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Development of a Challenge-Based Match The Cups Game Media to Train Interpersonal Communication Skills of Students at SMP Muhammadiyah 7 Medan

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Abstract

Interpersonal communication is an important skill that students need to develop to build positive relationships and interact effectively with their peers. However, based on the needs analysis, some students still experience difficulties in expressing opinions, listening to and understanding others, cooperating with peers, providing support, building positive interactions, and giving others equal opportunities to communicate. In addition, the implementation of guidance and counseling services is still limited by the availability of interactive media that can provide students with opportunities to practice communication directly. This condition indicates the need for media that can support students in developing interpersonal communication skills through active and enjoyable activities. Therefore, this study aimed to develop a challenge-based Match The Cups *game as a medium for group guidance services to train students' interpersonal communication skills. This study employed a Research and Development (R&D) method using the 4D development model (*Define, Design, Develop, *and* Disseminate*), with the development process limited to the* Develop *stage. The research subjects consisted of eight seventh-grade students from class VII-1 at SMP Muhammadiyah 7 Medan. Data were collected through interviews and questionnaires using media expert validation sheets, material expert validation sheets, a school counselor response questionnaire, and a student response questionnaire. The results showed that the challenge-based* Match The Cups *game obtained a feasibility percentage of 89% from the media expert and 86% from the material expert, both categorized as highly feasible. Meanwhile, the practicality assessment obtained percentages of 84.17% from the school counselor and 90.21%*

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from the students, both categorized as highly practical. Therefore, the challenge-based Match The Cups *game is considered highly feasible and highly practical for use as a medium in group guidance services to train students' interpersonal communication skills.*

Keywords: **Match The Cups*, interpersonal communication, Group Guidance***

INTRODUCTION

Humans are essentially social beings who cannot live independently and constantly need others in their lives. The nature of interdependence has been inherent in humans since birth, leading every individual to establish relationships with the surrounding environment. In everyday life, people interact with one another. Therefore, humans cannot avoid an activity known as communication. Whether consciously or unconsciously, communication is an integral part of human life..

Adolescence is one of the most important stages of development in the human life span. At this stage, particularly between the ages of 11 and 14, individuals are generally in the early adolescence period and are typically enrolled in junior high school (SMP) (Rakhmat, 2018). The school environment at this level serves as the primary setting for adolescents to engage in various forms of social interaction. Such interactions are an integral part of students' daily lives and occur continuously within the context of their social relationships at school (Maharani & Rusmawati, 2020).

Various potentials and abilities possessed by students need to be developed, one of which is communication skills (Kurniawati, 2023). During this period, adolescents tend to form peer groups and actively interact with their social environment as part of the process of developing their social skills. This condition is consistent with the developmental tasks of adolescence, namely the ability to establish interpersonal relationships and communicate more maturely with peers, both male and female (Alghzali, 2022).Interpersonal communication skills among students vary from one individual to another. These differences can be reflected in various behaviors, such as low self-confidence, aggressive behavior such as fighting, violations of school rules, failure to complete assignments, truancy, frequent tardiness to school, defiance toward teachers, and, in certain circumstances, serious acts of violence (Anggraini et al., 2022). In the context of social relationships, interpersonal communication plays a crucial role as a foundation for building positive, harmonious, and meaningful relationships among individuals (Bastian & Widodo, 2024).

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Interpersonal communication skills do not develop automatically from birth; rather, they are skills that can be learned, practiced, and developed through education, experience, and continuous social interaction. Therefore, systematic efforts are needed to develop students' interpersonal communication skills so that they can interact effectively with their surrounding environment. One of the environments that plays an important role in developing these skills is the school. Education is not only aimed at improving students' academic abilities but also at developing their potential, attitudes, skills, and social competencies needed for life in society (Ajmalia et al., 2025). Therefore, schools have a responsibility to facilitate the development of students' interpersonal communication skills as an integral part of their social development (Samsaifil & Sari, 2022).

In achieving these educational objectives, Guidance and Counseling (GC) services play an important role as an integral part of the education system in schools. GC services help students achieve their developmental tasks optimally through personal, social, academic, and career guidance (Purba, 2023). School counselors do not only play a role in assisting students who experience problems but also have the responsibility to provide services that develop students' potential, improve their social skills, and help them cope with various developmental demands during adolescence.

One aspect of social development that needs attention in Guidance and Counseling services is interpersonal communication skills. DeVito (as cited in, 2024) explains that interpersonal communication is a process of transmitting and receiving messages between two people or a small group of people, involving immediate feedback. This communication process enables individuals to exchange information, provide responses, and build relationships through direct interaction.

DeVito (2016) He explains that effective interpersonal communication is characterized by several important aspects, namely openness, empathy, supportiveness, positiveness, and equality. These five aspects serve as the foundation for building effective interpersonal relationships, as good communication enables individuals to express their thoughts and feelings openly, understand others' perspectives, provide support, demonstrate a positive attitude, and establish equal relationships. Therefore, interpersonal communication skills need to be developed from the school years so that students can establish positive social relationships with their surrounding environment.

This condition is not fully consistent with the reality found in the school environment. Based on an interview with the Guidance and Counseling (GC) teacher at SMP Muhammadiyah 7

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Medan, particularly in class VII-1, it was found that students' interpersonal communication skills had not yet developed optimally. This was reflected in students' lack of confidence in expressing their opinions, limited ability to listen to and understand others, difficulties in cooperating and providing support to peers, limited active participation in building positive interactions, and difficulties in respecting others' opinions when differences of opinion arose during group activities. These conditions indicate that students need activities that provide opportunities to practice communicating, listening, cooperating, providing support, building positive interactions, and respecting others' opinions through direct interaction.

The problem of low interpersonal communication skills among students requires attention because these skills influence the quality of their social relationships and developmental processes. This is in line with a study conducted by (Yudanto, 2024) involving seventh-grade students at SMP Muhammadiyah 6 Yogyakarta, which showed that students' interpersonal communication skills were still not optimal. The results indicated that, out of 121 students, only 19% were in the high category, while 64% were in the moderate category and 17% were in the low category. These findings indicate that some students still experience difficulties in interpersonal communication, such as a lack of openness in expressing opinions, difficulties in expressing thoughts and feelings, and limited ability to establish effective social interactions with others.

