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The Effectiveness Of Group Counseling Services Using Assertive Training Techniques To Reduce People-Pleasing Behavior Among Grade X Students At Dar El Iman

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the effectiveness of group counseling services using the assertive training technique in reducing people-pleaser behavior among tenth-grade students at Dar El Iman. The research employed a One Group Pretest–Posttest Design with seven students selected through purposive sampling. The instrument used was a people-pleaser scale administered before and after the intervention. The results showed a significant decrease in students' people-pleaser scores after participating in four sessions of group counseling with assertive training. The Wilcoxon test produced a significance value of 0.016 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a meaningful difference between the pretest and posttest scores. Therefore, group counseling using the assertive training technique is effective in reducing people-pleaser behavior among students.

Keywords: People Pleaser, Group Counseling, Assertive training.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescents undergo a complex transition; beyond biological changes, this period is marked by the development of social identity, a growing need for peer acceptance, and the strengthening of interpersonal skills that will influence the quality of relationships throughout their lives. During middle and high school, the desire to be accepted often drives adolescents to

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adjust their behavior-such as prioritizing others' wishes over their own needs a pattern frequently referred to in the literature as "people-pleasing" or "approval-seeking." This behavior is not merely a trivial social habit; if it becomes chronic, it can undermine self-esteem, heighten social anxiety, and limit an individual's ability to maintain healthy personal boundaries.

"People-pleasing" behavior is a psychosocial issue increasingly observed among today's adolescents, including within school environments. The term refers to an individual's tendency to constantly strive to please others, prioritize external needs over their own, and feel guilty or fear rejection when faced with the need to say "no." According to Alfahmi et al. (2024), this behavior is closely linked to a need for acceptance, social anxiety, and an inability to establish healthy personal boundaries. During adolescence particularly at ages 15–16, when students are in their first year of high school (Grade X) the processes of identity formation and peer interaction make individuals more susceptible to adopting people-pleasing behaviors. They tend to defer to the group's wishes, avoid conflict, or sacrifice personal interests to maintain social acceptance. Zalika and Nisa (2024) note that healthy personal boundaries are crucial for preventing excessive people-pleasing behavior, which can be detrimental to psychological well-being. When students lack adequate assertiveness skills, they are prone to self-sacrifice, conflict avoidance, and placing themselves in an inferior position.

In the school environment particularly among Grade X students newly entering high school "people-pleasing" behavior manifests as a tendency to offer excessive help, yield without clear reason, and an inability to express opinions honestly. A lack of assertiveness makes it difficult for adolescents to express themselves and build healthy social relationships. Adolescents lacking assertiveness skills are prone to social anxiety, emotional distress, and even academic burnout resulting from constantly meeting the demands of others (Alfahmi et al., 2024). This situation calls for a systematic intervention to help students improve their assertiveness and establish personal boundaries.

Based on field observations, Grade X students are generally in a transitional phase characterized by the formation of self-identity and the search for social groups that provide a sense of security. At this stage, peer pressure often drives students to comply with their friends' wishes, even when doing so conflicts with their own values or personal needs. For instance, a student might accept an overly burdensome group assignment, engage in excessive displays to gain acceptance, or habitually agree with others out of a fear of being ostracized. If left

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unchecked, this pattern can evolve into a detrimental habit of people-pleasing. (Alfahmi et al., 2024).

Assertive training is a widely recommended approach in interpersonal behavioral interventions. It is a counseling technique designed to help individuals express their thoughts, feelings, and desires clearly and honestly while maintaining respect for others. The training teaches participants how to decline inappropriate requests, establish personal boundaries, communicate firmly, and reduce the fear of conflict or rejection. Beyond setting boundaries, students gain the confidence to refuse others' requests without feeling guilty or fearing that they might hurt feelings. Assertive training not only fosters communication confidence but also establishes a balance between one's own interests and those of others (Sholekah, 2025). In the context of people-pleasing, assertive skills are crucial for helping students learn to express themselves without guilt. Numerous studies have demonstrated that assertive training effectively enhances self-confidence, communication skills, and decision-making abilities among adolescents (Dewantari, 2021).

