The Effectiveness of Group Guidance Using the Scaling Technique in Improving Students' Academic Self-Concept

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Abstract

Background - Based on the researcher's observations at the Jabal Rahmah Mulia Plus Junior High School Boarding School, it was found that students exhibited a low level of academic self-concept. A low academic self-concept may cause students to become easily discouraged, lose their motivation to learn, and be reluctant to participate actively in class because they perceive themselves as less intelligent than their peers. Academic self-concept refers to an individual's perception, evaluation, and belief in their own abilities within the academic domain.

Purpose - This study aims to determine whether group guidance using the scaling technique is effective in improving students' academic self-concept.

Method/approach - This study employed a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design using a one-group pretest–post-test model. The participants consisted of eight students with low levels of academic self-concept, selected through purposive sampling. The research instrument used in this study was an academic self-concept questionnaire.

Findings - The results of this study indicate that group guidance services using the scaling technique are effective in improving students' academic self-concept. Data were analysed using the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test, which yielded a Z value of -2.527 with a p-value of 0.012. Since the p-value < 0.05, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores.

Conclusions - Group guidance services using the scaling technique can be utilized as a form of intervention to enhance students' academic self-concept. This study is also expected to serve as a reference for the implementation of guidance and counselling services in schools, particularly in addressing psychological issues related to students' academic aspects.

Novelty/Originality/Value - This study offers novelty by emphasizing the effectiveness of group guidance using the scaling question technique in improving academic self-concept. It provides a theoretical contribution by expanding the understanding of the impact of the scaling question technique on students' cognitive-reflective aspects, as well as a practical contribution by offering an alternative group guidance strategy for school counsellors to optimize students' academic potential.

Keywords: Group Guidance; Scaling Technique; Academic Self-Concept

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INTRODUCTION

In the modern era, education plays an increasingly complex role in shaping individuals who not only possess broad knowledge but are also capable of thinking critically, creatively, and adaptively in response to ongoing changes. The education system requires students to meet certain academic standards, such as problem-solving skills and mastery of various subjects. With these academic demands, the continuously evolving curriculum, and the growing intensity of academic competition, education has become a significant challenge for many students.

The phenomenon observed in schools shows that many students still struggle to accurately assess their own abilities. Some students perceive themselves as incapable of succeeding in certain subjects, even though they actually possess the necessary potential. It is also common to find students who easily give up, lose motivation to learn, and are reluctant to participate actively in class because they consider themselves less intelligent than their peers. This condition reflects the presence of issues related to academic self-concept.

The issue of academic self-concept is not experienced by only a few students but has become a widespread phenomenon in schools. For instance, students who receive low grades in certain subjects often perceive themselves as "not smart" and are unwilling to make efforts to improve. Some students also tend to compare themselves excessively with their peers, leading to feelings of inferiority. This indicates that self-understanding and self-acceptance in the academic domain remain serious concerns that require attention from both teachers and school counsellors.

According to Atmasari in Khotimah et al. (2016), academic self-concept is an individual's perception of their academic abilities, which includes their capacity to engage in learning activities, achieve academic success, and participate in school or classroom activities related to their perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and evaluations of their academic competence. Meanwhile, Flowers, Raynor, and White state that academic self-concept is a psychological construct used to describe students' beliefs about their abilities in the academic domain (Kurniawanti, 2023).

Marsh, as cited in Fitra et al. (2022), defines academic self-concept as an individual's perception, evaluation, and belief in their own abilities within the academic domain. Individuals with a positive academic self-concept tend to view their academic abilities positively, are willing to take risks and try new things, remain optimistic and confident, and show enthusiasm in pursuing their goals and life aspirations.

Academic self-concept does not develop instantly but evolves through various learning experiences, support from the surrounding environment, and interactions with teachers and peers. Students who frequently receive encouragement and appreciation for their efforts tend to develop a more positive academic self-concept. Conversely, excessive criticism or negative learning experiences can lead students to feel incapable, ultimately hindering their personal and academic development.

According to Carlock, academic self-concept refers to an individual's perception and evaluation of themselves in relation to various learning behaviours within the academic domain. It encompasses one's perceptions and feelings about their academic abilities, involving both cognitive and affective aspects. Carlock, as cited in Maghfiroh (2024), identifies three main components of academic self-concept. The first is knowledge, which represents an individual's perception of themselves. The second is expectation, referring to one's aspirations for academic achievement, future goals, or desired accomplishments. The third is self-evaluation, which involves an individual's assessment or judgment of themselves. These three aspects collectively form a comprehensive understanding of how students perceive themselves in the academic context, ultimately influencing their motivation, effort, and learning outcomes.

