most points won and could decide a fun penalty for the losing group. All students enjoyed the process of the group guidance activity, and the counseling teacher asked each group member to summarize the activity. The teacher appreciated the participants with positive affirmations and motivation to implement the learned experience about the importance of avoiding self-harm. The simulation game "tic tac toe" to improve students' understanding of self-harm behavior is shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1 Tictactoe game to improve students' understanding of self harm behavior

Next, the counseling teacher distributed the posttest to see how well students understood self-harm after participating in the group guidance. The comparison of pretest and posttest scores on students' understanding of self-harm is shown in Figure 1.

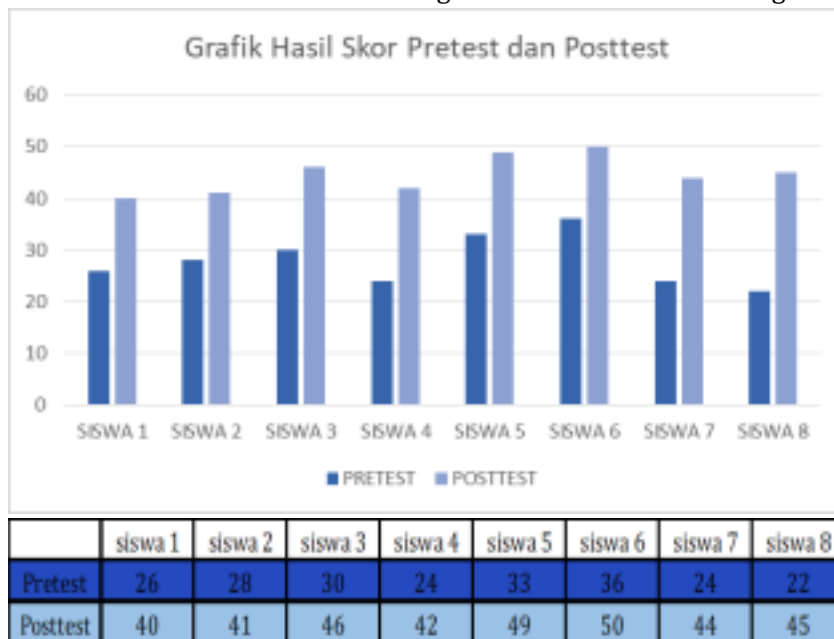


Table 1. Comparison of pretest and posttest scores on understanding self-harm after participating in group guidance using the tic tac toe simulation game

The pretest results for 8 students showed that all students had a low understanding of self-harm behavior. Student 1 had a score of 26, student 2 had a score of 28, student 3 had a score of 30, student 4 had a score of 24, student 5 had a score of 33, student 6 had a score of 36, student 7 had a score of 24, and student 8 had a score of 22. The researchers then provided

treatment using the tic tac toe simulation game to improve students' understanding of self-harm behavior.

After the treatment, a posttest was conducted. The posttest results were as follows: student 1 scored 40, student 2 scored 41, student 3 scored 46, student 4 scored 42, student 5 scored 49, student 6 scored 50, student 7 scored 44, and student 8 scored 45. Based on the posttest results and Figure 2, it can be seen that students' understanding scores were low before the treatment, but after the group guidance using the tic tac toe simulation game, their understanding of self-harm behavior increased.

These results were supported by the Wilcoxon test analysis. Based on Figure 2, the Negative ranks show the difference in students' understanding of self-harm behavior from pretest to posttest. The Negative Ranks values for N, Mean Rank, and Sum of Ranks are all 0, indicating that no students' scores decreased from pretest to posttest. The Positive Ranks show the positive difference in students' understanding of self-harm behavior from pretest to posttest. The Positive Ranks value for N is 8, meaning all 8 students' understanding improved from pretest to posttest. The Mean Rank indicates an average increase of 450, and the Sum of Ranks shows a positive ranking sum of 3600. The Ties indicate that no students had the same scores for pretest and posttest.

