

The Effectiveness of Behavioristic Individual Counseling with an Operant Conditioning Technique to Improve Study Attitudes and Study Habits in Students

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Abstract

Study attitudes and study habits are important in education because they determine the success of learning. These became the problems in this research because low study attitudes and study habits will cause the decline in students' academic achievement, so a solution is needed. In dealing with this issue, the present research examined the effectiveness of behavioristic individual counseling with an operant conditioning technique to improve the study attitudes and study habits of the ninth graders at SMP Negeri 13 Semarang. It was experimental research which used a randomized pretest posttest comparison group design. In addition, a manova analysis was done to both experimental and control groups. In detail, the treatment used in this study could improve students' study attitudes and study habits. Finally, school counselors are recommended to provide a reinforcement program to support the implementation of the behavioristic individual counseling with an operant conditioning technique.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is an important part of life since it can help individual develop all aspects of his life. A decline in study habits from year to year may lead someone to academic failure (Rasdiany & Neviyarni, 2022).

A research by (Alzahrani et al., 2018) concludes that study habits have a significant impact on student performance. However, an article by (Nasrulloh & Muslimin, 2019) found that students often face learning difficulties. Similarly, studies by (Clarke et al., 2021) and (Romanowska & Dobroczyński, 2020) have concluded that there is a need for further action to support study habits by using counseling.

An investigation done by (Bhaduria et al., 2018) concludes that there are significant differences in behavior changes found in children who received counseling. Then, (Fatmawati, 2021) has proved that a contract counseling technique in guidance and counseling services is be effective in improving study habits. Moreover, (Tanjung et al., 2018) in their research states that information services are effective in improving study attitudes.

Seeing the facts that a group counseling format was the most used in the previous research, the present research attempted to give some enrichment by using an individual counseling format with the aim of providing thorough results in each student.

A preliminary research done to students at SMP Negeri 13 Semarang gave the researchers an overview that many students there were low in study attitudes and study habits.

Regarding the above description, it was necessary to conduct a research on the effectiveness of behavioristic individual counseling with an operant conditioning technique to improve study attitudes and study habits of students.

The findings of this study can be consideration for school principals in preparing educational programs for students, especially those related to teaching and learning activities and provide empirical data that can be used by school counselors to master counseling

approaches both theoretically and practically in guidance and counseling services.

METHODS

In this research, there were 258 ninth graders at SMP Negeri 13 Semarang who became the population. Purposive sampling was done and resulted 12 students who had low study attitudes and study habits. A random assignment technique was performed to equivalently place those students in experimental and control groups with six students in each.

There were two instruments used to collect the data in this research. The first was a study attitudes scale. This instrument has 23 items and was scored using the scale of 1=strongly disagree up to 4: strongly agree. Its reliability was 0.91, while the item validity ranged from 0.178 to 0.781. Another scale was a study habits scale. It has 23 items and was scored using the scale of 1=strongly disagree up to 4: strongly agree. Its reliability was 0.9, while the item validity ranged from 0.316 to 0.810. A clearer description of the research stages are presented in the following figure 1.

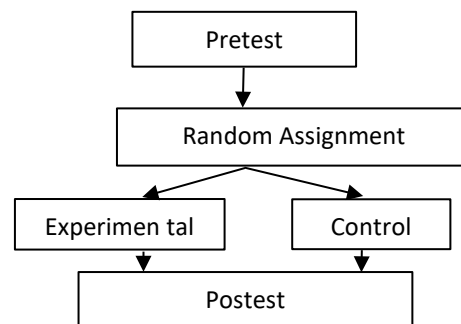


Figure 1. Research Procedures

As presented in Figure 1. the present research used a randomized pretest-posttest group design and involved two groups, namely the experimental group and the control group. The experimental group was given a treatment with individual behavioristic counseling with an operant conditioning technique (in 5 meetings) by providing reinforcement with verbal reinforcement and gestural reinforcement, while the control group was given a individual counseling treatment without technique (in 5

meetings). Once the data was collected, those were analyzed using t-test and the MANOVA test assisted by the IBM SPSS Statistics 25 program.