Assertiveness training teaches participants how to express their thoughts, feelings, and needs honestly and politely, set boundaries without aggression, and firmly yet respectfully decline requests. The advantages of this technique in a group setting include opportunities for hands-on practice (role-playing), peer observation, and feedback, all of which facilitate faster behavioral change compared to individual interventions alone. Therefore, integrating assertiveness training into group counseling services is a relevant strategy for fostering refusal skills, strengthening personal boundaries, and reducing the tendency toward approval-seeking behavior among adolescents.

The phenomenon of people-pleasing within the context of Islamic schools must also be understood as a socio-cultural challenge. On one hand, values of obedience and proper conduct are taught to cultivate good character. On the other hand, without an understanding of personal boundaries, these values can be misinterpreted, fostering a tendency to yield excessively to others. Interventions such as assertiveness training can help students learn how to be polite and respectful without losing the ability to express themselves. This approach aligns with Islamic principles regarding the balance between maintaining proper conduct and self-preservation *(hifdzun nafsi*), making it a suitable solution for the Dar El Iman school environment.

Group counseling serves as an effective platform for implementing assertive training, as it provides a safe, supportive environment and offers students opportunities to learn through

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direct social interaction. Through group dynamics, students can observe peer behavior, engage in role-playing, receive feedback, and practice self-evaluation. Furthermore, group counseling is efficient and fosters the natural development of empathy and social skills.

Specific social training programs, such as assertive training, have not yet been fully integrated into routine counseling services. Consequently, students who require support in interpersonal areas such as the ability to refuse requests, set personal boundaries, and cope with social pressure have not received adequate guidance. This situation highlights a clear need for interventions based on assertive techniques within school counseling services (Sholekah, 2025). Therefore, incorporating assertive training techniques into group counseling services represents an appropriate approach to addressing "people-pleasing" behavior in a comprehensive and systematic manner (Putri et al., 2024).

Group-based interventions have a significant impact on changes in adolescents' interpersonal behavior. For instance, several studies have found that group counseling incorporating assertiveness techniques can reduce anxiety regarding conflict, enhance the ability to refuse requests, and boost self-confidence. However, limited research has examined the mechanisms behind these changes specifically in the context of people-pleasing, even though mechanisms such as establishing personal boundaries and assertive communication skills are highly relevant for addressing this behavior. (Sholekah, 2025).

Group counseling is highly suitable for adolescents, as it provides a space for mutual support, exposure to real-life examples, and experiential learning within a safe environment. Putri et al. (2024) demonstrated that group counseling incorporating assertiveness techniques effectively enhances students' self-esteem and communication skills. These findings reinforce the view that assertiveness training not only fosters self-confidence but is also essential for mitigating unhealthy interpersonal behaviors, such as people-pleasing. Assertiveness training is effective in transforming maladaptive behavioral patterns into adaptive ones by strengthening an individual's ability to communicate assertively without harming themselves or others (Sholekah, 2025). Consequently, this technique holds significant potential for implementation in efforts to reduce approval-seeking tendencies among Grade X students at Dar El Iman.

Based on the preceding discussion, it can be concluded that people-pleasing is a behavioral pattern that risks undermining adolescents' well-being and learning effectiveness if not properly addressed. Assertive training delivered through group counseling offers a promising, skill-based approach to strengthening personal boundaries and the ability to refuse requests

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among students. This study aims to determine the extent to which group counseling incorporating assertive training techniques can reduce people-pleasing behavior among Grade X students at Dar El Iman, with the hope of contributing to the development of more effective guidance services that help students enhance their self-disclosure and psychological well-being.