These findings are further supported by a study conducted by (Ghoriszah, 2022) which descriptively analyzed the interpersonal communication skills of eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 14 Semarang. The results showed that 27% of students were in the very low category and 33% were in the low category, indicating that, overall, students' interpersonal communication skills were still relatively low. The study also revealed that students continued to experience difficulties in developing openness, empathy, and the ability to interact effectively with their social environment.

Low levels of interpersonal communication skills among students can have various impacts on their social lives at school. Communication difficulties may lead to misunderstandings, conflicts among peers, difficulties in working collaboratively in groups, and low levels of student participation in social and learning activities (Sridasweni et al., 2017). If interpersonal communication skills are not developed optimally, students may experience difficulties in building positive relationships within their school environment.

Interpersonal communication problems among students cannot be ignored because these skills are an important aspect of students' social development. Students with low interpersonal

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communication skills may experience difficulties in expressing ideas, cooperating with others, understanding others, and resolving social problems that arise in their daily lives. This statement is supported by a study conducted by (Ilda, 2025), which found that ineffective interpersonal communication among students at SMP Negeri 30 Padang was one of the factors contributing to conflicts among peers. These communication barriers led to misunderstandings, jealousy, and tension in students' social relationships.

In addition to affecting social relationships, low interpersonal communication skills can also influence students' engagement in the learning process. Students who have difficulty expressing their opinions and interacting effectively tend to experience challenges in building positive relationships with teachers and peers (Yudhistira & Trihastuti, 2023). Therefore, efforts are needed to help students develop their interpersonal communication skills optimally.

One of the efforts that can be undertaken by Guidance and Counseling teachers is through group guidance services. Group guidance services provide students with opportunities to learn through group dynamics, exchange experiences, develop social skills, and practice communication skills through interaction with other group members. According to (Fadillah & Hidayat, 2021) group guidance is a process of providing assistance to students through group activities aimed at helping group members understand themselves, develop social skills, and address problems through group interaction. Although group guidance services provide students with opportunities to interact directly, their implementation still needs to be supported by appropriate media so that the activities do not rely solely on the delivery of material and discussion, but also provide students with a more active learning experience.

The use of media in group guidance services can help Guidance and Counseling (GC) teachers deliver material in a more engaging way, facilitate students' understanding of information, increase their attention and engagement, and create a more interactive guidance environment**.** Media can also be used to guide students in carrying out specific activities in accordance with the objectives of the service, allowing students not only to passively receive information but also to participate actively and directly experience the learning process.

This is supported by various research findings showing that the use of media can improve the quality of Guidance and Counseling services. (Nabila & Darminto, 2020) explained that Guidance and Counseling media can stimulate students' attention, interest, thoughts, and feelings, making them more interested and actively engaged in participating in the services. These findings are further supported by (Hazrati et al., 2016) who found that group guidance services utilizing media were more effective than services conducted without media. Therefore, media not

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only function as tools for delivering information but also serve as a means of supporting more active, engaging, and effective Guidance and Counseling services.

One type of media that can be used in group guidance services is game-based media (*games*). Game-based media involve play activities with specific rules, objectives, and mechanisms that encourage students to actively participate in the activity. The use of game-based media in group guidance can create a more enjoyable and less rigid service environment while providing students with opportunities to interact, cooperate, express their opinions, and respond to other group members. These characteristics make game-based media relevant for services aimed at developing social skills and interpersonal communication.

The use of game-based media in group guidance services is also supported by previous research. (Astuti et al., 2013) showed that the *Kartu BerBi* game media can be used in group guidance services to help improve students' interpersonal communication. The study demonstrated that games can provide students with opportunities to participate in group activities and engage in direct interaction. In addition, (Nugraha, 2022) explained that play activities in group guidance can provide students with experiences in learning to communicate and cooperate through activities carried out directly. These findings further support the use of game-based media as an alternative medium in group guidance services, particularly when the objectives of the service involve developing students' social and interpersonal communication skills.

Interviews with the Guidance and Counseling (GC) teacher at SMP Muhammadiyah 7 Medan revealed that the implementation of GC services is still predominantly based on conventional methods, such as lectures, question-and-answer sessions, and discussions. These methods are generally used to deliver service materials to students because they are considered easy to implement given the limitations of time and available resources. However, the GC teacher explained that these methods have not been able to actively involve all students throughout the service process. In practice, only some students are willing to express their opinions or participate in discussions, while others tend to remain passive, show limited enthusiasm, and primarily act as listeners.

Based on the interview analysis, this condition indicates that GC services still require media that can increase students' active participation. The GC teacher also stated that the media currently used in the services are limited, resulting in insufficient variety in service implementation. Consequently, the service environment tends to be monotonous and provides limited opportunities for students to practice social and communication skills directly. Meanwhile,

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students at the junior high school level, who are generally in early adolescence, tend to benefit from activities involving interaction, cooperation, challenges, and direct learning experiences through engaging activities.

Based on these findings, there is a gap between the ideal conditions and the actual conditions in the field. Ideally, Guidance and Counseling services, particularly in the area of social guidance, should help students develop interpersonal communication skills through engaging, interactive activities that are appropriate to the developmental characteristics of adolescents. Students are expected to demonstrate openness in communication, empathy toward others, supportive attitudes, positive thinking, and respect for each individual in social interactions (Annisa & Pratiwi, 2023). However, in reality, students' interpersonal communication skills remain suboptimal, and the implementation of Guidance and Counseling services in schools is still dominated by conventional methods with limited use of media. Consequently, the services provided have not fully succeeded in creating active, participatory, and meaningful learning experiences for students.

If this condition is not addressed promptly, students may experience various difficulties in their social lives, such as difficulty expressing their opinions, limited ability to cooperate in groups, inadequate conflict-resolution skills, and limited ability to build positive relationships with their surrounding environment (Salim et al., 2025). In the long term, this condition may affect students' social development, reduce their engagement in learning activities, and hinder their ability to adapt to various social situations both at school and in society (Sari & Hidayati, 2020). Integrating games into Guidance and Counseling services can encourage students to participate actively, making the service process more engaging and less monotonous. Through games, students have opportunities to interact, exchange information, cooperate, and demonstrate various communication behaviors that arise naturally. Such situations enable students to practice conveying messages, listening, understanding others' perspectives, and building positive interpersonal relationships.