Table 1. Manova Test

Group	Study Attitudes				t(5)	Study Habits				t(5)
	Pretest		Posttest			Pretest	Posttest		t	
	M	SD	M	SD			M	SD		
Experimental	47.17	2.137	66.83	5.269	-	40.67	1.366	59.33	5.046	-
Control	44.33	3.615	42.33	4.227	2.00**	40.67	1.862	41.67	3.011	-0.719*
F(1,10)	2.73**		78.92**			0.00*		54.22**		

Notes : *) $P < 0,1$; **) $P < 0,5$

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The initial condition of the counselee's study attitudes tended to be in the low category with the value of ($M = 47.17$, $SD = 2.137$). The same thing happened to study habits with the value of ($M=40.67$, $SD=1.366$).

Based on table 1, the results of the t test showed that the behavioristic individual counseling with an operant conditioning technique has confirmed to improve study attitudes with the value of ($t(5)=-10.92$; $p < 0.1$) and study habits with the value of ($t(5)=-11.78$; $p < 0.1$). Changes in the experimental group were different from the control group where the control group experienced a decrease in study attitudes ($t(5)=2.00$; $p < 0.5$), but no change in study habits ($t(5)=-0.72$; $p < 0.5$).

Furthermore, table 1 also showed that the experimental group gained a higher increase in study attitudes, namely ($M=66.83$, $SD=5.27$) that was higher than the control group analysis result ($M=42.33$, $SD = 4.23$; $F(1, 10) = 78.92$, $p < 0.05$). The same thing happened to study habits, proving the experimental group experienced a higher increase ($M=59.33$, $SD=5.05$) than the control group ($M=41.67$, $SD = 3.01$; $F(1, 10) = 54.22$, $p < 0.05$).

Regarding the above results, it was confirmed that the behavioristic individual counseling with an operant conditioning

technique was effective to improve study attitudes and study habits.

Study attitudes had a significant impact on student performance. This variable tends to dominate students' behavior every time they carry out learning activities. The reason is because attitudes contain a strong motivation. In a research by (Nasrulloh & Muslimin, 2019), it is concluded that learning difficulties are experienced by all students, but not all schools or teachers are able to help students overcome these problems although they have guidance and counseling teachers. It proves that guidance and counseling teachers have different ways in dealing with student problems depending on cultures, habits, and situations.

A research by (Alnahdi & Aftab, 2020) concludes that there is a significant negative correlation between academic stress and study habits, in other words more academic stress causes poor study habits. Next, a research by (Unal, 2021) shows that study habits greatly determine success in academic achievement, while a research by (Davilia et al., 2022) concludes that study attitudes are positively related to academic stress trigger factors.

(Munir, 2022) investigated the relationship between students' study habits and academic achievement in secondary schools in the metropolitan city of Katsina. The investigation revealed that there is a significant relationship

between students' study habits and academic achievement.

(Romanowska & Dobroczyński, 2020) has conducted a research with the focus on students' learning problems. The findings state that guidance and counseling services can be an answer to learning problems, such as study attitudes and study habits. It is because one of the functions in guidance and counseling is the curative function, namely to alleviate the problems experienced by students.

The curative function aims to solve students problem with the quickest, most thorough, and most proper way. A guidance service for learning is a service targeted for developing effective and efficient attitudes and habits. A possible method to employ in this service is the application of an operant conditioning technique in a counseling service with a behavioral approach.

Based on the observation, the counseling sessions run well and maximally. It was supported by the changes in the level of study attitudes and study habits following the implementation of the behavioristic individual counseling with operant condition technique stages for five times.

An operant conditioning technique is one of the techniques in the behavioral approach (behavior therapy) in which a person can control the behavior of an organism through the provision of reinforcement that is adjusted to the individual's needs in his environment. Stages of the behavioristic individual counseling with an operant conditioning techniques used by researchers were assessment, problems formulation/ goals setting, the operant conditioning technique implementation and evaluation.

