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Development Of Nature-Based Relaxation Therapy Using Free Flying Birds To Reduce Academic Stress Among Junior High School Students

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Abstract

Academic stress is one of the problems that may be experienced by junior high school students due to academic demands, examination pressure, learning competition, and expectations from their surrounding environment. This condition can affect students' emotional well-being, concentration, motivation, and comfort during the learning process. Therefore, innovation in guidance and counseling services is needed to provide relaxation experiences while supporting students in managing academic pressure. This study aimed to develop a nature relaxation therapy medium using free-fly birds as a supporting medium for group counseling services to help reduce academic stress among junior high school students and to determine the feasibility and practicality of the developed medium. This study employed a Research and Development (R&D) method using the Four-D (4D) development model, consisting of the Define, Design, and Development stages. The trial subjects were eight seventh-grade students of SMP Yayasan Pendidikan Nur Adia who were identified as experiencing academic stress. Data were collected through interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. The data were analyzed descriptively using feasibility and practicality percentages. The results of the needs analysis indicated that students experienced academic stress characterized by academic workload, anxiety before examinations, emotional fatigue, and difficulty concentrating. The media validation by the media expert obtained a score of 95%, categorized as very feasible, while the material expert validation obtained 81%, categorized as very feasible. The practicality test based on the guidance and counseling teacher's response obtained 96%, categorized as very practical, while the students' responses obtained 84%, also categorized as very practical. Therefore, the nature relaxation therapy medium using free fly birds was considered very feasible and very practical as a supporting medium for group counseling

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services to help students manage and reduce academic stress. This medium can serve as an alternative innovation in guidance and counseling services that is engaging, interactive, and based on nature relaxation experiences.

Keywords: *nature relaxation therapy, free fly birds, academic stress, group counseling, guidance and counseling.*

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a strategic role in shaping individuals who are able to think critically, act wisely, and uphold humanitarian values. In addition to developing academic abilities, schools also play a role in shaping students' character through the values of honesty, discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and caring (Siswandi & Putri, 2024: 68). Education also encompasses students' emotional and psychological development (Sihono & Hamami, 2025: 67). Junior high school students are in the early adolescent phase and are vulnerable to stress, particularly due to academic demands.

Academic stress is an individual's perception of learning demands that give rise to negative physical, emotional, mental, and behavioral reactions (Barseli et al., 2020: 75), especially when these demands exceed the individual's abilities (Sholihah et al., 2023: 330).

Symptoms of stress can include sleep disturbances and fatigue (Rahmi et al., 2025: 2021), anxiety, emotional exhaustion, difficulty concentrating, procrastination, and social withdrawal (Mubarok et al., 2025: 10). Contributing factors include low *self-efficacy* and time management, workload, exam pressure, competition, and lack of social support (Hudi et al., 2024: 133; Lie et al., 2024: 194). The emotional changes of adolescence also make individuals more susceptible to stress if they are unable to manage their emotions effectively (Hastuti & Baiti, 2019: 89).

Guidance and Counseling Services play a role in helping students achieve optimal personal, social, learning, and career development (Harahap, 2021: 34). Guidance and Counseling teachers help students understand themselves, recognize their potential, and overcome developmental obstacles (Sihono & Hamami, 2025: 170) by considering the differences in background, abilities, and needs of each student (Susanto & Yohana, 2025: 7). One service that can help overcome academic stress is group counseling, which generally involves 4–8 students to discuss problems, develop personal skills, share experiences, and obtain social support (Hayati, 2023: 120).

Based on the results of observations and interviews with the Guidance and Counseling Teacher, namely Mr. MK on May 22, 2026 at the Nur Adia Education Foundation, the problem of academic stress is triggered by piling up assignments, exam preparation, pressure to achieve, expectations of parents and teachers, and unstable learning motivation. Prolonged stress can reduce students' concentration, motivation, achievement, and mental health (Sukaesi et al., 2025: 9). This condition shows the need for innovation in guidance and counseling media that is dynamic, interactive, flexible, and in line with current developments (Zahro et al., 2025: 230;

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Viranti, 2026: 15752; Widyasari & Mukayati, 2021: 125; Isroi et al., 2021: 34; Sucipto et al., 2024: 332; Mulyani et al., 2026: 438).

