

Group Counseling Innovation: Self-Management Techniques for Enhancing Discipline Among Vocational High School Students

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Abstract

The issue of students' lack of discipline in public schools remains a major challenge in educational institutions. When disciplinary issues such as tardiness, failure to complete homework, skipping classes, and truancy are left unaddressed, they can disrupt the learning process and directly impact students' academic performance. This study aims to analyze the improvement of learning discipline among vocational high school students (SMKN) using behavioristic group counseling with self-management techniques to enhance student discipline. The research employed a quantitative approach with an experimental method. The design used in this study was a quasi-experimental design. The sample consisted of 195 students, from which 10 students were selected for the experimental group and 10 students for the control group, all of whom exhibited low levels of learning discipline. The sampling technique used was simple random sampling. Data analysis techniques included the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov 2 Independent Samples test. The findings revealed that group counseling services using a behavioristic approach with self-management techniques effectively improved students' learning discipline. These results provide practical implications for school counselors in delivering guidance and counseling services, particularly group counseling services, using a behavioristic approach with self-management techniques to systematically improve students' learning discipline.

Keywords: Learning discipline, group counseling, behavioristic, self-management.

Received 28 October 2024/Revised 13 December 2024/Accepted 8 March 2025 ©The Author all rights reserved 2025

Introduction

Over the past five years, more than 22,000 studies discussing learning discipline in schools have been found on Google Scholar. One of the most common concerns raised by teachers is the issue of student discipline (Fikriyanda et al., 2018; Prasetyarini et al., 2021). Previous research has shown that student discipline significantly influences learning outcomes and motivation (Anderson et al., 2019; Anjani et al., 2020). Discipline in learning is a crucial component in the educational process (Yadrian et al., 2021; Raviando & Netrawati, 2023).

Discipline is a fundamental aspect that students must cultivate to improve academic achievement (Gottfried, 2019; Gustiana et al., 2020). Schools play a pivotal role in instilling discipline among students, encouraging behaviors aligned with norms, regulations, and school

rules (Ardani et al., 2022). However, issues such as tardiness, truancy, failure to attend classes on time, or wearing improper uniforms still frequently occur in schools (Gubbels et al., 2019). These instances of indiscipline hinder effective teaching and learning processes, ultimately obstructing the achievement of educational goals (Fitri et al., 2021; Lubis et al., 2022).

Indiscipline negatively impacts the learning environment, reduces student readiness, and increases the risk of academic failure, such as repeating grades or dropping out of school (Ardi & Sisin, 2018). Conversely, disciplined behavior supports the attainment of optimal learning outcomes (Reski et al., 2017; Herpratiwi & Tohir, 2022). Discipline is also a product of character-building efforts achieved through education both at home and in schools, with teachers serving as key facilitators (Lase et al., 2020).

The effective implementation of discipline in schools fosters a comfortable and conducive learning environment while nurturing positive student character (Setyaningsih & Suchyadi, 2021). On the other hand, a lack of discipline negatively affects character and personality development (Fiberianti et al., 2023). An individual's success is closely tied to the disciplined habits practiced daily (Nuari & Mudjiran, 2022).

Discipline, as a form of self-regulation and adherence to rules, must become a key focus in student development at schools (Semali & Vumilia, 2016; Wulandari et al., 2022). Developing self-discipline is also a cornerstone of character education (Sudaryono & Aryani, 2021). However, challenges such as globalization and uncontrolled access to information often degrade students' morals, including their discipline (Baehaqi & Murdiono, 2020). This situation decreases academic quality and disrupts the learning process (Ernest, 2021). Therefore, it is crucial to equip students with strong disciplinary behavior to face the challenges of globalization (Sudaryono & Aryani, 2021). One of the interventions hypothesized to reduce undisciplined behavior is behavioral counseling using self-management techniques.

The Effectiveness of Behavioral Counseling through Self-Management Techniques

Behavioral counseling using self-management techniques has been proven effective in improving behavior management and individuals' quality of life (Saputri et al., 2023). This technique involves individuals in the self-management process to change behavior through steps such as goal setting, progress monitoring, and self-reinforcement. For example, research shows that this technique effectively reduces aggressive behavior, both verbal and physical, in students through group counseling based on self-management (Jaeti & Suwarjo, 2022).