In the field of education, it is essential for teachers and counsellors to assist students in developing a strong academic self-concept. One effective approach to achieve this is through group guidance. According to Prayitno, as cited in Jasman (2022), group guidance is a guidance and counselling service that allows a number of students (counselees) to collectively, through group dynamics, obtain various materials from a specific resource person (primarily a guidance teacher or counsellor) that are useful for supporting daily life as students, family members, and members of society, as well as for decision-making purposes. Furthermore, group guidance is a

collective activity conducted by a group of individuals utilizing group dynamics—namely, interactions that involve expressing opinions, providing feedback, suggestions, and so forth—where the group leader provides beneficial information to help individuals achieve optimal personal development (Risal & Alam, 2021).

The importance of group guidance services in helping students develop self-understanding, self-adjustment, and social skills has been demonstrated by several studies. Siwi (2020) found that group guidance services significantly improved the self-concept of students in Class XII MIPA 2 at SMA Negeri 6 Surakarta. Similarly, Istiqomah et al. (2023) confirmed that group guidance was effective in enhancing the self-confidence of seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Karanggayam in the 2022/2023 academic year. Furthermore, a study by Ayuni and Setiowati (2022) showed that group guidance was effective and had a positive effect in reducing academic procrastination among tenth-grade dance students at SMK Negeri 1 Kasihan during the 2021/2022 school year.

From the three studies mentioned above, none specifically examined group guidance services using particular techniques, such as the scaling technique. This technique can help students recognize their abilities more objectively, enhance self-confidence, and foster a more optimistic mindset toward learning. The scaling technique was first introduced in Solution-Focused Brief Counselling (SFBC), developed by de Shazer. The scaling question technique serves as a tool that enables clients to focus more on their actions and identify the steps they can take toward achieving desired changes.

The scaling question technique is a method that helps counsellors and counselees transform complex problems into more concrete and tangible ones. This technique assists counselees in setting change targets and assessing their ability to achieve those targets, thereby fostering a sense of control and responsibility over their own counselling process (Habsy et al., 2024). According to Fitriani and Wulandari (2021), the scaling question technique is a counselling method in which the counselee is asked to provide a rating on a scale from 0 or 1—representing having no control over the problem—to 10, representing full control over the problem. This rating reflects the counselee's perception of the problem and their confidence in the effectiveness of the solutions they have created. The purpose of the scaling question technique is to help the therapist or counsellor and the counselee make previously vague or abstract issues more concrete and tangible.

Martina & Supandi (2017) argue that the application of the scaling question technique involves the counsellor asking clients to assign a number from 1 to 10 to indicate where they currently stand on a given issue. Typically, the counsellor designates 10 as the positive end of the scale, meaning that the higher the number chosen, the more positive the indicated outcome or experience. Scaling can be used to identify goals or to help clients make progress toward previously established objectives. Clients can define their goals by identifying specific behaviours that would indicate they have reached a score of 10 on the scale. Once the goal is set, the scaling technique can be used to guide clients in achieving it. After determining their current position on the scale (with 10 representing goal attainment), the counsellor may ask follow-up questions to identify small, manageable steps the client can take toward reaching their target score. Thus, the purpose of the scaling or scaling question technique is to help the therapist or counsellor and the counselee transform vague issues into concrete forms, as clients are encouraged not only to describe their thoughts and feelings but also to interpret them through measurable assessments.

Nugroho et al. (2018) explain that scaling questions enable counselees to pay closer attention to what they have already done and to identify the steps they can take toward achieving the changes they desire, making those changes observable. For example, a counsellor might ask, "On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you are not confident in your ability to reach your learning goals and 10 means you are very confident in achieving them, where would you place yourself?"

The effectiveness of the scaling question technique has been demonstrated through various studies. Aisyah and Romiaty (2021) found that the scaling question technique is effective in addressing students' learning motivation issues. Similarly, Triwulandari et al. (2025) reported that the use of the scaling question technique in Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) significantly reduced academic procrastination among tenth-grade accounting students at SMKN

1 Makassar. Furthermore, research conducted by Tanjung and Rusman (2024) showed that the combination of the scaling question technique and group guidance fundamentally helps build learning motivation among students at SMA Negeri 7 Medan. In addition, Abdulla and Woods (2023) found that the Solution-Focused Brief Counselling (SFBC) approach using the scaling question technique had a positive impact on enhancing students' self-confidence.