Researchers then integrated nature relaxation therapy into group counseling. This therapy utilizes elements of the natural environment to calm the nervous system and reduce psychological stress (Waruwu et al., 2019: 317; Setiawati et al., 2024: 18; Savira et al., 2024: 2597). Natural sounds, green open spaces, and visual elements and natural movements have also been shown to support relaxation and psychological recovery (Endah Putri Sari, 2024: 5; Cahyani & Tasalim, 2024: 5; Supradewi, 2024: 226; Azizunnisa, 2025: 293).

Based on this foundation, researchers are interested in developing natural relaxation therapy with *free-flying birds* , using *Sun Conures,* which are brightly colored, highly intelligent, and able to interact with humans (Hardina, 2019: 740). The activity of observing *free-flying birds* in the open air is expected to provide visual and auditory experiences that help distract the mind from stress, reduce anxiety, and manage academic stress (Koswara et al., 2022: 342; Siregar et al., 2022: 433).

So Therefore, researchers are interested in using The research used *the Research and Development* (R&D) method with the 4D model (Judianto, 2024: 39). Through the research entitled "Development of Natural Relaxation Therapy Media with *Free Fly Birds* to Reduce Academic Stress in Junior High School Students," it is hoped that innovative and feasible media will be produced as an alternative for guidance and counseling teachers in helping to improve psychological well-being and reduce academic stress in students.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses the *Research and Development* (R&D) method, which is a systematic procedure for creating new products or improving existing products through a series of design, development, testing, and revisions to meet feasibility criteria. This method aims to produce products that provide solutions to problems identified based on needs analysis (Judianto, 2024: 39). The development model used is *the Four* -D (4D) model developed by *S. Thiagarajan, Dorothy S. Semmel, and Melvyn I. Semmel,* which consists of four stages: *Define*, *Design, Development,* and *Disseminate* (Slamet, 2022: 48).

The implementation of this research is limited to the *Development stage* because the research objective has been achieved at that stage, namely producing media whose feasibility and practicality have been tested. The research subjects involved 8 students of class VII-A of Nur Adia Education Foundation Junior High School who were identified as experiencing academic stress. This research took place at Nur Adia Education Foundation Junior High School located at Jalan Tanjung Selamat No. 100, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra, with the object of research being the *free fly bird media* which was developed as a guidance and counseling media to help reduce the academic stress of junior high school students. The data collected included qualitative data in the form of interview information and documentation, as well as quantitative data in the form of

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numbers from measurements or calculations of variables that were analyzed statistically.

Data collection techniques included interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. Interviews are a direct question-and-answer technique between researchers and respondents to gather initial information about students' academic stress levels. A written questionnaire was used to collect data on student needs analysis, media needs analysis, validation from material experts, validation from media experts, responses from guidance and counseling teachers, and student responses to the developed media. Documentation included written data and images, such as questionnaire results, interview transcripts, and photographs of research activities (Slamet, 2022).

The research procedure was carried out based on three stages of the 4D model, namely *Define, Design, and Development.* In the *Define stage,* researchers identified problems through the distribution of needs analysis questionnaires to determine the academic stress conditions of junior high school students, followed by a media needs questionnaire to obtain information on the characteristics of media needed in guidance and counseling services. In the *Design stage,* researchers compiled a *free fly bird media design* that included a media usage guidebook, *free fly birds,* whistles, boxes, bird food, and bird feeding utensils, as well as compiling an instrument for assessing the feasibility and practicality of the media. In the *Development stage,* the design was realized into a ready-to-use product which was then validated by material experts and media experts to assess its feasibility, where input and suggestions from the validators were used as the basis for revising the product.

After the revision process was completed, the media was piloted on eight grade VII-A students experiencing academic stress through group counseling services. This trial aimed to determine the practicality of the media's use and user responses to the developed product. Furthermore, data from validation by media and material experts, responses from guidance counselors, and student responses were analyzed to determine the media's validity and practicality based on a predetermined percentage formula (Judianto et al., 2024: 57).