The media developed in this study is a challenge-based *Match The Cups* game. In this game, students complete challenge cards related to interpersonal communication to obtain cups, which are then used to arrange patterns according to the given examples. Through these activities, students are encouraged to discuss, express their opinions, listen to others, cooperate, and respect the opinions of group members, allowing the aspects of interpersonal communication to be practiced directly.

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Based on the interpersonal communication problems identified among students and the needs analysis indicating the limited availability of engaging, interactive, and developmentally appropriate Guidance and Counseling media for junior high school students, there is a need to develop a Guidance and Counseling service medium that can facilitate students in practicing communication directly through active and enjoyable activities. The developed media is expected not only to increase students' engagement in Guidance and Counseling services but also to provide learning experiences that help develop their interpersonal communication skills.

Therefore, the researcher is interested in conducting a development study entitled "Development of a Challenge-Based *Match The Cups* Game to Train the Interpersonal Communication Skills of Students at SMP Muhammadiyah 7 Medan." This study is expected to produce a valid, practical, and feasible game medium for use in Guidance and Counseling services, as well as serve as an innovative alternative Guidance and Counseling medium to assist school counselors in developing students' interpersonal communication skills.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed the Research and Development (R&D) method, which aims to produce a product through a systematic development process and assess its feasibility before broader implementation (Krispaty *et al*., 2025). Research and Development (R&D) is a research method designed to produce a particular product through stages of design, development, validation, and product testing to ensure that the developed product meets feasibility criteria and can be used in accordance with the research objectives (Dewi *et al.*, 2024)

The development model used in this study was the 4D model, developed by Silvasailam Thiagarajan, Dorothy S. Semmel, and Melvyn I. Semmel. This model consists of four stages: Define, Design, Develop, and Disseminate (Slamet, 2022). However, this study was conducted only up to the Develop stage because the research focused on producing a product that is feasible and practical for use.

The subjects of this study consisted of 8 seventh-grade students at SMP Muhammadiyah 7 Medan. The study aimed to develop the *Match The Cups* game as a medium for group guidance services to train students' interpersonal communication skills. The object of the study was the *Match The Cups* game media developed to train students' interpersonal communication skills. The data consisted of qualitative and quantitative data. Data were collected through interviews and questionnaires**.** Interviews were conducted to obtain preliminary information regarding media needs and students' interpersonal communication problems. Questionnaires were used to obtain

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feasibility assessments from media experts, material feasibility assessments from material experts, practicality assessments from the school counselor, and students' responses to the developed media.

The research procedure consisted of several stages. In the Define stage, the researcher conducted a needs analysis through semi-structured interviews with the school counselor and students to identify interpersonal communication problems and the need for appropriate service media. In the Design stage, the researcher designed the *Match The Cups* game media according to the objectives of training students' interpersonal communication skills.

In the Develop stage, the designed *Match The Cups* game was developed into a tangible product, validated by media experts and Guidance and Counseling material experts, and revised based on the suggestions provided by the validators. Subsequently, a product trial was conducted. The *Match The Cups* game was introduced to the school counselor as an interactive and innovative alternative medium for group guidance services. The validity and practicality data were then analyzed based on the scores obtained. The formula used to analyze the expert assessment results was as follows:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

Where:
$P =$ percentage score
$F =$ score obtained
$N =$ maximum possible score

Table 1. Validity and Practicality Criteria

No.	Score Range (%)	Interpretation
1	81%–100%	Very Valid / Very Practical
2	61%–80%	Valid / Practical
3	41%–60%	Moderately Valid / Moderately Practical
4	21%–40%	Invalid / Impractical
5	0%–20%	Highly Invalid / Highly Impractical

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

This research was conducted with seventh-grade students at SMP Muhammadiyah 7

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Medan, located at Jl. Pelita II No. 3–5 Medan, Sidorame Barat I, Medan Perjuangan District, Medan City, North Sumatra 20236. The final product of this Research and Development (R&D) study is a challenge-based *Match The Cups* game media, developed as an interactive medium to support Guidance and Counseling services in training students' interpersonal communication skills.

Define Stage

The Define stage is the initial stage of the 4D development model, which aims to identify and analyze needs before developing a product (Montori & Jacobus, 2025). At this stage, the researcher conducted an initial analysis to obtain information regarding the problems occurring in the field and the need for the product to be developed.

Based on interviews with the Guidance and Counseling teacher and observations at SMP Muhammadiyah 7 Medan, particularly in class VII-1, students' interpersonal communication skills still need to be developed. The problems were indicated by students' lack of confidence in expressing their opinions, limited ability to listen to and understand others, difficulties in cooperating and providing support to peers, limited active participation in building positive interactions, and difficulties in respecting peers' opinions when differences of opinion occurred during group activities. In daily interactions, some students were also found to interrupt conversations, show limited respect for their peers' opinions, and experience difficulties in building positive social relationships. These conditions have the potential to cause miscommunication and hinder students' social interactions within the school environment.

Based on the results of the interpersonal communication questionnaire administered to 26 seventh-grade students in class VII-1, the researcher identified 8 students whose interpersonal communication skills were categorized as low. These eight students were subsequently selected as the research subjects because they were considered to require further development of their interpersonal communication skills. The eight students were then provided with group guidance services using the challenge-based *Match The Cups* game media to train their interpersonal communication skills through activities involving communication, cooperation, expressing opinions, and giving and receiving information throughout the game. The results of the needs analysis of these eight students are presented below:

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Table 2. Student Needs Survey Results (SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree)