OVERVIEW OF CONNECTIVISM

Modern-day learning is taking place via network connections as people exchange respective skills, information, viewpoints, experience, and views in digital or online learning settings (Dunaway, 2011; Siemens, 2008). Because knowledge is continually evolving, its usefulness and correctness may vary significantly when new contributions to a field are discovered. As a result, one's grasp of a matter, as well as student ability to learn about the subject at hand, will vary from time to time. Connectivism emphasizes two crucial abilities that help to learn: the capacity to search for existing knowledge and the capacity to eliminate alternative and superfluous knowledge. The process of learning is continuous in the sense that individuals will access the network to exchange and discover new knowledge, subsequently adjust existing views based on new understanding, and then reconnect to a community to communicate such experiences and discover new knowledge again. Essentially it is, the ability to understand is much more important than what is known. The capacity to make judgments based on learned knowledge is seen as essential to the education process (Siemens, 2008). Driscoll's (2005) research was used to classify knowledge among three main philosophical frames notably objectivism, pragmatism, and interpretivism. Objectivism holds that reality exists outside of the mind and that learning and perception are gained via experience.

Pragmatists view learning as the result of a bargain involving thought and practice (Siemens, 2008). The Internet has been reshaped into a huge blended learning environment, with knowledge storage tanks such as online virtual classrooms, online forums and virtual societies to successfully execute, replicate, communicate, and convey content in to the grip of students and teachers (Kropf, 2013). More significantly, the Internet has become a central focus of connectivism, which is potentially dynamic in innovative educational philosophy. Adelstein (2013) states that students nowadays are ‘do-it-yourself’ thinkers. Connectivism sees learning as an unstructured chance and it converts individual students into ‘networks’ themselves, equally skilled in exchanging their skills and experience with other people after gaining knowledge from a sequence of nodes (Albert & Steve, 2013). Individuals may alter or reform their behavior in

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response to stimuli such as incentives and penalties. Online communication platforms can turn students into someone who can manage their schedule and arrange their duties appropriately amidst the everyday turmoil of plentiful data (Couros, 2009; Garcia et al., 2012).

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a quantitative approach using a pre-experimental research design, which aims to determine the effect of a treatment on research subjects, even though it does not fully involve a control group and does not meet the criteria for a true experiment (Sugiyono, 2010). The specific design applied is the One-Group Pretest-Posttest Design, which involves a single experimental group without a control group, comparing the results of the pre-test and post-test (Arikunto, 2013).

Table 1. One-Group Pretest-Posttest Research Design

Pretest	Treatment	posttest
O^1	X	O^2

A The population for this study consisted of all 24 Grade X students at Dar El Iman. From this population, seven students were identified as the sample, having been found to exhibit a high tendency toward "people-pleasing" behavior. Purposive sampling was employed, as the selection was based on specific criteria aligned with the research objectives (Arikunto, 2014). Several selection criteria were applied based on the aspects being assessed. All 24 Grade X students completed the people-pleaser scale questionnaire, and the results revealed that seven students scored high on the scale.

Data collection techniques included questionnaires, interviews, and documentation. The primary instrument was a "people-pleaser" scale questionnaire based on the theory of Harriet B. Braiker (2001), as outlined in her book “The Disease to Please”, this instrument assesses three specific aspects: Approval Seeking, Conflict Avoidance, and Self-Sacrifice. The questionnaire utilized a Likert scale with five response options: always, often, sometimes, rarely, and never. Validity testing was conducted by analyzing statement items via item-total correlation identifying which of the 30 items were valid and which were not while reliability was assessed by reporting the Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient to demonstrate the instrument's internal consistency.

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Following the pre-test, students received group counseling services based on assertive training techniques over four sessions. After the intervention, a post-test was administered to assess behavioral changes. The data were analyzed using the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test, given the small sample size and the ordinal nature of the data. The significance criterion was set at a 95% confidence level ($\alpha = 0.05$). An Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of less than 0.05 indicates a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results, demonstrating that group counseling using assertive training techniques is effective in reducing "people-pleaser" behavioral tendencies among students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Validity and Reliability Testing of the Instrument