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

Information:
P: Percentage of grades obtained
F: Frequency of alternative answers
N: Highest Score

Table 1. Criteria for validity and practicality of media

No	Score (%)	Criteria
1	81% -100%	Very Valid/Practical
2	61% - 80%	Valid/Practical
3	41% - 60%	Quite Valid/Practical
4	21% - 40%	Not Valid/Practical

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5.	0%- 20%	Totally Invalid/Impractical

Source: **(** Judianto et al., 2024: 57).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

free fly bird media was carried out through a research and development procedure using the 4D model, including the definition, design*, and* development stages. Based on these stages, the innovation of the *free fly bird media* was realized as an innovative tool in implementing group counseling services, with the main goal of helping reduce the level of academic stress experienced by junior high school students.

Define Stage

The initial step in this entire series of procedures begins with the definition phase. The main objective of this phase is to identify and formulate the various fundamental provisions required for product creation (Slamet, 2022: 48). To achieve this goal, the researcher conducted an analysis focused on student needs and media specifications through semi-structured interviews with Guidance and Counseling (BK) teachers, which was then combined with the distribution of a student needs questionnaire to eight students from class VII-A of Nur Adia Education Foundation Middle School.

Based on the results of an interview on May 22, 2026, with the Guidance and Counseling Teacher, Mr. MK, academic stress was clearly identified in class VII-A students in the advanced class who were in the stage of adjusting to the environment and tighter learning competition. Symptoms of this stress are evident from boredom due to piles of assignments, anxiety about exams, pressure to achieve from parents, and intense competition between friends that trigger mental fatigue. Triggering factors include internal factors such as low learning motivation, as well as external factors such as academic demands and environmental expectations. Management efforts that have been carried out so far are still conventional, such as *ice-breaking collaboration with subject teachers and individual counseling that has not been optimally supported by innovative media. This finding strengthens the urgency of developing group counseling services based on nature relaxation therapy with free-fly* birds as an effective innovative alternative to reduce academic stress, calm emotions, and increase student learning motivation.

Table 2. Results of the student problem needs analysis questionnaire

No	Dimensions of Analysis	Aspect	Statement	Answer Options	%
1		Schoolwork Burden	I feel that the school assignments given are	Strongly agree	40
				Agree	35

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	Academic stress conditions		quite a lot which makes me stressed	Doubtful	25
				Don't agree	0
				Strongly Disagree	0
2	Psychological Experience	The pressure of facing exams	I feel anxious when facing tests or exams	Strongly agree	40
				Agree	35
				Doubtful	25
				Don't agree	0
				Strongly Disagree	0
3	Emotional Reaction	Emotional condition	I feel tired because of learning activities at school	Strongly agree	40
				Agree	35
				Doubtful	25
				Don't agree	0
				Strongly Disagree	0
4.	Emotional Reaction	Concentrate on studying	I feel stressed so it's hard to focus on studying.	Strongly agree	40
				Agree	35
				Doubtful	25
				Don't agree	0
				Strongly Disagree	0

Based on the results of the analysis of student needs and problems of eight students on May 22, 2026, it was found that academic stress was seen in several aspects. The schoolwork load received a response of strongly agreeing at 88% and agreeing at 12%, while the pressure of facing exams received a response of strongly agreeing at 75% and agreeing at 25%. In the aspect of emotional conditions, 50% of students stated strongly agreeing and 50% agreed that learning activities make them tired. Meanwhile, the aspect of learning concentration received a response of strongly agreeing at 75% and agreeing at 25%. These results indicate that students experience academic stress characterized by the burden of work, anxiety facing exams, emotional exhaustion, and difficulty concentrating. Therefore, interesting guidance and counseling media is needed that is appropriate to the needs of students, so that natural relaxation therapy with free fly birds was developed as a supporting medium for group counseling services.