No.	Dimension	Indicator	Response Distribution (%)
1	Openness	Ability to express opinions	SA 12.5; A 12.5; N 12.5; D 37.5; SD 25
		Willingness to openly receive and share information	SA 12.5; A 12.5; N 25; D 25; SD 25
		Ability to establish relationships with peers	SA 12.5; A 12.5; N 12.5; D 25; SD 37.5
		Willingness to exchange information in communication	SA 12.5; A 25; N 12.5; D 25; SD 25
2	Empathy	Ability to actively listen to peers	SA 12.5; A 12.5; N 12.5; D 37.5; SD 25
		Ability to understand peers' feelings	SA 12.5; A 12.5; N 25; D 25; SD 25
		Ability to understand peers' perspectives	SA 12.5; A 25; N 12.5; D 25; SD 25
		Ability to show concern for peers	SA 12.5; A 12.5; N 12.5; D 25; SD 37.5
3	Supportiveness	Ability to respect peers' opinions	SA 12.5; A 12.5; N 12.5; D 37.5; SD 25
		Ability to provide support to peers	SA 12.5; A 25; N 12.5; D 25; SD 25
		Ability to accept differences of opinion without judging	SA 12.5; A 12.5; N 25; D 25; SD 25
		Ability to give peers an opportunity to speak	SA 12.5; A 12.5; N 12.5; D 25; SD 37.5
4	Positiveness	Ability to show confidence when communicating	SA 12.5; A 12.5; N 12.5; D 37.5; SD 25

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No.	Dimension	Indicator	Response Distribution (%)
		Ability to build positive interactions	SA 12.5; A 25; N 12.5; D 25; SD 25
		Ability to create a pleasant communication atmosphere	SA 12.5; A 12.5; N 25; D 25; SD 25
5	Equality	Ability to respect differences of opinion	SA 12.5; A 12.5; N 12.5; D 37.5; SD 25
		Ability to cooperate and treat peers equally	SA 12.5; A 12.5; N 12.5; D 12.5; SD 50

Based on the table above, in the aspect of openness, the indicator of the ability to express opinions shows that 37.5% of students disagreed and 25% strongly disagreed with their ability to express opinions. Meanwhile, 12.5% of students strongly agreed, 12.5% agreed, and 12.5% were neutral. For the indicator of willingness to openly receive and share information, 25% of students disagreed and 25% strongly disagreed, while 12.5% strongly agreed, 12.5% agreed, and 25% were neutral. Furthermore, for the indicator of the ability to establish relationships with peers, 25% of students disagreed and 37.5% strongly disagreed, while 12.5% strongly agreed, 12.5% agreed, and 12.5% were neutral. For the indicator of willingness to exchange information during communication, 25% of students disagreed and 25% strongly disagreed, while 12.5% strongly agreed, 25% agreed, and 12.5% were neutral.

In the aspect of empathy, the indicator of the ability to actively listen to peers shows that 37.5% of students disagreed and 25% strongly disagreed, while 12.5% strongly agreed, 12.5% agreed, and 12.5% were neutral. For the indicator of the ability to understand peers' feelings, 25% of students disagreed and 25% strongly disagreed, while 12.5% strongly agreed, 12.5% agreed, and 25% were neutral. Furthermore, for the indicator of the ability to understand peers' perspectives, 25% of students disagreed and 25% strongly disagreed, while 12.5% strongly agreed, 25% agreed, and 12.5% were neutral. For the indicator of the ability to show concern for peers, 25% of students disagreed and 37.5% strongly disagreed, while 12.5% strongly agreed, 12.5% agreed, and 12.5% were neutral.

In the aspect of supportiveness, the indicator of the ability to respect peers' opinions shows that 37.5% of students disagreed and 25% strongly disagreed, while 12.5% strongly agreed, 12.5% agreed, and 12.5% were neutral. For the indicator of the ability to provide support to peers,

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25% of students disagreed and 25% strongly disagreed, while 12.5% strongly agreed, 25% agreed, and 12.5% were neutral. Furthermore, for the indicator of the ability to accept differences of opinion without judging, 25% of students disagreed and 25% strongly disagreed, while 12.5% strongly agreed, 12.5% agreed, and 25% were neutral. For the indicator of the ability to give peers an opportunity to speak, 25% of students disagreed and 37.5% strongly disagreed, while 12.5% strongly agreed, 12.5% agreed, and 12.5% were neutral.

In the aspect of positiveness, the indicator of the ability to show confidence when communicating shows that 37.5% of students disagreed and 25% strongly disagreed, while 12.5% strongly agreed, 12.5% agreed, and 12.5% were neutral. For the indicator of the ability to build positive interactions, 25% of students disagreed and 25% strongly disagreed, while 12.5% strongly agreed, 25% agreed, and 12.5% were neutral. Furthermore, for the indicator of the ability to create a pleasant communication atmosphere, 25% of students disagreed and 25% strongly disagreed, while 12.5% strongly agreed, 12.5% agreed, and 25% were neutral.

In the aspect of equality, the indicator of the ability to respect differences of opinion shows that 37.5% of students disagreed and 25% strongly disagreed, while 12.5% strongly agreed, 12.5% agreed, and 12.5% were neutral. For the indicator of the ability to cooperate and treat peers equally, 12.5% of students disagreed and 50% strongly disagreed, while 12.5% strongly agreed, 12.5% agreed, and 12.5% were neutral.

Based on the results of the student needs analysis, it can be seen that the interpersonal communication skills of the seventh-grade students are not yet optimal. This is reflected in the predominance of Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) responses across most indicators. The problems identified include difficulties in expressing opinions, listening to and understanding peers, providing support, building positive interactions, cooperating, and respecting differences of opinion. These conditions indicate that students still experience difficulties in meeting the characteristics of effective interpersonal communication proposed by DeVito, namely openness, empathy, supportiveness, positiveness, and equality. Therefore, the results of the analysis indicate that these five aspects still need to be developed so that students can establish more effective communication and interpersonal relationships with their peers.