Moreover, self-management techniques are beneficial in enhancing the endurance personality of students who tend to have low resilience to stress. Research has shown that this counseling leads to significant improvements in students' resilience scales after intervention, with statistically significant test values (Gading et al., 2019). In the academic field, self-management has also been effective in reducing academic procrastination among middle school students, with a significant increase in learning motivation levels after the counseling program was implemented (Wati et al., 2022).

Self-management techniques also have broad potential applications in health and education contexts. For instance, self-management-based counseling has improved self-efficacy in treatment-seeking behaviors among pulmonary tuberculosis patients, resulting in significant improvements in treatment adherence (Jauhar et al., 2019). Overall, behavioral counseling with

self-management techniques is a highly beneficial approach to helping individuals manage behavioral changes independently and sustainably.

The foundational theory of self-management techniques in behavioral counseling is based on learning principles emphasizing individual self-control to regulate their behavior. Behavioral counseling is rooted in Skinner's learning theory, which developed the concept of reinforcement to modify individual behavior through positive or negative reinforcement (Elvina, 2019). Self-management is a process in which individuals become the primary agents in monitoring, evaluating, and reinforcing their own behaviors, making it effective in various contexts, including education, health, and social behavior management.

In counseling contexts, self-management techniques are often combined with social learning models, such as Bandura's self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1997). This theory states that individuals' confidence in managing specific tasks significantly determines their success in facing challenges (Wu & Chang, 2014). In practice, self-management is implemented through a series of steps, including setting goals, monitoring progress, and providing reinforcement for desired outcomes, all designed to motivate independent behavioral change (Hughes & Lloyd, 1993).

Counseling using this approach has proven effective in various contexts, such as promoting positive student behavior in schools and improving patient adherence to treatment in healthcare. This approach also enables individuals to learn sustainable self-management skills even after the intervention ends, making it a long-term strategy for personal development and problem-solving (Friesen & Andrews, 1982; Jaeti & Suwarjo, 2022). The combination of behavioral learning theory and self-management techniques creates a robust framework to assist clients in effectively managing behavioral changes.

Previous studies, such as those by Ardani, Rahardjo, & Kiswanto (2022), evaluated the use of behavioristic counseling with self-management techniques to enhance discipline during remote learning. Unlike this prior research, the current study seeks to apply group counseling services using a behavioristic approach with self-management techniques in a face-to-face learning context. This approach offers an innovative solution through group counseling interventions to help students improve their discipline. Self-management techniques enable students to regulate and observe their own behavior through practices such as self-monitoring, stimulus control, and self-rewarding. The goal is to eliminate maladaptive behaviors and develop positive habits (Peterson et al., 2021).

The strength of self-management techniques lies in their ability to help students set realistic goals, design action plans, and monitor and evaluate their actions (Corey, 2017). It is expected that group counseling services employing this approach can address indiscipline issues such as tardiness, truancy, and failure to follow classroom schedules. Ultimately, students can develop strong disciplinary character, supporting their academic success and personal growth.

Despite extensive research on the importance of discipline in learning and its impact on academic outcomes, most studies have focused on general disciplinary strategies or specific contexts such as online learning environments. For example, prior research by Ardani, Rahardjo, & Kiswanto (2022) explored the use of behavioristic counseling with self-management techniques to improve student discipline during remote learning. However, there remains a significant gap in understanding how these techniques can be effectively applied in face-to-face learning environments, where different challenges and dynamics are at play.

Additionally, while self-management techniques are recognized for their potential to foster self-regulation and long-term behavioral changes, their practical application within group counseling sessions in schools has not been fully explored. This leaves an unaddressed need for empirical evidence on the effectiveness of group counseling approaches using self-management techniques to address common disciplinary issues such as tardiness, absenteeism, and compliance with school rules in traditional classroom settings.

Addressing this gap is crucial, as it would provide actionable insights into how schools can leverage innovative counseling models to enhance student discipline and ultimately improve educational outcomes. This study aims to fill this gap by evaluating the implementation of behavioristic group counseling with self-management techniques in a face-to-face learning context, offering a novel contribution to the field of educational counseling and discipline management.

Method

Design

This study employed a quantitative approach with an experimental method. The design implemented in this research is the pre-post-test control group design. A pre-post-test control group design is a type of experimental design that compares the results between an experimental group (which receives the intervention) and a control group (which does not receive the intervention) (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Fraenkel et al., 2019). Measurements are conducted twice: before the intervention (pre-test) to assess initial conditions and after the intervention (post-test) to evaluate changes. This design allows researchers to assess the effectiveness of the intervention by comparing changes in both groups, providing more valid and controlled results (Cohen et al., 2018).