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Table 3. Results of student media needs analysis

No	Dimensions of Needs	Aspect	Statement	Answer Options	%
1	Media Needs	Media needs in bk services	I need media that helps me understand how to deal with academic stress.	Strongly agree	88
				Agree	12
				Doubtful	0
				Don't agree	0
				Strongly Disagree	0
2	Interest in media	Media display	I like media bk which has an attractive appearance	Strongly agree	50
				Agree	58
				Doubtful	0
				Don't agree	0
				Strongly Disagree	0
3	Desired media characteristics	Interactive media	I prefer to follow counseling services through media that actively involve me.	Strongly agree	75
				Agree	25
				Doubtful	0
				Don't agree	0
				Strongly Disagree	0
4.	Expectations for the media	Suitability to students	I hope that the media will make me more motivated in studying and facing academic pressure.	Strongly agree	50
				Agree	50
				Doubtful	0
				Don't agree	0
				Strongly Disagree	0

Based on the results of the media needs analysis conducted on May 22, 2026, it shows that students have a high need for BK media that is interesting, interactive, and appropriate to the problem of academic stress. As many as 88% of students strongly agree and 12% agree that they need media to help overcome academic stress. In terms of media appearance, 50% strongly agree and 50% agree that they like interesting media. Meanwhile, 75% strongly agree and 25% agree that they want media that actively involves them. In terms of expectations towards media, 50%

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strongly agree and 50% agree that media can help increase learning motivation and deal with academic stress. Thus , natural relaxation therapy with free fly birds is considered appropriate to students' needs as a supporting medium for interesting, interactive, and enjoyable group counseling services.

***Design* Stage**

design stage serves to formulate and compile an initial product design based on the findings of the needs analysis from the previous stage (Slamet, 2022: 48). At this stage, the researcher designed a guidebook for the use of *free-fly bird media* , including procedures for bird care, bird feeding, bird training, and the use of *free-fly bird media* in guidance and counseling. Next, the researcher prepared *free-fly birds* of the sun conur species, followed by bird equipment such as flutes, bird feeding equipment, bird food, and bird boxes (bird cages).

***Development* Stage**

development stage is the stage of refining the design into a product ready for use in group counseling services (Slamet, 2022: 48). After the product was developed, validation was conducted by subject matter and media experts to assess its suitability. The validation results indicated that nature relaxation therapy with *free-flying birds* was suitable for use as a supporting medium for group counseling to reduce academic stress in junior high school students.

The Media Expert Validator commented: "The book cover needs improvement. The bird image on the cover looks too large. Adjust the image to make it more appealing."
Book cover image before editing



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Book cover image after repair



The expert validator's comment is: Create the RPL in the guidebook and understand the sessions in the game.

Addition of RPL in the manual,



RENCANA PELAKSANAAN LAYANAN KONSELING
KELOMPOK

A	Komponen	Layanan Dasar	Yayasan SMP Nur Adiah
B	Bidang Layanan	Belajar dan Pribadi	Yayasan SMP Nur Adiah
C	Topik Layanan	Terapi Relaksasi Alam Dengan Burung *Free Fly* Untuk Penurunan Stress Akademik Siswa Smp	Yayasan SMP Nur Adiah
D	Fungsi Layanan	Pemahaman, Pengembangan, pencegahan, dan Pengentasan	Yayasan SMP Nur Adiah
E	Tujuan Umum	Membantu menurunkan tingkat stres pada siswa SMP melalui terapi relaksasi alam dengan media burung *free fly*, sehingga siswa memperoleh ketenangan, mampu mengelola	Yayasan SMP Nur Adiah

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Dipindai dengan CamScanner

After the product is revised based on suggestions and input from the validator, the

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assessment results are then analyzed to determine the level of validity and practicality of the media developed.

Table 4. Results of media expert validation

Validator Score	Total Maximum Score	Score	Criteria
62	65	95%	Very Worthy

Based on media expert validation by Mrs. M W on June 8, 2026, the *free fly bird media* obtained a score of 62 out of 65 with a feasibility percentage of 81%, so it was declared very suitable for use in guidance and counseling services. The media was considered interesting, easy to understand and use, had systematic instructions, and was in accordance with the goal of reducing academic stress in junior high school students. The validator provided input on the appearance of the guidebook and supporting components for improvement. This input was then used as a basis for revisions so that the media was more visual, practical, and able to provide a relaxing experience that supports reducing academic stress in students.