In addition to identifying students' interpersonal communication problems, the researcher also conducted a media needs analysis to determine the characteristics of media expected in guidance and counseling services. The media needs analysis was conducted to obtain an overview of the type, form, and characteristics of media that are appropriate to students' needs in practicing interpersonal communication. The results of this analysis were used as a basis for

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developing the challenge-based Match the Cups game so that the resulting product would meet users' needs and be utilized optimally in the implementation of guidance and counseling services. The results of the media needs analysis are presented in the following table:

Table 3. Learning Media Needs Questionnaire Results for Junior High School Students (SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree)

No.	Dimension	Indicator	Response Distribution (%)
1	Media Needs	Interactive and engaging learning media are needed in the learning process	SA 37.5; A 42.5; N 12.5; D 5.0; SD 2.5
2	Learner Characteristics	Experience-based learning media facilitate students' understanding of the material	SA 40.0; A 37.5; N 12.5; D 7.5; SD 2.5
3	Media Availability	School facilities support the use of varied learning media	SA 32.5; A 42.5; N 15.0; D 7.5; SD 2.5
4	Learning Motivation	Engaging learning media can increase students' learning motivation	SA 45.0; A 35.0; N 12.5; D 5.0; SD 2.5
5	Learning Effectiveness	Learning media help students understand the service material	SA 42.5; A 37.5; N 12.5; D 5.0; SD 2.5

For the need for interactive and engaging media, 37.5% of respondents strongly agreed, 42.5% agreed, 12.5% were neutral, 5% disagreed, and 2.5% strongly disagreed. For experience-based or hands-on learning media, 40% of respondents strongly agreed, 37.5% agreed, 12.5% were neutral, 7.5% disagreed, and 2.5% strongly disagreed. Regarding the availability of school facilities, 32.5% of respondents strongly agreed, 42.5% agreed, 15% were neutral, 7.5% disagreed, and 2.5% strongly disagreed. For the motivational value of engaging media, 45% of respondents strongly agreed, 35% agreed, 12.5% were neutral, 5% disagreed, and 2.5% strongly disagreed. Regarding the effectiveness of learning media in supporting material understanding, 42.5% of respondents strongly agreed, 37.5% agreed, 12.5% were neutral, 5% disagreed, and 2.5% strongly disagreed. The media needs analysis indicated that students need an interactive, engaging, and experience-based product that can involve them actively in guidance and counseling activities. The findings also showed that the available school facilities can support the use of varied media. These findings informed the selection of the Match The Cups game and the design of its challenge-

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based activities to provide students with direct and enjoyable experiences in practicing interpersonal communication.

Design Stage

The design stage is the product planning stage, which is developed based on the needs analysis conducted in the define stage. This stage aims to produce an initial design or prototype of the challenge-based Match The Cups game to be used in group guidance services (Rahmi & Baharuddin, 2021) At this stage, the researcher began translating the results of the needs analysis into a product design. The entire design process was carried out systematically by considering the characteristics of junior high school students, the objectives of group guidance services, the material to be delivered, and the interpersonal communication skills that were the focus of the study. The design stage was not only focused on the visual appearance of the media but also on developing the game mechanism, completing the components, and determining the procedures for using the media so that it could be effectively implemented in group guidance services.

The media design began with developing the basic concept of the game. The game concept was designed based on the needs analysis, which indicated that students needed media that could create a more active, engaging, and interactive service environment while providing opportunities for students to participate directly in each activity. Therefore, the researcher developed the challenge-based Match The Cups game by combining challenge activities, cup arrangement, group cooperation, and direct communication during the game. The game concept was designed to provide each student with opportunities to express opinions, listen to information from peers, provide responses, cooperate, and support one another in completing each stage of the game so that the objectives of the group guidance service could be achieved effectively.

After determining the game concept, the researcher proceeded to design all the components required for the media. Each component was designed according to its function and role in supporting the implementation of the game. The components developed included a game manual as a guide for school counselors, game cups as the main components used to arrange the patterns, challenge cards as a means of strengthening interpersonal communication activities and obtaining cups, pattern cards as references for arranging the cups, star points as a form of reward for groups that successfully completed the challenges, and a storage box for keeping all media components organized, safe, and easy to carry during guidance and counseling services.

In addition to designing the concept and components, the researcher also determined the materials and equipment required to produce the product. The materials were selected by

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considering safety, durability, practicality, and ease of use so that the media could be used repeatedly in group guidance activities. The materials included plastic cups, art carton paper, sticker paper, laminating sheets, adhesive, and a storage box. Meanwhile, the equipment consisted of a laptop or computer, a design application, a laminating machine, scissors, and a ruler, which were used to design, print, cut, and complete each component of the media.

The next stage involved producing the media according to the design that had been developed. This process was carried out systematically, beginning with designing the visual elements of each media component, preparing the game manual, developing the question cards, challenge cards, and pattern cards, designing the star points, adding identification labels to the cups, printing, laminating, and arranging all components inside the storage box. The entire production process referred to the predetermined game concept so that each component had an interconnected function and supported the implementation of the game as an integrated medium.

Based on the activities carried out during the design stage, Prototype I of the challenge-based Match The Cups game was produced. Prototype I represents the initial physical form of the product developed based on the concepts, components, materials, equipment, and production procedures that had been planned. The prototype consisted of a game manual, game cups, challenge cards, pattern cards, star points, and a storage box designed as an integrated media package. Each component had a complementary function in supporting the implementation of group guidance services to train students' interpersonal communication skills. The Prototype I produced at this stage was then prepared to enter the develop stage to obtain assessments, feedback, and suggestions from material and media experts. The results of the expert evaluation were subsequently used as a basis for revision and improvement to produce a valid, practical, and feasible final product for use in guidance and counseling services.

Develop Stage

At this stage, the initial product that had been developed was reviewed, followed by a process of product testing, revision, and validation (Lukman *et al.*, 2021). The developed *Match The Cups* game-based media using a *challenge* approach was subsequently validated by a team of validators consisting of media and material experts. In addition, assessments also involved responses from Guidance and Counseling teachers and students as users of the media. The validation process was conducted by administering questionnaires covering several assessment aspects. The assessment results were then analyzed to determine the feasibility and practicality

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of the developed media.

a. Material Expert

The *Match The Cups* game-based media was validated by a material expert on May 18, 2026. The validation was conducted to assess the content feasibility, material clarity, feasibility, and practicality of the *Match The Cups* game-based media and its user guide. The results of the material expert validation are presented in the following table.