Participants

The selection and determination of the research sample were conducted using random sampling. Out of 195 student samples who were given the learning discipline screening scale, 23 students were categorized as having low learning discipline. From this group, the randomization process was carried out using a simple random sampling technique. The names of the students in the low-category group were written on rolled pieces of paper and placed in a bowl. These rolled papers were then drawn randomly, one by one, to select 10 students for the experimental group and another 10 students for the control group.

Measurement

The data collection tool used in this study was a learning discipline instrument designed to assess students' learning discipline behavior before and after participating in group counseling services utilizing a behavioristic approach with self-management techniques. The study employed a questionnaire based on a Likert scale model. The response options included five choices: always, often, sometimes, rarely, and very rarely. Content validity was ensured through professional judgment to select valid items. Following this, the learning discipline behavior scale's reliability was estimated using the internal consistency method. Items were considered valid if their correlation significance was ≤ 0.05 . A trial was conducted with 35 students, and of the 46 statement items tested, 9 were found to be invalid. Thus, 37 valid statement items remained. The reliability test results showed a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.953, indicating that the instrument's reliability falls into the high category, with a coefficient range of 0.80–1.00. Therefore, it can be concluded that the learning discipline instrument is

reliable.

Intervention Process

Preparation Phase

The preparation phase involves observing and collecting data from various sources, including case notes from guidance and counseling teachers, student attendance records specific to the counseling teacher, ceremony attendance logs, muhadharah (speech practice) attendance, and records of late arrivals. These data were gathered from a vocational high school in Padang.

Implementation of the Treatment

The research sample was selected using a simple random sampling method. To enhance students' learning discipline, the experimental intervention involved conducting group counseling sessions using a behavioristic approach with self-management techniques. Meanwhile, the control group received regular group counseling sessions without additional techniques. The group counseling sessions employing the behavioristic approach with self-management techniques were facilitated by a behavioral counseling expert with a master's degree, assisted by two assistants throughout the intervention process.

Duration

The intervention was conducted twice a week for both the experimental and control groups, with each session lasting 90 minutes. The entire study consisted of eight sessions.

Experimental Implementation

Based on the pre-test results, students in both the experimental and control groups were identified as having low levels of learning discipline. To address this, the experimental group participated in group counseling sessions utilizing a behavioristic approach with self-management techniques to improve their learning discipline. In contrast, the control group received group counseling services using the behavioristic approach without incorporating self-management techniques.

Conducting Pre-Test and Post-Test

Before administering the treatment, a pre-test was conducted for both the experimental and control groups to measure the initial levels of students' learning discipline. This pre-test aimed to establish a baseline for comparison with subsequent results.

After completing the planned treatment for the experimental group (using group counseling services with a behavioristic approach and self-management techniques) and maintaining the usual conditions for the control group, a post-test was administered to both groups. The same learning discipline instrument used during the pre-test was employed to ensure consistency in measurement.

The pre-test and post-test results were then analyzed to compare the changes in learning discipline between the two groups. This comparison aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention by identifying whether the experimental group showed significant improvement in learning discipline compared to the control group. Statistical analysis was performed to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings, highlighting the impact of the intervention on the experimental group.

Intervention

This study involved two groups receiving interventions: the experimental group, consisting of 10 participants, and the control group, also consisting of 10 participants. The selection of the experimental and control groups was based on pre-test data, identifying students with low learning discipline behavior. The group counseling intervention using a behavioristic approach with self-management techniques was conducted by the researcher.

The group counseling sessions were held twice a week for both groups, over a total of 8 sessions. Each session lasted 2 × 45 minutes. For the experimental group, a specialized intervention was provided through group counseling sessions addressing learning discipline using a behavioristic approach with self-management techniques. In contrast, the control group received group counseling sessions using the behavioristic approach without incorporating self-management techniques, covering the same topics and materials as the experimental group. This approach ensured that the control group's condition remained monitored.

In each session, materials related to learning discipline were delivered. The content was derived from the instrument distributed to students, where items with the highest problem scores were used as discussion topics. These topics were organized based on sub-variables of the instrument. Using this approach, the materials discussed in group counseling sessions with a behavioristic approach and self-management techniques aimed at improving learning discipline were outlined and presented in [Table 1](#).