The counseling service addressed to study attitudes was initially focused on the cognitive and affective aspects by finding out the backgrounds that caused students have low study attitudes. Based on the results of the study, the most prominent background was undisciplined behaviors, one of which was not being responsible for task completion given by the teacher.

The effectiveness of the behavioristic individual counseling with an operant conditioning technique to improve students' study attitudes could be achieved because of the presence of reinforcement to solve the counselee's problems. Reinforcement was given based on a reference from a study by (Muratama, 2018) which states that reinforcement and directions in behavioral counseling are needed to change negative attitudes into the positive ones in relation to the issues of study discipline and responsibility.

The findings of this research are relevant to a research conducted by (Ulfa et al., 2019) about the effectiveness of an individual counseling service to improve students' attitudes of learning responsibility, and a research conducted by (Gunawan et al., 2019) which found an influence of behavioristic counseling on the attitude of tenacity of the eight graders at SMPN 3 Batukliang Utara where tenacity is a factor that shapes student study attitudes. Thus, the results of this research indicate that behavioral counseling with an operant conditioning technique is effective in improving study attitudes.

The effectiveness of the treatment given was due to the operant condition technique that enabled students to solve problems through reinforcement (Corey, 2017). In this research, reinforcement strategies were given to students whose learning environment was noisy, sweaty, and non-conducive atmosphere due to the smartphone use. It is relevant to a research by (Solihatun, 2019) that students' study habits can be improved through a guidance service.

Again, the findings of this research are relevant to a research conducted by (Fatmawati, 2021) who carried out a research to determine the effectiveness of a contract counseling service to improve students' study habits, and a research conducted by (Rasdiany & Neviyarni, 2022) which concludes the implementation of a cognitive restructuring technique in a group setting can improve students' study habits.

A research by (van Vu, 2021) concludes that the cause of bad study habits is social media, and it can be reduced by the use of content

mastery services with a symbolic modeling technique (Pratisa Mutiana & Awalya, 2017). Therefore, it is expected that supervising teachers can motivate and help students to improve study habits

(Atim et al., 2022) conclude that the provision of group counseling to overcome study habits has an effect on students' academic achievement, so this service should be held in schools to create awareness about effective learning.

The findings of this research related to the implementation of behavioral individual counseling to deal with study habits somehow enriched the previous research findings which focused on the counseling in a group format.

This research has succeeded in proving that the behavioristic individual counseling with an operant conditioning technique was effective to improve the counselee's study attitudes and study habits. However, there were some limitations in it, such as the absence of a follow-up plan to monitor the duration of the reinforcement effect and the unavailability of the discussion of any important mediator variables that may influence learning habits, such as intention and learning achievement. On study habits, apart from mediators, there is still much that has not been discussed, such as the factors that influence study attitudes and study habits. If discussed further, the background underlying the study attitudes and study habits of students will be discovered and enrich further researches.

CONCLUSION

According to the analysis of the data obtained from the investigation at SMP 13 Semarang from the beginning to the implementation of individual counseling with an operant conditioning technique, some conclusions are drawn and presented as follows.

There are several ninth graders at SMP Negeri 13 Semarang who have low study attitudes and study habits. After being given the behavioristic individual counseling treatment with an operant conditioning technique, it is known that this service is able to improve study

attitudes. In addition, this type of counseling is effective to improve the low learning habits of students who have difficulty controlling smartphone use and have difficulty focusing on learning in class.

Following up on these findings, it is necessary to have follow-up plans and build closeness with students who have problems in following the stages of the operant conditioning technique used and monitor the duration of the effect of reinforcement in improving study attitudes and study habits. Furthermore, in the discussion it is known that there are many mediating variables that reduce study attitudes and trigger students' learning habits towards learning. Therefore, future research is expected to add mediating variables such as intention and learning achievement.

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