Table 4. Results of Material Expert Validation

Score Obtained	Maximum Score	Percentage	Criteria
80	100	80%	Valid

Based on the material expert's assessment of the *Match The Cups* game-based media and its user guide, the obtained score was 80 out of a maximum score of 100. The assessment resulted in a percentage of 80%. Based on the assessment criteria, this percentage falls into the feasible category, with a range of 62%–81%. The assessment was based on 20 statements using a 5-point Likert scale. Therefore, the *Match The Cups* game-based media using a *challenge* approach and its user guide were considered feasible for use. However, the material expert provided several suggestions for improvement, including adjusting the font size to make the text more comfortable to read and less monotonous, as well as adding images to each step of the game to make the implementation procedures clearer and easier to understand.

Table 5. Product Revisions Based on Material Expert Suggestions

Validator Recommendation	Before Revision	After Revision
Adjust the font size to make the text more comfortable to read and prevent monotony.		

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Validator Recommendation	Before Revision	After Revision
Add images to the game implementation steps.		

After the product was revised based on the material expert's suggestions, a second validation was conducted. The revised product obtained a score of 86%, indicating an improvement in the quality of the developed media. The revisions improved the presentation of the material, the clarity of the game procedures, and the appropriateness of the language used. The results of the material expert validation after revision are presented in the following table.

Table 6. Results of Revised Material Expert Validation

Score Obtained	Maximum Score	Percentage	Criteria
86	100	86%	Very Valid

The results show that the percentage increased from 80% in the first validation to 86% after revision. Thus, based on the material expert's assessment, the revised *Match The Cups* game-based media using a *challenge* approach and its user guide were categorized as highly feasible for use in guidance and counseling services.

b. Media Expert

The *Match The Cups* game-based media using a *challenge* approach was validated by a media expert on May 18, 2026. The validation was conducted in several stages to determine the feasibility of the media and to obtain feedback as a basis for improving the product before it was

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implemented in Guidance and Counseling services. In the first validation stage, the media expert's assessment showed that the *Match The Cups* game-based media obtained a feasibility percentage of 70.67%, which was categorized as feasible. This result was based on the validator's assessment of 15 statements using a 5-point Likert scale. The results indicated that the media had met the initial feasibility criteria but still required several improvements to optimize its quality.

Table 7. Results of Media Expert Validation Stage I

Score Obtained	Maximum Score	Percentage	Criteria
53	75	70.67%	Valid

After receiving feedback from the media expert, the researcher revised several components of the media. The revisions focused on the appearance, design, completeness of components, and clarity of media use.

Table 8. Product Revisions Based on Media Expert Recommendations

Validator Recommendation	Before Revision	After Revision
The media materials should be made from stronger materials to improve durability and allow repeated use.		
The letters or codes on the cups should be made more attractive, creative, and easily recognizable by students.		

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The printing quality of the challenge cards should be improved so that the text and images are clearer.		
The printing quality of the user guide should be improved because the previous print was blurry.		
A special box should be provided for storing the challenge cards to make them more organized and easier to use.	There was no separate storage box for the challenge cards.	 .
A stronger and more attractive storage box should be provided to keep the media organized and make it easier to carry and store.	The storage box was made of plain cardboard without additional design elements.	

After the revisions based on the first validation stage, the *Match The Cups* game-based media using a *challenge* approach was revalidated by the media expert. The second validation stage aimed to determine the feasibility of the media after improvements had been made to the quality of the cup materials and other components. The media expert's assessment in the second stage resulted in a score of 87 out of a maximum score of 100, corresponding to a percentage of

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87%. This assessment was based on 20 statements using a 5-point Likert scale. Although the media achieved a very good result, the validator recommended adding labels or descriptions to each component inside the media storage box so that each item could be identified more easily and the components could be properly organized after use. The results of the second-stage validation are presented in the following table.

Table 9. Results of Media Expert Validation Stage II

Score Obtained	Maximum Score	Percentage	Criteria
87	100	87%	Very Valid

Based on the feedback from the second validation stage, the researcher revised the media by adding labels to each section of the storage box. The labels were added to help Guidance and Counseling teachers and students identify, retrieve, and return each media component to its appropriate storage location. The results of the revision are presented in the following table.

Table 10. Product Revision Based on Media Expert Recommendations at Stage II

Validator Recommendation	Before Revision	After Revision
Add labels or descriptions to each component in the media storage box.		

After the revisions based on the second validation stage, the *Match The Cups* game-based media using a *challenge* approach and its user guide were revalidated by the media expert. The third validation stage aimed to ensure that all revisions had been implemented according to the validator's recommendations and that the media had met the required feasibility criteria.

Based on the media expert's assessment, the *Match The Cups* game-based media using a *challenge* approach and its user guide obtained a feasibility percentage of 89%, which was categorized as highly feasible. The results indicated that the media met the required criteria in terms of appearance, technical quality, feasibility, and practicality. At this stage, the validator no

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longer provided any further recommendations or revisions. Therefore, the *Match The Cups* game-based media using a *challenge* approach and its user guide were considered highly feasible and ready for the user trial stage.

c. Practitioner/Guidance and Counseling Teacher

The *Match The Cups* game-based media using a *challenge* approach and its user guide were also evaluated by a practitioner/Guidance and Counseling (GC) teacher to determine the practicality of the media in the implementation of group guidance services. The assessment was conducted by the GC teacher as the user of the media. The results of the practitioner/GC teacher's assessment are presented below.

Table 11. Results of the GC Teacher Response Questionnaire

Score Obtained	Maximum Score	Percentage	Criteria
101	120	84.17%	Very Practical

Based on the assessment by the practitioner/GC teacher, the *Match The Cups* game-based media using a *challenge* approach obtained a score of 101 out of a maximum score of 120, resulting in a percentage of 84.17%. This result was based on the assessment of 24 statements using a 5-point Likert scale. Based on the assessment criteria proposed the percentage falls within the highly practical category, with a range of 81%–100%. Therefore, the developed *Match The Cups* game-based media using a *challenge* approach was considered highly practical for use and did not require further revision.

Based on the review of the *Match The Cups* game-based media using a *challenge* approach and its user guide, the GC teacher provided the following comments:

1. The *Match The Cups* game-based media using a *challenge* approach is well designed and can support the implementation of group guidance services in developing students' interpersonal communication skills.
2. The media should continue to be developed through creativity and innovation so that it can serve as an engaging and beneficial Guidance and Counseling medium for students.

d. Student User Response

The *Match The Cups* game-based media using a *challenge* approach and its user guide were subsequently tested with 8 students as prospective users to determine the practicality of the media from the users' perspective. The results of the student response assessment are presented

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in Table 12.