As outlined above, students with low academic self-concept can experience improvement through group guidance using the scaling technique. However, previous studies have not specifically focused on the effectiveness of the scaling question technique in the context of developing students' academic self-concept. Therefore, this study offers novelty by emphasizing the effectiveness of group guidance using the scaling question technique in enhancing academic self-concept. It provides a theoretical contribution by expanding the understanding of the impact of the scaling question technique on students' cognitive–reflective aspects and a practical contribution as an alternative group guidance strategy for school counsellors to optimize students' academic potential.

This study aims to gain a deeper understanding of how students' academic self-concept can be improved through the group guidance approach and to examine the positive effects of the scaling question technique in helping students develop self-awareness regarding their academic potential. The importance of assisting students in cultivating a strong academic self-concept serves as the main objective of this research. Hence, the researcher proposes the following hypothesis: "Group Guidance Using the Scaling Technique Is Effective in Improving Students' Academic Self-Concept."

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental design with a one-group pretest–post-test model. The Quasi-Experimental One-Group Pretest–Post-test Design is a research method that does not include a control or comparison group, focusing solely on a single group—the experimental group. In this design, participants are first given a pretest to assess their initial level of ability or condition. After the pretest, the participants receive a treatment—in this case, group guidance using the scaling technique. Following the treatment, a post-test is administered to determine the extent to which the group guidance with the scaling technique is effective in improving students' academic self-concept. The structure of the One-Group Pretest–post-test Design is illustrated as follows:

	Pretest		treatment	Posttest
01		X		02

Description:

01: Pretest (test administered before the treatment)

X: Treatment (group guidance using the scaling technique)

O2 : Posttest (test administered after the treatment)

This research was conducted at the Jabal Rahmah Mulia Boarding School. The population of the study consisted of all eighth-grade students, totalling 53 individuals. The sampling technique used in this study was purposive sampling. According to Sugiyono (2020), purposive sampling is a technique for selecting research participants based on specific considerations or criteria. The sample in this study comprised students identified as having a low level of academic self-concept. A total of eight students were selected as participants, and the intervention was delivered using a group guidance format.

The data collection technique in this study utilized a questionnaire instrument adopted from Fitri (2022) to measure the participants' academic self-concept. The questionnaire consisted of both favourable and unfavourable statements, which were assessed using a Likert scale ranging

from 1 to 4: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). Participants were asked to select one of these four options that best represented their academic self-concept.

Before being used in the research process, the questionnaire instrument underwent validity and reliability testing. The academic self-concept questionnaire consisted of three aspects, ten indicators, and 49 statement items that had been tested for validity, yielding an r-table value of 0.254. The reliability test produced a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.868, which is higher than the r-table value of 0.254. Therefore, it can be concluded that the 49 items are reliable, with a very high reliability coefficient qualification.

Preparation Stage: This study consisted of several systematic stages. In the first stage, the researcher distributed a pretest questionnaire on academic self-concept adopted from Fitri (2022), meaning that the instrument was used directly without significant modifications to its content or structure. The questionnaire was administered to all eighth-grade students at the Boarding School SMP Jabal Rahmah Mulia to obtain preliminary data on students with low levels of academic self-concept. Implementation Stage: The results of the pretest distributed to all 53 eighth-grade students at Boarding School SMP Jabal Rahmah Mulia showed that 8 students had low academic self-concept. The researcher then conducted group counseling sessions using the scaling technique in four meetings. In the first meeting, the researcher provided students with an understanding of the concept of academic self-concept and encouraged them to discuss how they assess their own learning abilities. In the second meeting, the researcher administered a questionnaire based on the scaling technique to reveal students' perceptions of their academic abilities while also helping the counselor obtain an objective picture of their level of academic selfconcept. In the third meeting, the results of the previous questionnaire were discussed together, and the researcher invited students to explain the reasons behind their chosen scores. Additionally, the researcher introduced the topic of multiple intelligences to help students realize that intelligence is diverse, and failure in one area does not indicate a lack of ability. The fourth meeting focused on developing a follow-up plan, in which students were guided to design learning strategies that align with their individual intelligence styles and to enhance their academic motivation.

