

## The Effectiveness of Behavioral Group Counseling with a Modeling Technique to Improve Students Social Interaction Skills and Empathy

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### Abstract

Low social interaction skills and empathy can potentially raise problems in students. Therefore, this research aimed to analyze the effectiveness of behavioral group counseling with a modeling technique to improve students' social interaction skills and empathy at MAN 1 Palu. It used a pretest-posttest control group design in an experiment. In sampling, this research used a purposive sampling technique, while the data collection was done using the social interaction ability scale and empathy scale. Following the data collection, hypothesis testing was carried out based on the Wilcoxon sign rank test, the Mann Whitney test and the N-gain score test. According to the Wilcoxon sign rank test and Mann Whitney analysis, there was an increase in social interaction skills and empathy in the modeling group, while in the control group was no. It has proved that the behavioral group counseling with a modeling technique has been able to improve the social interaction skills and empathy of MAN 1 Palu students. Further research implications are discussed in the discussion section.

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## INTRODUCTION

Social interaction belongs to a social process because it is the main requirement for social activities to occur. Social interaction is realized in dynamic social relationships that involve relationships between individuals, human groups, and individuals and human groups (Soekanto, 2016). Empathy is one's ability to understand the feelings and emotions of others and imagine oneself in another person's shoes (Hurlock, 2010). In the process of empathy, individuals involve affective and cognitive aspects. The affective aspect is the tendency to care less about other people (Eisenberg, 2016). Low social interaction skills and empathy have a big impact on adolescents because this condition will lower a person's generosity.

Research related to social interaction conducted by Evi (2020) found as many as 66.2% of students have a low level of social interaction ability. Another one by Nurul Rizkiana (2014) shows that 53.50% of students have problems with low levels of social interaction skills. The. A previous research related to empathy conducted by Hayati (2017) concludes moral decline due to decreased empathy among teenagers towards other people, resulting in the formation of an uncontrolled condition in the social life of teenagers who have lost their sense of empathy, based on the results of the analysis test, it can be seen that there are differences in students' empathy scores before and after participating in the service. Thus, group guidance using sociodrama techniques can increase students' empathy. Siyez (2010) shows that psychology students' empathy and self-efficacy are higher than other students as determined using the peer facilitator model.

Regarding the previously mentioned research findings, some distinguishable aspects from the present research were the research design, research sample, strategy, and problems. In the field, there still found many MAN 1 Palu students who had low social interaction and a sense of empathy, indicating by the absence of close relationships between one student and another, difficulties in getting along with their

classmates, indifference when their friends face problems, students preference to stay silent in class rather than group together during break time, students inability to accept other people's opinions during discussions. Mereka tidak mampu merasakan apa yang sedang dirasakan oleh temannya. The MAN 1 Palu students were unable to feel what their friends were feeling. They seemed to close their eyes and ignore it. Even there were students who acted aggressively and hurt their peers so that their friends felt isolated.

The low students' social interaction skills and empathy that can be seen in the daily attitudes and behavior at school, including at MAN 1 Palu, is in line with the opinion of (Hurlock, 2010) that people who have the characteristics of low social interaction skills tend to be very aggressive, avoids unfamiliar environments, not want to cooperate, experience difficulties to communicate with others, hard to adapt to group activities, be unable to create harmonious relationships with friends. In relation to the importance of assistance for students, collaboration between teachers is very necessary. Here, counselors must prepare scientific strategies related to counseling services and techniques to help with various kinds of problems and difficulties of students.

In line with the findings of previous research and the explanation of social interaction skills as well as empathy, behavioral approach group counseling seems to work on these matters. According to Corey (2013) behavioral is a scientific view of human behavior. The basic principle is that behavior is orderly and carefully controlled experiments will reveal the laws that control behavior. Behavioral is characterized by an attitude of limiting methods and procedures to observable data. Humans are said to be mere creatures of habit so that they can be made in such a way, in a way that provides the right stimuli and good moments so that there is a process of learning and practicing. Furthermore, the research findings that urge to improve social interaction skills and empathy are as follows. Research by Rully (2017) found that strategy modeling through behavioral group counseling is

effective for improving students' interpersonal communication. Then, research by Ghozali (2016) Modeling techniques can improve interpersonal communication skills. This is aimed at changes in attitudes that occur in students seen from five indicators of interpersonal communication, namely openness, empathy, support, positive feelings and equality

In this research, the researchers used one of several behavioral counseling techniques, namely the modeling technique. States that the application of the modeling technique is based on the process where individual or group behavior (examples) act as a stimulus that influences thoughts and attitudes. The behavioral counseling model with this modeling technique is a counseling technique as a learning process through observation where the behavior of an individual or group, as a model, acts as a stimulus for thoughts, attitudes or behavior on the part of the individual observing the model displayed. In counseling, individuals observe a model and are then motivated to impersonate the model's behavior. Through the application of behavioral counseling, social interaction skills and empathy will be able to improve because the counselor will show models that can encourage students to increase students' social interaction and empathy, either with real models (live models) or models in the form of symbols. (Corey, 2013) emphasizes that the role of modeling in development and modification originates largely from human behavior.