Table 5. Results of validation by material experts

Validator Score	Total Maximum Score	Score	Criteria
57	70	81%	Very Worthy

Based on the validation by material experts by Mr. AS on June 8, 2026, the natural relaxation therapy guidebook with *free fly birds* received a score of 57 out of 70 with a percentage of 81% and was declared very suitable. The material was assessed as being in accordance with the goal of reducing academic stress, based on theory, systematic, easy to understand, and useful for guidance and counseling teachers. The validator provided input related to strengthening the theory and instructions for using the media through the creation of RPL, which was then followed up through revisions to make the product more comprehensive and systematic.

Table 6. Results of the practicality test assessment based on teacher responses

BK Teacher questionnaire results score	Maximum total score	Score	criteria
31	32	96%	Very practical

Based on the response from the guidance counselor, Mr. MK, on June 9, 2026, the natural relaxation therapy media with *free-flying birds* received a score of 31 out of 32, with a practicality percentage of 96%, thus being categorized as very practical. The media was deemed appropriate for its purpose, easy and safe to implement, able to increase student enthusiasm, and help relieve emotional tension. Input regarding the clarity of therapy instructions was then followed up by

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refining the guidebook to make the media easier to implement in schools.

Table 7. Results of practicality test assessment based on student responses

Number of respondents	Score obtained	Maximum score	percentage	criteria
8	326	384	84%	Very practical

Based on the results of the student response questionnaire conducted on June 9, the natural relaxation therapy media with *free fly birds* obtained a score of 326 out of 384 with a percentage of 84%, so it is categorized as very practical. Students gave a positive response because the media can create a comfortable and pleasant atmosphere, increase enthusiasm and activeness, and provide a relaxing experience that helps reduce academic stress. These results indicate that the media has met the practical aspect and is suitable for use as an innovation in guidance and counseling services in junior high schools.

DISCUSSION

Based on research and development using the 4D model, an innovative product has been successfully developed, namely the development of natural relaxation therapy with *free-fly birds* to reduce academic stress in junior high school students, which researchers conducted at the Nur Adia Education Foundation Junior High School. Starting from problem identification through needs analysis that showed boredom and academic pressure in students, researchers systematically designed the media and its guidebook to suit the characteristics of early adolescents and the principles of guidance and counseling in schools.

Through the development stage, the product has undergone validation testing by media experts with a feasibility percentage of 95% and material experts with a very feasible category of 81%. Furthermore, practicality testing conducted through the response of guidance and counseling teachers reached a percentage of 96% and student responses of 85% with a very practical category, proving that this media is safe, easy to implement, interesting, and effective in reducing emotional tension in students, making it worthy of being used as an alternative innovation for creative guidance and counseling services in schools.

This research and development aims to produce natural relaxation therapy with *free-flying birds* as a medium for group counseling services to help reduce academic stress in junior high school students. The development used a 4D model consisting of *Define, Design, Development, and Disseminate* , but this research was limited to the *Development stage.* Discussion of the research results includes needs analysis, the development process and feasibility, and product practicality.

Student Needs and Media Analysis

Interviews with guidance counselors on May 22, 2026, showed that students experienced academic stress related to the large number of assignments, exam anxiety, achievement demands,

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academic competition, and parental pressure. These conditions resulted in boredom, mental fatigue, decreased motivation, and difficulty concentrating. These findings align with those of Barseli et al., 2020: 75, who explain that academic stress arises when academic demands are perceived to exceed an individual's abilities. Sholihah et al., 2023: 330, also stated that academic pressure can have physical and emotional impacts.

The results of the student problem needs analysis questionnaire conducted on May 22, 2026, reinforced the interview findings. Regarding the assignment load, 88% of students answered Strongly Agree and 12% Agree; the pressure of facing exams 75% Strongly Agree and 25% Agree; emotional state 50% Strongly Agree and 50% Agree; and learning concentration 75% Strongly Agree and 25% Agree. There were no Disagree or Strongly Disagree answers, indicating that all students felt academic pressure.

The results of the student media needs analysis questionnaire conducted on May 22, 2026, showed that 88% of students strongly agreed and 12% agreed that they needed media to help overcome academic stress. Fifty percent strongly agreed and 50% agreed that they preferred engaging media, while 75% strongly agreed and 25% agreed that they preferred services that involved student activities. (Widyasari & Mukayati, 2021: 125) also explained that guidance and counseling media can be developed in various forms according to student needs.