Data analysis in this study was conducted using SPSS Version 25 with the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test to measure the difference in academic self-concept scores before (pretest) and after (post-test) the treatment was administered. This test was chosen because the data were not normally distributed and the sample size was fewer than 30 respondents. The purpose of using this test was to determine the effectiveness of group counselling with the scaling technique in improving students' academic self-concept. Therefore, the results of this analysis serve as the basis for answering the research questions and testing the hypothesis in this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted at Boarding School SMP Plus Jabal Rahmah Mulia, specifically involving eighth-grade students with low academic self-concept. The study focused on measuring the effectiveness of group counselling services using the scaling technique to improve students' academic self-concept. The data were collected through pretest and post-test questionnaires using an academic self-concept measurement instrument consisting of 49 statement items, assessed with a Likert scale that had previously been tested for validity and reliability. The response options ranged from scores 1 to 4, where the maximum possible score was $49 \times 4 = 196$ and the minimum score was $49 \times 1 = 49$. Thus, the score range was calculated as $(196 - 49) \div 3 = 49$. Based on this interval, the categorical ranges were determined as follows:

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Pre-test

Category	Interval	F	%
High	147-196	0	0%
Moderate	98-146	0	0%
Low	49-97	8	100%
То	otal	8	100

Based on the data analysis presented in Table 1 regarding the frequency distribution of the pre-test, it was identified that eight (8) students exhibited low levels of academic self-concept and were selected as research participants. These participants then received a treatment in the form of group counselling sessions employing the scaling technique, conducted over four meetings and facilitated by the researcher under the supervision of the school counsellor. Upon completion of the four sessions, the participants were requested to complete a post-test using the same instrument. The post-test results subsequently demonstrate the frequency distribution as presented below.

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Post-test

Category	Interval	F	%
HIgh	147-196	8	100%
Moderate	98-146	0	0%
Low	49-97	0	0%
Tc	otal	8	100

Based on the results presented in the table above, a significant change was observed among the participants who received the intervention. Initially, all eight students were classified in the low category, but after the intervention, they moved to the high category. Based on the pretest and post-test results administered to the participants, the analysis of the academic self-concept scale is as follows:

Table 3. Pre-test and Post-test Results

Participant	Pre-test Score	category	Post-test Score	Category
DA	91	Low	158	High
AR	96	Low	154	High
BA	97	Low	149	High
LNH	97	Low	155	High
AAI	90	Low	151	High
AAA	96	Low	156	High
AZ	94	Low	147	High
KA	92	Low	152	High

Berdasarkan dari hasil pada tabel 3, diketahui bahwa sebelum diberi perlakuan (*pretest*), sebanyak 8 siswa pada kelas VIII berada pada kategori konsep diri akademik yang rendah. Setelah mendapatkan perlakuan melalui bimbingan kelompok dengan teknik *Scaling* (*posttest*), terjadi peningkatan yang signifikan sehingga konsep diri akademik siswa berada pada kategori tinggi. Untuk menguji perbedaan tersebut, peneliti menggunakan analisis *Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test* dengan bantuan program *SPSS versi 25 for Windows*, ialah sebagai berikut:

Based on the results presented in Table 3, it can be observed that before the treatment (pre-test), all eight eighth-grade students were classified in the low academic self-concept category. After receiving the intervention through group counselling using the scaling technique (post-test), a significant improvement was observed, with students' academic self-concept moving into the high category. To examine this difference statistically, the researcher conducted a Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test using SPSS Version 25 for Windows, as follows:

Table 4. Wilcoxon Test Results **Posttest-Pretest**

1 0000000 1 1 00000	
Z	-2.527
Asymp. Sig. (2 tailed)	.012

- a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test
- b. Based on negative ranks

Based on the table above, the results of the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test showed a Z value

of -2.527 with a p-value of 0.012, indicating that there is a significant difference between the pretest and post-test scores of the participants. Therefore, it can be concluded that group counselling using the scaling technique effectively improves students' academic self-concept. Based on these results, the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted, and the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected.

During each session of the study, participants in the group counselling shared and expressed their experiences regarding their academic self-concept, whether it had improved or declined, using the scaling question technique. As Corey states (Eryanti, 2020), scaling questions allow counselees to pay closer attention to what they have done and identify the steps they can take toward achieving the changes they desire.