Further support for the previous materials is realized in research by Thomas (2006) showing that people, including children, who have viewed generous models (other people) will become generous people compared to people who have not viewed prosocial models. Modeling is carried out by the behavior of an individual or group (model) as a stimulus for similar thoughts, attitudes and behavior on the part of the observer. With regard to the previous elaboration, this research strived for determining the level of effectiveness of behavioral group counseling with a modeling technique for MAN 1 Palu students. It was expected that the findings of this research will provide an alternative understanding of the

basic principles of using behavioral group counseling in solving problems with students' social interaction skills and empathy.

## METHODS

This research used a quantitative approach in an experimental format. (Sugiyono, 2014) the experimental method is an approach where situations or symptoms are created deliberately. The research design used was pretest-posttest control group design. It involved students who had low social interaction skills and empathy. In selecting the samples, the nonprobability sampling was applied. Following this step, the collected samples were grouped using random assignment, namely randomly assigns individuals to different groups in an experiment. Here, the provision of behavioral group counseling with a modeling technique was carried out in 5 meetings over 5 weeks at MAN 1 Palu. Students data were collected using the psychological scale of social interaction skills which consists of 25 items. Based on (Santoso 2010) aspects of social interaction skills consist of cooperation (7 items), competition (6 items), conflict (4 items), conformity (4 items), and integration (4 items). Items from the social interaction skills scale have 4 scaling alternatives (1=strongly disagree, 4=strongly agree). The results of the instrument validity test showed that 25 items were valid and the reliability on the social interaction ability scale items obtained a result of (0.873).

Another instrument was the psychological empathy scale which consists of 25 items. Based on (Goleman 1999), the empathy aspect consists of placing oneself and sharing in feelings, thoughts from another person's perspective (10 items), listening to other people's conversations well (10 items), and being sensitive to other people's feelings (5 items). Items from the empathy scale have 4 scaling alternatives (1=strongly disagree, 4=strongly agree). The results of the instrument validity test showed 25 valid items and the reliability on the empathy scale items obtained a result of (0.878). In addition, the effectiveness of behavioral group counseling with a modeling technique to improve

social interaction skills and empathy in the subjects of this research was analyzed using the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test, followed by the Mann-Whitney test.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the description of students' social interaction skills and empathy before and after receiving behavioral group counseling services using modeling techniques is presented. The data were obtained from 14 research subjects

divided into two groups, namely the modeling group and the control group. It is known that the mean of pre-test for social interaction skills in the modeling group was 45.57 (SD=1.71) and was categorized as low. Besides that, in the control group, the pre-test mean for social interaction skills was 42.7 (SD=1.97) and was similarly categorized low. Regarding empathy, the pre-test mean in the modeling group was 43.57 (SD=2.14) and was categorized as low. For more, the control group gained the pre-test mean of 43.43 (SD=3.59) categorized as low.

**Table 1.** The Test Results of Behavioral Group Counseling with the Modeling Technique to Improve Social Interaction Skills and Empathy

Variabel	Group	T1		T2		G		Z <sub>1</sub>	p <sub>1</sub>
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Social interaction skills	Experimental	45.57	1.71	90.71	3.35	82.95	6.01	-2.384	<.05
	Control	42.71	1.97	43.14	1.77	0.72	1.40	-1.342	>.05
	Z <sub>2</sub>	-1.375				-3.141			
	p <sub>2</sub>	>.05				<.01			
Empathy	Experimental	43.57	2.14	84.86	3.76	73.19	6.52	-2.371	<.05
	Control	43.43	3.59	44	3.87	1.03	0.97	-1.000	>.05
	Z <sub>2</sub>	-1.229				-3.137			
	p <sub>2</sub>	>.05				<.01			

Notes: T1:Pre-test, T2:Post-Test, Z<sub>1</sub>: Wilcoxon Test Score, Z<sub>2</sub>: Mann-Whitney Test Score, G: Gain score, M: Mean, SD: Standard Deviation, p<sub>1</sub> = <.05, p<sub>2</sub> = <.01

The analysis of the Wilcoxon test score indicated that the behavioral counseling intervention with a modeling technique was effective in increasing social interaction skills in the modeling group (Z=-2.384, p<.05). However, in the control group there was no significant increase (Z=-1.342, p>.05). The analysis also showed that the modeling technique in the behavioral counseling intervention was effective in increasing empathy in the modeling group (Z=-2.371, p<.05). However, in the control group there was no significant increase (Z=-1.000, p>.05).