The research instrument used to measure "people-pleaser" behavior was designed as a questionnaire comprising 30 statement items. Prior to its use in the main study, the instrument underwent a pilot test with 30 students to assess its validity and reliability. Validity testing was conducted using Pearson's Product-Moment correlation analysis at a 5% significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$). Based on the sample size ($n = 30$), the critical r-value (r-table) was 0.361. An item was considered valid if the calculated r-value (r-count) exceeded the r-table value. The analysis results indicated that out of the 30 statement items, 18 met the validity criteria, while 12 were deemed invalid because their calculated r-values fell below 0.361. Consequently, only the 18 valid items were used for data collection in the main study. The following table presents the validity test results, showing the calculated r-value for each item:

Table 2. Validity Test Results for the People-Pleaser Behavior Instrument

No	R-value	criteria	No	R-value	criteria
1	0.326	Invalid	16	0.542	Valid
2	0.365	Valid	17	0.183	invalid
3	0.567	Valid	18	0.188	Invalid
4	0.297	Invalid	19	0.359	Invalid
5	0.591	Valid	20	0.609	Valid
6	0.634	Valid	21	0.645	Valid
7	0.343	Invalid	22	0.332	Invalid

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8	0.361	Invalid	23	0.738	Valid
9	0.315	Invalid	24	0.516	Valid
10	0.403	Valid	25	0.198	Invalid
11	0.444	Valid	26	0.093	Invalid
12	0.590	Valid	27	0.154	Invalid
13	0.511	Valid	28	0.440	Valid
14	0.666	Valid	29	0.393	Valid
15	0.656	Valid	30	0,714	Valid

Following the validity test, a reliability test was conducted to determine the consistency level of the measuring instrument. The reliability test utilized the Cronbach's Alpha formula. The calculation results yielded a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.850, indicating high instrument reliability. This signifies that the instrument is consistent and reliable for use in the research. The following table presents the reliability test results for each item:

Table 3. Instrument Reliability Test Results

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.850	30

Based on these validity and reliability test results, it can be concluded that the questionnaire instrument used in the study possesses adequate validity and high reliability, making it suitable for measuring "people-pleaser" behavior among Dar El Iman students.

Description of Pretest and Posttest Data

To identify students with a high tendency to be "people-pleasers," the researchers first conducted a preliminary assessment (pre-test) by distributing a questionnaire to all 24 Grade X students at Dar El Iman. The questionnaire served to map the students' abilities regarding self-recognition, emotional understanding, and awareness of their personal strengths and weaknesses.

Once all questionnaires had been collected and analyzed, seven students were identified as falling into the "low" category; this indicates a high level of "people-pleasing" behavior,

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suggesting a need for greater attention during their personal development process. These findings subsequently served as the basis for determining the appropriate intervention measures or counseling programs to be implemented.

In this study, students' "people-pleaser" scores were grouped using score intervals established based on the instrument's minimum and maximum values—specifically, 18 and 90. The difference between these two values yields a range of 72, which was subsequently divided into three categories of people-pleasing levels: low (18–42), moderate (43–66), and high (67–90).

This categorization serves as a guideline for determining each student's people-pleasing level based on the score obtained during the pre-test. For instance, a student scoring between 18 and 42 is assigned to the low category; a score in the 43–66 range places the student in the moderate category; and a score between 67 and 90 results in classification into the high category.

Table 4. Frequency of "people-pleaser" tendencies

Category	score range	(%)intervals	Frequency
High	67-90	74%	7
Medium	43-66	73%	0
Low	18-42	47%	17

Thus, the results of students' people-pleaser scores listed in the pre-test table can be interpreted systematically by matching the scores obtained by each student with the predetermined intervals. This approach ensures that the learning process The classification is conducted objectively and consistently, in accordance with the measurement standards used in the study.

Presented below are the results of the pre-test questionnaire measuring the "people-pleaser" trait among students prior to the intervention specifically, group counseling utilizing assertive training techniques. These pre-test data illustrate the students' initial levels of people-pleasing behavior and self-neglect, serving as a baseline to assess the extent of the need for intervention and a point of comparison for the results obtained after the service is delivered. By presenting this data, the researcher can observe the distribution of student scores across low, medium, and high categories, thereby enabling a more targeted and effective intervention planning process.