Table 12. Results of the Student Response Questionnaire

Score Obtained	Maximum Score	Percentage	Criteria
866	960	90.21%	Very Practical

Based on the responses of 8 students to the *Match The Cups* game-based media using a *challenge* approach and its user guide, the obtained score was 866 out of a maximum score of 960. The assessment was based on 24 statements using a 5-point Likert scale.The results showed an average percentage of 90.21%. Based on the assessment criteria, this percentage falls within the highly practical category, with a range of 81%–100%. Therefore, the *Match The Cups* game-based media using a *challenge* approach and its user guide were considered highly practical for use in group guidance services to develop students' interpersonal communication skills

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1. Discussion

The study began with a needs analysis aimed at identifying students' interpersonal communication conditions and their needs for media to support group guidance services. Based on interviews with the guidance and counseling teacher and the needs-analysis questionnaire, several communication difficulties were identified, including low confidence in expressing opinions, limited ability to listen to and understand peers' messages and perspectives, limited cooperation and peer support, low participation in positive interactions, and limited opportunities for peers to express their opinions. These findings indicate that students' interpersonal communication skills still need to be developed through activities that provide opportunities for direct interaction.

These findings are consistent with DeVito's theory of interpersonal communication, which identifies five characteristics of effective interpersonal communication: openness, empathy, supportiveness, positiveness, and equality. These five aspects are interrelated in establishing effective interpersonal relationships. When one or more aspects are not optimally developed, communication may be hindered. Therefore, the difficulties identified in the needs analysis correspond to the interpersonal communication aspects proposed by DeVito.

The development of the Match The Cups game was based on the concept of game-based learning media. According to Seels and Glasgow in Arsyad (2023), games are a form of traditional media that use play activities as a means of providing learning experiences. Through games, students do not merely receive information but actively participate in activities involving rules, objectives, and challenges. Based on this classification, Match The Cups can be categorized as

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traditional game-based media because it uses physical components such as cups, pattern cards, challenge cards, point stars, and a guidebook without requiring digital devices. These characteristics provide students with opportunities to interact, cooperate, communicate information, listen to others, and respond during the game.

To develop interpersonal communication skills, Match The Cups applies repeated practice through several game rounds. In each round, students repeat communication activities such as answering challenges, conveying information, listening to instructions, responding to peers, cooperating, and arranging the cups according to the given pattern. Repetition allows students to practice the same communication skills again and improve their performance based on previous experiences. Thus, each round functions not only as a stage of the game but also as an opportunity to strengthen interpersonal communication skills.

This repeated practice is supported by Edward L. Thorndike's behaviorist learning theory, particularly the Law of Exercise. Thorndike stated that the connection between stimulus and response becomes stronger when a behavior is repeatedly practiced or used. In this study, communication activities performed in each round serve as opportunities for repeated practice. Therefore, the implementation of several rounds in Match The Cups provides students with opportunities to repeatedly practice and strengthen their interpersonal communication skills through direct experience.

The application of DeVito's interpersonal communication theory can be observed throughout the stages of the game. In the first stage, students answer challenge cards to obtain cups. This activity encourages students to express their answers, opinions, and thoughts orally in front of group members and therefore relates to openness. In the following stage, students use the cups they have obtained to complete the assigned task, requiring them to communicate and cooperate with group members.

In the next stage, students receive a pattern card and discuss how to arrange the cups according to the given pattern. Students are required to express their ideas, listen to peers' opinions, and understand different perspectives before determining how to complete the task. This activity is related to empathy because students are encouraged to listen to and understand the perspectives of others. Students then work together to arrange the cups according to the pattern within a specified time. This activity requires coordination, communication, assistance, and mutual support among group members. Therefore, it is related to supportiveness, as students are encouraged to help and support one another in achieving the group's goal.

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The time limit in each round provides a challenge that encourages students to remain actively involved and maintain positive interactions while completing the task. Students are also encouraged to remain engaged when difficulties occur rather than immediately giving up. This activity is related to positiveness because students practice maintaining active participation and positive interaction during the game. Finally, groups that successfully complete the pattern within the specified time receive a star as a point. The activity provides opportunities for each member to contribute, express opinions, listen to others, and participate in completing the task. The distribution and rotation of roles also provide equal opportunities for students to participate. Therefore, this stage is related to equality, as every group member is given space to contribute to the completion of the game.

These activities are repeated in subsequent rounds with different challenges and patterns. The repetition of answering challenges, communicating information, listening, arranging cups, cooperating, and obtaining points represents the application of repeated practice. Through this process, students have opportunities to reuse the communication skills practiced in previous rounds and improve weaknesses identified during the game. Thus, the five aspects of interpersonal communication proposed by DeVito are integrated into the game mechanism rather than merely presented as theoretical indicators.

The validation results showed that Match The Cups met the criteria for use as a supporting medium in group guidance services. The quality of the developed media can be viewed from the alignment among the development objectives, content, theoretical foundation, game mechanism, and media components. According to Nieveen, the quality of a developed product can be examined through validity, practicality, and effectiveness. In terms of validity, a product should demonstrate content validity and construct validity. Content validity concerns the consistency of the product with its objectives, theoretical foundation, and identified needs, whereas construct validity concerns the coherence among the components of the product in supporting its intended objectives.

The content validity of Match The Cups is reflected in the alignment between the game activities and the objective of developing students' interpersonal communication skills. The media does not merely involve arranging cups; each stage requires students to engage in communication activities. When students discuss challenge cards, they express and listen to opinions. When they receive pattern cards, they discuss how to complete the task. During cup arrangement, they cooperate, provide directions, listen to others, and support group members. Therefore, the

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activities contained in the media are directly related to the interpersonal communication skills targeted in the study.