Based on these conditions, natural relaxation therapy with *free-flying birds* is considered suitable for development because it provides a more interactive experience. Research (Cahyani & Tasalim, 2024: 5; Supradewi, 2024: 226; Azizunnisa, 2025: 293) shows the benefits of relaxation, the natural environment, bird sounds, and animal involvement on psychological well-being. Therefore, product development is based on students' real needs.

Natural Relaxation Therapy Prototype with *Free Fly Birds*

The product was developed through the *Define, Design, and Development stages* . The *Define stage* was used to identify student problems and needs, while the *Design stage* produced a natural relaxation therapy plan using *free-flying birds* as a supporting medium for group counseling. The product was equipped with a guidebook, cage or box, flute, food, and bird feeding equipment. The *Development stage* involved revising the guidebook based on comments from material and media expert validators. The guidebook must meet the objectives of media development, benefits of media development, targets of media development, media development equipment, media development procedures.

This development aligns with research (Isroi et al., 2021: 34) that states that guidance and counseling media must function to support the achievement of service objectives. Its implementation integrates the stages of group counseling, namely formation, transition, activities, and closure, as described (Hayati, 2023: 120). In the core activities, students engage in relaxation, observe *free-flying birds* , perform breathing exercises, and reflect. These stages are also in line with (Cahyani & Tasalim, 2024: 5), namely preparation, adaptation to nature, relaxation, reflection, and

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evaluation.

Product Feasibility and Practicality

The media expert validation conducted by Mrs. MW on June 8, 2026, obtained a score of 62 out of 65, or 95.38%, making it a very suitable book. The assessment showed that the display, instructions, ease of use, and media suitability met the criteria. Improvements were primarily made to the appearance of the bird image on the book cover.

The validation conducted by a material expert by Mr. AS on June 8, 2026, obtained a score of 57 out of 70, or 81.43%, and was categorized as very feasible. The validator's input included strengthening the material, clarifying the usage procedures, and adding a RPL to the manual. Overall, the validation results indicated that the product met the eligibility criteria in terms of media and materials.

Practicality based on the response of the guidance counselor by Mr. MK on June 9, 2026, obtained a score of 31 out of 32 with a percentage of 96.88%, so it is very practical. The guidance counselor assessed the media as appropriate to students' needs, easy to use, safe, able to engage students, and create a more relaxed atmosphere. Meanwhile, the student response made by 8 students of class VII A on June 9, 2026, obtained a score of 326 out of 384 with a percentage of 84.90% and is included in the very practical category based on research criteria. Students gave positive responses to the media's appeal, comfort, ease of use, enthusiasm for participating in services, and feeling more relaxed after the activity.

These results indicate a match between students' initial needs and the characteristics of the product being developed. This finding also aligns with (Cahyani & Tasalim 2024: 5, Supradewi 2024: 226, Azizunnisa, 2025: 293) regarding the psychological benefits of relaxation, nature, bird sounds, and interaction with animals.

Thus, natural relaxation therapy with *free-flying birds* was deemed feasible and practical for use as a supporting tool for group counseling services to help reduce academic stress in junior high school students. The product not only met expert assessments but also received positive feedback from guidance counselors and student users.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research and development, natural relaxation therapy with *free-flying birds has been successfully developed* as a supporting medium for group counseling services to help reduce academic stress for junior high school students. The results of the needs analysis indicate that students experience academic stress in the form of assignment burdens, anxiety about exams, emotional exhaustion, and difficulty concentrating and require interesting and interactive BK media. The development was carried out using the R&D research method with a 4D model limited to the *Define, Design, and Development stages* . The resulting product is a natural relaxation therapy with *free-flying birds* equipped with a guidebook and supporting equipment for service

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implementation.

The validity test results from media experts obtained a percentage of 95.38% and material experts 81.43%, both categorized as very feasible. The practicality test based on the responses of the guidance counselor obtained 96.88% and student responses 84.90%, both categorized as very practical. Thus, natural relaxation therapy with *free fly birds* is declared very feasible and practical to be used as a supporting medium for group counseling services to help reduce academic stress in junior high school students.

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