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Table 5. People-Pleaser Scale Pre-test Results

No	Respondent	Skala *People Pleaser*		
		Total	categories	% (interval)
1	JR	77	High	86%
2	SH	76	High	84%
3	VQ	75	High	83%
4	PA	77	High	86%
5	SM	68	High	76%
6	AN	85	High	94%
7	CD	82	High	91%

Based on Table 5, the pre-test results from the "people-pleaser" scale indicate that all seven participants fell into the high category, with score percentages ranging from 76% to 94%. These findings suggest that, prior to the intervention, the students' "people-pleasing" tendencies were notably high and required further attention.

Furthermore, the total scores obtained by the students ranged from 68 to 85, reinforcing the observation that their level of self-awareness consistency remained in the high category. These results served as a crucial basis for the implementation of the intervention ...in the form of group counseling services utilizing assertive training techniques to help reduce "people-pleasing" behavior among students.

The data indicate that the majority of participants exhibited relatively high levels of people-pleasing behavior. Consequently, it is necessary to implement group counseling services using assertive training techniques to reduce such behavior among students who display high levels of this tendency.

Upon completion of the intervention, all seven students participating in the study were asked to complete the same questionnaire used during the pre-test. This step was taken to assess any changes in the subjects' levels of people-pleasing behavior following their participation in the

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intervention specifically, the group counseling sessions incorporating assertive training techniques.

Based on the post-test results completed by the seven participants, it was found that all students experienced a reduction in their "people-pleaser" tendencies. No students remained in the high category; all shifted to the moderate and low categories. These results indicate that the intervention had a positive impact on reducing the students' people-pleasing tendencies and successfully enhanced their ability to engage in self-recognition, understand emotions, and acknowledge their personal strengths and weaknesses. The complete post-test results are presented in the following table:

Table 6. Post-test Results of the People-Pleaser Scale

No	Responden	Skala *People Pleaser*		
		Total	**categories**	**% (interval)**
1	JR	60	Low	67%
2	SH	59	Low	66%
3	VQ	58	Low	64%
4	PA	60	Low	67%
5	SM	53	Low	59%
6	AN	65	Low	72%
7	CD	66	Medium	73%

Based on Table 6, a significant change in the students' "people-pleaser" levels is evident following the intervention. All study participants demonstrated a marked decrease in scores, shifting from the "high" category at the pre-test stage to either the "moderate" or "low" category at the post-test stage. This reduction is reflected in total scores now ranging from 53 to 66, with the corresponding percentage intervals shifting to 64%–73%. These findings indicate that every student experienced a meaningful reduction in people-pleasing behavior after participating in group counseling sessions utilizing assertive training techniques.

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By way of illustration, the student with the initials AN, who initially obtained a score of 85 (94%), saw a significant drop to 65 (72%) in the post-test. Similarly, CD, who initially scored 82 (91%), experienced a decrease to 66 (73%). These examples demonstrate that the observed changes were not merely collective but were also clearly evident at the individual level. A comparison of the pre-test and post-test results based on the people-pleaser scale is presented in the following diagram:

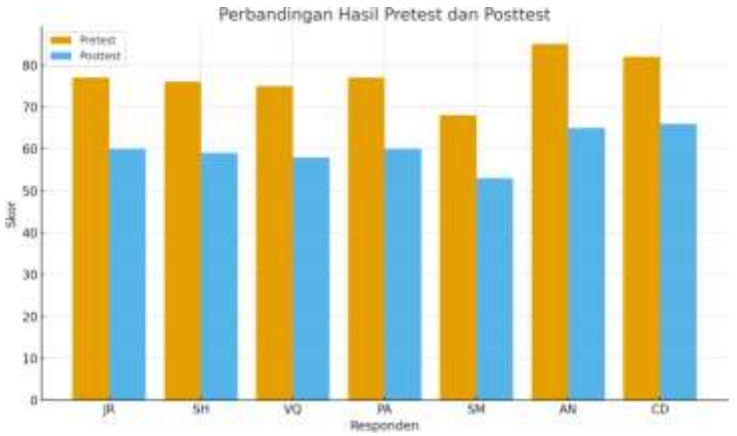


Figure 1. Comparison of pretest and posttest results

Figure 1, which presents a comparison of pre-test and post-test scores, illustrates the change in students' self-awareness levels following an intervention involving group guidance services utilizing the self-talk technique. Visually, the diagram shows a consistent increase in scores across all respondents, highlighting a clear difference between the conditions prior to and following the service.