The content validity is further supported by the application of DeVito's five interpersonal communication aspects. Openness is practiced when students express their opinions during challenge discussions. Empathy is developed when students listen to and understand their peers' perspectives. Supportiveness is practiced through helping and cooperating with group members. Positiveness is encouraged through participation in challenges and efforts to complete tasks within the specified time. Equality is implemented by providing opportunities for each group member to express opinions and contribute to the activity. The alignment between the theoretical framework and the activities contained in the media demonstrates that the product has a clear theoretical foundation.

Construct validity is reflected in the coherence among the objectives, components, rules, and game mechanisms. Each component of Match The Cups has a specific function that is connected to the other components. Challenge cards initiate communication activities, correct responses lead to obtaining cups, and the cups are then used to complete the patterns provided on the pattern cards. Successful completion of the task is rewarded with a star. This sequence demonstrates that the components are not designed independently but function as an integrated system supporting the development objectives.

The media also corresponds to the characteristics and needs of students in group guidance services. Match The Cups uses simple physical components that can be directly used in group activities and does not require digital devices, electricity, or additional technological equipment. The game also provides opportunities for direct interaction among students. This characteristic corresponds to the needs identified during the needs analysis, particularly students' difficulties in expressing opinions, listening, cooperating, providing support, maintaining positive interactions, and providing equal opportunities for peers.

These findings are consistent with (Utami & Prasetiawan, 2023) who emphasized that game-based media in group guidance services should be aligned with the objectives of the service, learning content, student characteristics, and media components. In this study, such alignment can be seen in the relationship among students' needs, the objective of developing interpersonal communication, game activities, and media components. Therefore, the very feasible validation result reflects the fulfillment of content and construct alignment rather than merely a high validator score.

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In addition to feasibility, Match The Cups demonstrated a high level of practicality. Practicality in this study refers not only to ease of use but also to the extent to which the media can be implemented by guidance and counseling teachers and students without significant difficulties. Nieveen (in Istiqomah & Kurniasari, 2020) distinguishes between expected practicality and actual practicality. Expected practicality refers to the extent to which a product is considered usable, while actual practicality is demonstrated through its implementation by users in practice.

The actual practicality of Match The Cups can be seen from the experience of teachers and students during implementation. For guidance and counseling teachers, the guidebook provides the objectives, components, rules, and procedures of the game systematically, allowing teachers to understand and implement the media without having to develop the game mechanism themselves. For students, practicality is reflected in the clear sequence of activities and the ease of following the game. The game does not require complex technological equipment and can be implemented directly after the components are prepared.

The media is also practical in terms of storage and mobility because all components can be stored in the provided storage box. This makes the media easier to prepare, transport, and reuse in different group guidance activities. Student responses also indicated positive perceptions regarding interest, ease of use, clarity, usefulness, comfort, and motivation. These responses suggest that the media is not only technically usable but also acceptable and enjoyable for students.

Thus, Match The Cups can be considered highly practical for both teachers and students. For teachers, the media provides clear instructions, complete components, systematic procedures, and simple implementation. For students, the media is easy to understand, enjoyable, and provides opportunities for active participation. This finding is consistent with (Lestari & Wibowo, 2022) who emphasized the importance of usability in guidance and counseling media so that the media can support service implementation without creating additional operational difficulties for teachers.

Match The Cups also has several strengths. Its main strength is the integration of game activities with direct interpersonal communication practice. Students do not merely learn about interpersonal communication theoretically but participate in activities that require them to express opinions, listen, respond, cooperate, and interact with group members. The challenge system, cup arrangement, and point system also contribute to students' engagement and active participation.

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Another strength is the simplicity and completeness of the media components. Match The Cups consists of cups, challenge cards, pattern cards, point stars, a guidebook, and a storage box. The media does not require digital devices, electricity, or additional technological facilities, allowing it to be used flexibly in group guidance services. The role distribution and role rotation also provide students with opportunities to experience different communication activities and support the implementation of repeated practice.

However, the media also has several limitations. Its implementation requires effective time management because each round consists of several activities, including answering challenge cards, discussing, obtaining cups, communicating pattern information, arranging cups, and awarding points. In addition, the effectiveness of the game process depends on the participation of all group members. Students with lower communication skills may require additional guidance from the counseling teacher when expressing opinions, understanding information, or cooperating with peers.

The study also has limitations in terms of the scope of its trial. The media was tested with students in the school and group context involved in the study; therefore, the findings cannot yet be generalized to all junior high school students with different characteristics. Furthermore, this study focused primarily on the development, feasibility, and practicality of the media. Therefore, the long-term effectiveness of Match The Cups in improving interpersonal communication has not yet been fully established. Future research could involve larger samples, broader implementation contexts, longer intervention periods, and pretest-posttest designs to examine its effectiveness more comprehensively.

Overall, the findings indicate that Match The Cups is a feasible and practical game-based medium for supporting group guidance services aimed at developing students' interpersonal communication skills. Its main strengths lie in direct student involvement, enjoyable game activities, repeated communication practice, and ease of use. Nevertheless, successful implementation still requires appropriate time management and guidance from the counseling teacher. Further development and effectiveness testing are therefore recommended to strengthen the evidence regarding its broader application.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and development of the challenge-based Match The Cups game as a group guidance medium for training students' interpersonal communication skills, it can be concluded that:

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1. The needs analysis showed that students require engaging, interactive media that provide direct experiences in practicing interpersonal communication. The identified problems included difficulties in expressing opinions, listening to and understanding peers, and cooperating in groups.
2. The initial prototype of the challenge-based Match The Cups game was developed using the 4D model, consisting of Define, Design, Develop, and Disseminate. The media includes colored cups, challenge cards, pattern cards, game rules, and a user guide designed to facilitate communication, active listening, and cooperation.
3. Expert validation showed that the media was categorized as highly feasible, while practicality testing by the school counselor and students indicated that the media was highly practical. Therefore, the challenge-based Match The Cups game is feasible and practical for use in group guidance services to train students' interpersonal communication skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. For school counselors, the challenge-based Match The Cups game can be used as an alternative medium in group guidance services to help develop students' interpersonal communication skills.
2. For schools, it is recommended to support the use of innovative media in guidance and counseling services to make the services more engaging and responsive to students' needs.
3. For future researchers, the Match The Cups game can be further developed by conducting effectiveness testing and involving a wider range of participants to examine its broader benefits.

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