Data Analysis

The data analysis technique used in this hypothesis testing involves non-parametric statistics, utilizing the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov 2 Independent Samples Test. To ensure accurate and precise analysis results and to minimize the risk of errors in manual calculations, the researcher employed the Statistical Product and Service Solution (SPSS) software version 23.00 for data processing.

[Table 1](#)
Description of Content Material in the Intervention

Session	Discussion	Time	Objective
I	The Importance of Study Discipline	2 x 45 Minute	To provide students with an understanding of the importance of applying discipline in learning.
II	The Continued Importance of Study Discipline	2 x 45 Minute	To provide students with an understanding of the importance of applying discipline in learning life.
III	The Role of Self-Regulation in Developing a Disciplined Personality	2 x 45 Minute	To help students understand and adopt self-regulation attitudes in learning.
IV	Responsibility as the Key to Academic Success	2 x 45 Minute	To provide students with an understanding of the importance of responsibility in the learning process.
V	Discipline Yourself to Achieve	2 x 45	To provide students with an understanding that

Session	Discussion	Time	Objective
	Your Dreams	Minute	discipline in learning plays a crucial role in achieving their desired goals.
VI	Honesty as the Key to Success	2 x 45 Minute	To provide students with an understanding of the importance of honesty in the learning process at school.
VIII	Let's Learn to Be a Disciplined Child	2 x 45 Minute	To help students develop a disciplined personality in the learning process as well as in daily life.
VIII	Simple Ways to Foster Self-Discipline	2 x 45 Minute	To help students develop a disciplined personality in the learning process as well as in daily life.

Result

Based on the results of the survey conducted through interviews, initial observations, and the collection of initial data from the guidance counselor's casebook records, student attendance specific to the guidance counselor, ceremony attendance, muhadharah attendance, and records related to student tardiness, various forms of learning discipline behavior were identified among students. These included frequent tardiness to school, being late during class transitions, skipping classes during school hours, pretending to go to school but not actually attending, untidy or non-compliant attire with school rules and regulations, cheating, and failing to complete assigned tasks at school.

In line with these survey results, the researcher also provided an instrument related to learning discipline to capture an initial picture of students' learning discipline before being given group counseling services using a behavioristic approach with self-management techniques. It was found that the overall picture of students' learning discipline fell into five distinct categories.

Based on these results, it was shown that 18 students were in the "very high" category and 38 students were in the "high" category. This indicates that only a few students demonstrated obedience, compliance, and orderliness in learning. Meanwhile, 109 students occasionally violated school rules or regulations, and 30 other students were in the "low" and "very low" categories of learning discipline. This means that students in these categories did not exhibit obedience or orderliness in learning and frequently violated school rules or regulations.

The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov 2 Independent Samples analysis, which was used to analyze the differences in learning discipline between the experimental group (who received group counseling services using a behavioristic approach with self-management techniques) and the control group, showed a Z-score of 2.236 with a significance probability (Sig. 2-tailed) of 0.000, which is below 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$). Based on these results, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) was accepted. Thus, it can be concluded that group counseling using a behavioristic approach with self-management techniques is effective in improving students' learning discipline.

Discussion

Based on the analysis results presented earlier, there is a significant difference in the improvement of students' learning discipline behavior between the experimental and control groups. The experimental group, which received group counseling services with a behavioristic approach using self-management techniques, showed a greater increase in learning discipline

scores compared to the control group.

This finding can be explained through the theoretical framework of the behavioristic approach, which emphasizes the role of reinforcement in modifying behavior (Shapiro & Cole, 1994). In this approach, learning discipline behavior can be enhanced through the formation of response patterns that are consistently reinforced (Karoly & Kanfer, 1982). The self-management technique, which involves self-regulation in identifying target behaviors, designing strategies, and applying consequences to behaviors, has proven effective in improving learning discipline (Bandura, 1997). This aligns with Skinner's operant conditioning theory, which states that behavior reinforced by rewards tends to increase in frequency (Skinner, 1971).

Previous research supports the effectiveness of this approach. For example, a study by Zimmerman and Schunk (2011) demonstrated that self-regulation strategies, which are part of the self-management technique, significantly improve students' learning outcomes by teaching planning, monitoring, and self-evaluation skills. Another study by Garrison (2011) found that group counseling with a behavioristic approach enhances social relationships and individuals' ability to manage emotions and behavior, ultimately leading to improved discipline.