To determine the intervention's effectiveness regarding students' "people-pleaser" tendencies, the researcher conducted a data analysis using the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test via IBM SPSS Statistics 23 software. This test was employed to assess whether there was a significant difference between the results obtained before (pre-test) and after (post-test) the provision of group counseling services utilizing the assertive training technique.

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Table 6. Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test

Ranks				
		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
posttest - pretest	Negative Ranks	7a	4.00	28.00
	Positive Ranks	0b	0.00	0.00
	Ties	0c		
	Total	7		
a. posttest < pretest				
b. posttest > pretest				
c. posttest = pretest				

Table 7. Statistic Test

Test Statistic	
	posttest - pretest
Z	-2.410b
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.016
a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test	
b. Based on positive ranks.	

Based on the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test results, all participants (N = 7) showed a decrease in scores from the pre-test to the post-test, indicated by 7 positive ranks and 0 negative ranks. There were no identical values between the pre-test and post-test results (ties = 0), demonstrating that all respondents experienced a positive change following the intervention. A

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Z-value of -2.410 with a significance level (Asymp. Sig. 2-tailed) of 0.016 (< 0.05) indicates a significant difference between the pre-treatment and post-treatment scores. Thus, it can be concluded that the group counseling intervention utilizing assertive training techniques successfully reduced the students' "people-pleaser" tendencies.

This reinforces the finding that group counseling services utilizing assertive training techniques are effective in reducing "people-pleasing" behavior among students. The observed reduction in scores reflects not only quantitative progress but also tangible qualitative changes particularly regarding personality, perseverance, and the students' capacity to make positive changes.

DISCUSSION

"People-pleasing" behavior among Grade X students at Dar El Iman School is a complex phenomenon linked to the fundamental adolescent need for social acceptance. Research indicates that individuals with a tendency to please others often feel compelled to meet others' expectations, avoid conflict, and maintain a specific self-image to ensure acceptance by their peers. During adolescence, the need for social validation becomes dominant, leading students to suppress personal desires and prioritize the comfort of others. This manifests in behaviors such as difficulty refusing requests, constant apologizing, frequent concession, and the sacrifice of personal interests to preserve friendships. Afri et al. (2021) explain that such behavior stems from a fear of disappointing others and a strong desire to be viewed favorably by those around them. Thus, people-pleasing behavior is not merely an interpersonal issue; it also reflects weak self-control, low self-confidence, and an excessive need for social approval.

This study also explains that the tendency to be a people-pleaser can stem from childhood experiences and parenting styles to a lack of self-worth. Students accustomed to receiving acceptance only when they comply with the wishes of others learn to equate their self-worth with their ability to meet social expectations. This aligns with the theory proposed by Danni and Ahmad (2025), which states that individuals with low social power or high emotional dependency are prone to developing people-pleasing behaviors. Adolescents who have not yet fully established personal boundaries tend to equate their own happiness with that of others; they not only strive to avoid disappointing others but also feel responsible for those individuals' emotions. At this developmental stage, a lack of assertiveness traps students in a pattern of

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excessive accommodation, which can ultimately impair their emotional health and hinder the development of their self-identity.

To help students overcome this tendency, group counseling utilizing assertive training techniques is implemented as an effective intervention. The module emphasizes that assertive training is a technique designed to assist students in expressing their opinions, needs, and feelings honestly while respecting the rights of others. This technique is particularly crucial for individuals who struggle to refuse requests or are unable to state their personal opinions firmly. Through a behavioral approach, assertive training teaches students to distinguish between passive, aggressive, and assertive behaviors, enabling them to understand the consequences associated with each communication pattern. As explained by Elbarazi et al. (2021), the stages of assertive training are systematically structured ranging from problem identification, role-playing exercises, and feedback provision to homework assignments all aimed at reinforcing behavioral change.