According to the results of the Mann-Whitney test confirmed there was an increase in social interaction skills and empathy after implementing behavioral group counseling with a modeling technique. In details, the level of social interaction skills was (Z=-3.141, p<0.05),

and the level of empathy was (Z-3.137, p<0.05 ). Following this analysis, the Mann-Whitney test was carried out on the gain score due to a significant difference in the level of social interaction ability between the experimental group and the control group. Thus, the gain score test was expected to be able to control differences in the impact of behavioral group counseling with a modeling technique from unbalanced pre-test results. Based on the data obtained in the modeling group, it was known that the provision of behavioral group counseling with a modeling technique on social interaction skills and empathy made some improvement in the category from low up to high. However, there was no change in the control group.

These findings proved that behavioral group counseling with a modeling technique was effective in increasing students' social interactions

because within the modeling technique students could achieve a change in each of their attitudes, obtain more adaptive social behavior, help themselves respond to new things, respond well and eliminate bad response. Specifically, the modeling technique helped students who lacked social interaction by learning how to carry out more effective social interactions by increasing or lowering observed behavior, aligning various observations simultaneously involving cognitive processes so that they can produce positive behavior.

The findings are also in accordance with the theory put forward by (Kartini Kartono 2011) that social interaction is in the form of the ability to react actively and harmoniously to social realities and situations as well as carrying out healthy social reactions, respecting one's own rights and those of society, and being able to get along with other people. Good social interaction is characterized by togetherness, a sense of mutual need, mutual appreciation and respect, the absence of distance between the rich and the poor, and helping each other to achieve common goals..

Based on the results of the Wilcoxon Sign Rank test on students' empathy, there was a difference from the low pre-test score and the high post-test score. The treatment in this research was given in 5 meetings to the experimental group only, while the control group used the conventional one. The purpose of using this modeling technique is to make students able to eliminate certain behaviors by forming new ones (Willis, 2004). The behavioral approach focuses on changing behavior by emphasizing giving rewards to clients when they do a good activity and giving consequences to prevent clients from doing bad activities. Meanwhile, according to (Corey, 2013) behavioral counseling is a theory that emphasizes human behavior which is basically shaped and determined by the environment and all behavior is learned/acquired through the training process.

The findings of Hartati's research (2022) modeling techniques to increase student empathy because this technique aims to enable students to help themselves in self-development, such as

feeling what other people feel to foster a sense of empathy. Based on the concept of (Corey, 2013), the aim of the modeling technique in this behavioristic approach is to change behavior by observing the model that will be imitated so that the client strengthens the behavior that has been formed. Thus, behavioral group counseling modeling techniques have a significant influence on students' lack of social interaction and empathy skills.

By using behavioral counseling, the modeling technique functions as a learning process through observation where the behavior of an individual or group, as a model, acts as a stimulus for the thoughts, attitudes, or behavior of other individuals who observe the model displayed. Models can be real (direct) models and can also be symbolic. The real model is a person, namely a counselor, teacher, or peer. modeling technique is a technique where someone learns to make something through the process of observation, observing models, where modeling also involves cognitive and creative processes, not just imitation. (Hariadi, 2019)

With regard to the previous explanation, the behavioral group counseling with a modeling technique was effective in improving students' social interaction and empathy skills at MAN 1 Palu. Of the findings, the implication for counselors is to improve students' social interaction skills and empathy by providing behavioral group counseling with a modeling technique. In this way, students can also learn new behaviors by observing models and learning modeling skills so that they can increase their understanding of social interaction skills and empathy. Also, the findings give a theoretical contribution which is currently still limited, especially regarding the implementation of behavioral group counseling with a modeling technique.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of research and discussion regarding the effectiveness of the behavioral group counseling with a modeling technique to improve the social interaction skills

and empathy of MAN 1 Palu students, several conclusions were drawn as follows:

(1) Based on the findings, the initial condition of students' social interaction skill was in the low category during the pre-test, and after being given treatment, their skills increased to the high category. Therefore, the behavioral group counseling with a modeling technique can give significant effectiveness in improving low social interaction skills of MAN 1 Palu students, (2) students' initial empathy conditions were in the low category during the pre-test and after being given treatment, their empathy improved to the high category. It means that the behavioral group counseling with a modeling technique can contribute significant effectiveness to the increase in low empathy of MAN 1 Palu students.

First, it is expected that the future researchers who are interested in this topic can conduct researchers using a qualitative approach as a means of revealing more detailed factors and impacts of low social interaction skills and empathy on male and female gender as well as expanding the research subject to age and different levels of education. Second, it recommended that guidance and counseling teachers provide treatment or intervention to students who have low social interaction and empathy skills through the behavioral group counseling with a modeling technique.

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