The significance of these findings also highlights the important role of structured counseling interventions in educational settings. The greater increase in learning discipline scores in the experimental group demonstrates that behavioristic-based counseling approaches provide a framework that can be directly applied in educational settings. The practical implication is that this approach can be used as a model for developing guidance and counseling services to systematically and consistently enhance students' positive behaviors.

In line with the content provided, self-management techniques can be integrated into group counseling during the working stage through several steps. According to Watson and Tharp (Corey, 2017), these steps begin with asking students to set goals they want to achieve and translate those goals into target behaviors. In this process, students are encouraged to consider what behaviors need to be performed to achieve the predetermined goals and to identify potential obstacles. Next, students are asked to conduct self-monitoring by recording behaviors that indicate a lack of discipline and providing reflections or comments on those behaviors. The following step is to develop a change plan by providing students with a discipline tracker to design improvement steps. Finally, an evaluation of the change plan is conducted to determine whether the goals have been achieved as expected.

The self-management technique focuses on students' responsibility to develop adaptive behaviors and avoid maladaptive behaviors. This technique helps students manage their own conditions and environments by regulating their behavior, identifying target behaviors, monitoring progress, selecting procedures to be applied, implementing those procedures, and conducting evaluations. In this way, students' learning discipline behavior can be gradually formed (Hidayah et al., 2020; Susanti, 2021).

Several studies have supported the effectiveness of self-management techniques in addressing learning discipline issues. Research by Anjani et al. (2020) showed that self-management training effectively improves students' learning discipline, as evidenced by increased discipline scores and student compliance in various aspects of learning discipline. Another study by Rositah and Rahima (2021) also revealed differences in discipline scores between the experimental and control groups, where the experimental group that received group counseling with self-

management techniques showed better results.

Based on the above explanation, group counseling services with a behavioristic approach using self-management techniques can be an effective strategy for addressing students' learning discipline issues. Discipline is crucial as it is closely related to responsibility, self-regulation, and self-control (Hayes et al., 2021). Learning discipline behavior not only affects the teaching-learning process but also directly contributes to students' learning outcomes (Wulandari et al., 2022). Students' academic achievement is significantly influenced by the level of discipline they apply in their learning (Hayes et al., 2021).

After receiving group counseling with a behavioristic approach using self-management techniques, students' learning discipline significantly improved. This is due to the students' better understanding of the importance of applying discipline in learning, factors affecting learning discipline, the significance of self-regulation, and the responsibility in learning. Students were also encouraged to understand the impact of indiscipline in learning and ways to foster disciplined attitudes.

In principle, this study was conducted optimally by adhering to proper scientific methods and procedures. However, the researchers acknowledge that the study's findings are not entirely perfect and that some limitations exist. One limitation is that the study was conducted with a limited sample, involving a number of students in the experimental and control groups, which means the findings cannot yet be generalized to a broader student population.

This study is expected to contribute to the development of group counseling services theory with a behavioristic approach using self-management techniques, as well as to enhance knowledge and insights in education, particularly in guidance and counseling programs related to students' learning discipline.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that group counseling services using a behavioristic approach with self-management techniques are effective in improving students' learning discipline. This effectiveness is evident from the overall analysis, where the experimental group showed a higher increase in discipline scores compared to the control group. This proves that group counseling using a behavioristic approach with self-management techniques can enhance students' learning discipline.

Based on the findings, discussion, and conclusions presented, practical suggestions and recommendations are proposed as follow-ups to this study. For guidance counselors, it is hoped that this research can be utilized in providing guidance and counseling services, particularly group counseling services using a behavioristic approach with self-management techniques, to improve students' learning discipline. Additionally, it can serve as input in developing guidance and counseling service programs to address students' issues, especially in low learning discipline, to improve the learning process for optimal development. For future researchers, it is recommended to expand this study with different contexts to compare findings and further explore the effectiveness of group counseling using a behavioristic approach with self-management techniques in improving students' learning discipline.

Acknowledgment

The authors would like to thank all students who participated in the study.

Conflict of Interest

The researchers declare that this paper has no conflicts of interest.

Author Contribution

All authors have contributed equally to the study's conceptualization, interpreting data, reviewing, and editing the manuscript.

Data Availability

Data can be provided upon request to the author.

Declarations Ethical Statement

The study followed the guidelines of the Declaration of Helsinki.

Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all persons involved in the study.

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