Ranks				
		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
POSTEST - PRETEST	Negative Ranks	0 ^a	0,00	0,00
	Positive Ranks	8 ^b	4,50	36,00
	Ties	0 ^c		
	Total	8		
a. POSTEST < PRETEST				
b. POSTEST > PRETEST				
c. POSTEST = PRETEST				

Figure 2 Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results for Pretest and Posttest Scores

Test Statistics ^a	
	POSTEST - PRETEST
Z	-2.527 ^b
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0,012
a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test	
b. Based on negative ranks.	

Figure 3 Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results: Comparison of Pretest and Posttest Scores with Asymptotic Significance Value (2-tailed)

The next output, shown in Figure 3, relates to the Wilcoxon hypothesis test results. The k-value of 0.012 is less than the alpha significance level of 5% (0.05), so H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted. This means there is a significant difference in students' understanding of self-harm

behavior from pretest to posttest, indicating a positive effect of the group guidance service in improving students' understanding of self-harm behavior.

3.2 Discussion

As individuals age, the number of problems and conflicts they encounter increases. Adolescence is a particularly vulnerable period for handling problems negatively. One common behavior seen today is self-harm, where many teenagers find solace in expressing their emotions and problems through self-inflicted harm. Self-harm is also a form of self-punishment for perceived inadequacies. Adolescents often view self-harm as a good problem-solving method, but many also engage in self-harm due to FOMO (fear of missing out) and curiosity.

The group guidance service with the theme "Improving Understanding of Self-Harm Behavior" was designed to enhance students' awareness that self-harm is far from beneficial. The aim was to help students understand that self-harm does not solve any problems but rather adds new issues, potentially leading them into further negative behaviors. Group guidance is well-suited for improving students' understanding because it allows active involvement and better focus due to the small number of participants.

During the group guidance service, students appeared very excited. The delivery of information and understanding of self-harm behavior, packaged in an engaging and interactive game format, helped students actively participate and enthusiastically grasp the material. This method also aided students in better remembering the material on self-harm. In the game, students were encouraged to be more competitive and confident by competing to answer the questions posed by the counseling teacher. After the game, the counseling teacher reinforced the topic by providing positive affirmations and motivation to the group members, emphasizing the importance of avoiding self-harm.

After the service, the group members were required to complete a post-test to assess whether the service had achieved its goals. Based on the post-test results, it was found that the group guidance service using the tic tac toe game had successfully met its objective of improving the group members' understanding of self-harm behavior. This was evident from the post-test answers, where no answers were left blank, and responses were more elaborated compared to the pre-test. For example, in the pre-test, a student answered the question "Do you think self-harm behavior can change someone's character/personality?" with a simple "Yes." In the post-test, the same student elaborated, "Yes, after self-harm, an individual can become more withdrawn, socially isolated, and more easily stressed."

The difference in responses between the pre-test and post-test demonstrated an improvement in the group members' understanding of self-harm behavior. This finding was also supported by the Wilcoxon test analysis, which showed a significant difference between pre-test and post-test results, with a positive rank value of 3600. The Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value was $0.012 < 0.05$, indicating that H_0 was rejected and H_a was accepted, meaning that the group guidance service using the tic tac toe simulation game was effective in improving students' understanding of self-harm behavior.

4. Conclusion

Group guidance services provide assistance to individuals by offering information on personal, social, academic, and career issues within a group setting. The goal of presenting material on self-harm using a simulation game method in group guidance is to help students gain knowledge in a different, more interactive, and enjoyable way. This approach aims to

ensure they understand the dangers of self-harm by sharing information to enhance mutual understanding within their group. Based on the above explanation, it can be concluded that group guidance services using the tic tac toe simulation game effectively improve students' understanding of self-harm. This conclusion is drawn from the observation that before participating in group guidance, students provided brief and straightforward answers during the pre-test. During the group guidance session, all participating students were very excited about answering the questions. After the session, when given the post-test, students provided more complete and accurate answers. This conclusion is also supported by the Wilcoxon test analysis, which showed a significant difference between pre-test and post-test results. There was a notable improvement in students' understanding before and after the treatment. Thus, it can be concluded that group guidance services are effective in enhancing the understanding of self-harm behavior among 11th-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Lawang.

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