Based on the post-test data analysis, there was a significant improvement in students' academic self-concept following the group counselling intervention using the scaling technique. Before the intervention, all participants were classified in the low category, as shown in the pretest results presented in Table 1. After participating in four sessions of group counselling using the scaling technique, all students demonstrated a significant increase, moving into the high category in the post-test, as shown in Table 2. The group counselling sessions were designed to help students enhance their academic self-concept, enabling them to view their academic abilities more positively and constructively. During the sessions, students had the opportunity to share their experiences and feelings in a safe and supportive environment. This is particularly important because students often focus solely on academic demands without recognizing their strengths outside of academics. Therefore, group counselling provides a platform for students to express their thoughts and emotions openly (Huang et al., 2021).

The implementation of group counseling using the scaling technique to enhance students' academic self-concept begins by creating a safe and comfortable environment among group members. The scaling technique is one of the methods used in counseling, particularly within the Solution-Focused Brief Counseling (SFBC) approach. This technique helps counselees or students assess their perceptions of a situation, ability, or problem using a numerical scale, typically ranging from 0 to 10. Through this scale, students are encouraged to position themselves according to their own perspective. This process not only allows the counselor to better understand the students' conditions but also helps students reflect on themselves and recognize both the progress they have made and the goals they wish to achieve.

In the context of group counselling, the scaling technique is applied by asking each group member to assign a numerical rating to a specific aspect, such as their academic ability in a particular subject. The counsellor then facilitates a discussion about why students chose those numbers and explores what actions they can take to improve their scores toward a more positive outcome. Thus, the scaling technique functions not only as a simple measurement tool but also as a means for self-reflection, motivation, and planning for self-improvement (Bannink, 2007). Through the application of the scaling technique in group counselling, students can learn to evaluate themselves objectively, understand the factors influencing their self-assessment, and develop concrete steps to enhance their academic self-concept. This aligns with the primary goal of group counselling, which is to help students gain new insights, develop positive attitudes, and find solutions to their problems through group dynamics.

Based on a literature review, no previous studies have specifically examined the effectiveness of group counselling services in improving students' academic self-concept. Existing research generally focuses on the effectiveness of group counselling on general self-concept, such as the study conducted by Nurul Auladi et al. (2023), and the study by Sumini et al. (2020), which explored the effectiveness of group counselling in developing students' academic self-concept. This highlights a research gap that needs to be addressed, making it important for the present study to investigate the effectiveness of group counselling in enhancing students' academic self-concept, with group counselling as the intervention approach and academic self-concept as the focus variable.

Overall, the application of the scaling technique in group counselling has proven to be relevant in enhancing students' academic self-concept. The scaling technique provides students with an opportunity to assess themselves gradually and objectively through the numbers they select, which are then reflected upon in group discussions. This process encourages students to

become more aware of their strengths and limitations and fosters a positive attitude toward their academic abilities. Thus, group counselling using the scaling technique can be considered effective in helping students build a healthier academic self-concept, supporting their overall learning success. The benefits of the scaling technique have also been demonstrated in previous studies. For instance, Pranata et al. (2022) found that the scaling technique assists in career decision-making for students at SMK Negeri 7 Kota Bengkulu. Additionally, research by Utari et al. (2025) showed that the scaling technique can enhance resilience in students from broken-home families at SMP Negeri 1 Sungai Raya.

Based on the data analysis presented above, it is evident that there was an increase in academic self-concept among eighth-grade students at Boarding School SMP Plus Jabal Rahmah Mulia. Group counseling using the scaling technique was proven to be effective in enhancing academic self-concept. This technique helps students learn to assess themselves more objectively. This improvement is reflected in the pre-test and post-test results conducted by the researcher: the post-test scores were higher than the pre-test scores, indicating the positive impact of the group counseling intervention using the scaling technique.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that group counselling using the scaling technique is effective in enhancing students' academic self-concept. The findings are expected to provide benefits for both schools and students. For schools, these results are valuable in enriching strategies to improve students' academic self-concept, thereby fostering a more positive learning environment that supports academic success. Additionally, the study offers insights for the development of school counselling services, enabling school counsellors to select approaches and techniques that best suit students' needs. For students, the study helps build self-confidence, enhance learning motivation, and improve their ability to evaluate themselves more positively when facing academic challenges. Suggestions for future research include expanding the scope of participants and exploring the application of the scaling technique in different academic contexts, with the aim of producing richer findings that can further contribute to the development of school counselling services. In conclusion, group counselling using the scaling technique can serve as an effective intervention to improve students' academic self-concept. This study is also expected to serve as a reference for the implementation of school counselling services, particularly in addressing psychological issues related to students' academic aspects.

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