The group counseling process plays a vital role by providing a safe, supportive, and non-judgmental environment where students can actively practice assertive skills. During the formation stage, the counselor fosters a sense of rapport through established group ground rules and ice-breaking activities, helping participants feel accepted and comfortable sharing their experiences. As the process moves into the core activity stage, students are encouraged to understand the concept of assertive behavior and relate it to their own personal experiences—such as the difficulty of refusing a friend's request or feelings of guilt after expressing a dissenting opinion. Through role-playing, students gain real-world experience in expressing their views assertively while maintaining positive relationships with others. Febrianti (2024) notes that the process of sharing experiences and observing behavioral modeling from both the counselor and peers accelerates interpersonal learning, as students realize they are not alone in facing these challenges.

Counselors also provide constructive feedback to reinforce students' assertive responses. The module explains how students are trained to use "I-messages" such as "I feel..." or "I cannot because..." which help them express refusal without feeling guilty or hurting others. Repeated practice and support from group members boost students' confidence in applying these behaviors outside of counseling sessions. Research by Nasution (2024) demonstrates that simulation exercises, such as role-playing, are highly effective in enhancing adolescents' assertiveness, as they engage in a learning process that is both direct and emotionally resonant.

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The effects of assertive training are evident not only in behavioral changes but also in shifts in students' mindsets and feelings. Based on the module's content, students who initially felt guilty when refusing others' requests came to realize that setting personal boundaries is not an act of rudeness, but rather a form of self-respect. After completing several sessions, they felt better equipped to manage social pressure and more confident in making decisions that aligned with their personal needs. This awareness is reinforced by Putri et al. (2023), who explain that the ability to refuse assertively can reduce the stress, emotional exhaustion, and role conflict often experienced by individuals who are "people-pleasers."

From the perspective of service objectives, this study demonstrates that the intervention employed group counseling utilizing assertive training techniques—aimed to enhance students' abilities to express their opinions, decline requests that did not align with their wishes, establish healthy personal boundaries, and boost self-confidence. Based on the dynamics and training activities undertaken, all these objectives were successfully achieved. The students not only grasped the theoretical concepts of assertiveness but also applied them practically in their daily lives. This finding is supported by research conducted by Rahayu (2019), which indicates that group counseling using assertive training techniques can significantly reduce "people-pleasing" behavior among high school students, particularly when the intervention is implemented in a structured manner, as was the case in this study.

Thus, it can be concluded that group counseling services utilizing assertive training techniques are effective in helping students reduce "people-pleasing" behavior. The observed behavioral changes indicate that students have successfully integrated assertive skills into their social lives, resulting in healthier and more balanced interpersonal relationships.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that group counseling services utilizing assertive training techniques are effective in reducing "people-pleasing" behavior among Grade X students at Dar El Iman. Prior to the intervention, all participants fell into the high-level category, with scores indicating a strong tendency to avoid conflict, difficulty refusing requests, and a habit of prioritizing others' needs over their own interests. Following four group counseling sessions using assertive training techniques, all students demonstrated a significant decrease in their post-test scores.

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The decrease in scores was confirmed by the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test, which yielded a significance value of 0.016 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results. All participants experienced a behavioral shift from the high category to the medium and low categories. These findings demonstrate that assertive training enhances students' skills in expressing opinions, refusing inappropriate requests, and establishing healthy personal boundaries without feelings of guilt or fear of rejection.

Group counseling services also yield positive effects through group dynamics, role-playing, feedback, and discussions that help students practice assertive skills in a safe and supportive environment. Consequently, group counseling utilizing assertive training techniques can be recommended as an effective intervention for students with a tendency to be "people-pleasers," and can be employed by school counselors to enhance students' emotional well-being and interpersonal skills.

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