

**THE APPLICATION OF GROUP GUIDANCE SERVICES GUIDED IMAGERY TECHNIQUE
TO REDUCE EXCESSIVE ANXIETY**

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to implement group guidance services with guided imagery techniques as an effort to reduce excessive anxiety in class XI F2 students at SMA Negeri 10 Medan. Anxiety is a common problem that can affect students' physical and psychological health, so it needs to be handled effectively. The research method used is Guidance and Counseling Action Research (PTBK) with two cycles, each consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection. The subjects of the study were 5 students who were identified as experiencing excessive anxiety based on the assessment results. The results showed that the application of guided imagery techniques was effective in increasing students' sense of calm and confidence. Evaluation of both cycles showed significant improvements in students' affective, cognitive, and psychomotor aspects, as well as a positive impact on their involvement in the guidance process. This study is expected to contribute to the development of guidance and counseling practices in schools and enrich knowledge about anxiety management techniques.

Keywords: group guidance; guided imagery; anxiety; action research.

INTRODUCTION

Anxiety is one of the psychological problems often experienced by adolescents, especially in the school environment, (Aminullah, 2013; Yulianti et al., 2024). In an educational context, excessive anxiety can affect students' mental health and academic performance, (Nadhira & Rofi'ah, 2023). The American Psychological Association (APA) defines anxiety as an emotion characterised by feelings of tension, worry, and various physical symptoms such as increased heart rate, sweating, and difficulty breathing, (Pasaribu & Sijabat, 2022; Sitorus & Elita, 2025). Along with increasing academic and social demands, many students face pressures that can trigger anxiety, which if not handled properly, can lead to more serious anxiety disorders. According to (Kusumah et al., 2022), adolescence is a phase full of changes and challenges, where students often feel anxious about exams, presentations, or social interactions. Poorly managed anxiety can affect students' learning quality, reduce motivation and lead to more serious mental health problems such as depression. This shows the importance of effective interventions to help students overcome their anxiety.

Excessive anxiety is not only prevalent in Indonesia, it is also a global problem that affects many countries, (Habibullah et al., 2019; Nasution et al., 2023). In the world, the prevalence of anxiety disorders is increasing along with technological advances, social pressures, and the dynamics of modern life. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), more than 264 million people worldwide experience anxiety disorders. In Indonesia, adolescent anxiety is also on the rise. Data from Risdas 2018 shows that more than 6% of adolescents in Indonesia experience anxiety disorders that affect their social and academic lives. In Medan, cases of anxiety among students are increasingly becoming a concern, especially for students facing final exams and fierce competition in the world of education. Factors that influence anxiety in adolescents can vary, ranging from academic pressure, social problems, to uncertainty about the future, (Rengganawati, 2024; Rohmatun, 2024; Sapari, 2024). In the educational context, anxiety is often triggered by heavy workloads, demands for achievement, and interpersonal problems with friends and teachers, (Gamayanti, 2016; Nasution et al., 2024). Family factors also play an important role, where support or tension in the family can exacerbate anxiety in adolescents, (Arfah & Wantini, 2023; Muktar, 2024). Therefore, it is important to identify and understand the factors that influence anxiety in order to provide appropriate interventions.

The impact of poorly managed anxiety can be very detrimental to students, (Ardianto, 2018). In addition to affecting academic performance, excessive anxiety can also affect students' overall quality of life. Anxiety can cause sleep disturbances, decreased appetite, and physical tension that can interfere with daily activities. Students who experience anxiety are also more susceptible to other mental disorders, such as depression, (Ardianto, 2018). Therefore, it is important to provide support to students so that they can manage anxiety in a healthy and effective way. One approach that can be used in overcoming anxiety is the guided imagery technique. This technique involves using imagination to create a calming mental experience, which can help individuals distract from the source of anxiety and create a sense of relaxation. Guided imagery has been shown to be effective in a variety of contexts, including stress management, recovery from illness, and enhancing emotional well-being, (Ajuan et al., 2022). In group guidance services, this technique can be applied to help students manage their anxiety through calming imaginative exercises, allowing them to feel more in control in the face of stressful situations.

This study aims to apply group guidance services with guided imagery techniques as a solution in reducing excessive anxiety in students of class XI F2 at SMA Negeri 10 Medan. By using this technique, it is expected that students can learn to manage their anxious feelings and increase their confidence in facing stressful situations. Through this study, the researcher hopes to provide empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of guided imagery technique in an educational context as well as provide recommendations for better guidance and counselling practices in schools. The urgency of this study is very high, given the importance of mental health for students. Given the high prevalence of anxiety among adolescents, this study is expected to make a significant contribution in the development of more effective guidance services. By considering students' need for emotional and psychological support, this research is also expected to help create a more supportive and positive learning environment, where students can develop optimally, both academically and emotionally.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a Guidance and Counselling Action Research (PTBK) approach consisting of two cycles. PTBK was chosen because this method allows the researcher to be directly involved in the guidance and counselling process as well as to conduct continuous evaluation of the effectiveness of the intervention. Each cycle in this study will be repeated to improve the quality of the intervention, as well as to ensure that the techniques applied can have a significant impact on changes in student anxiety. With two cycles, it is expected that the intervention can be sharpened and adjusted based on the results obtained in each cycle, (Kurniawan, 2017).

The subjects of this study were 5 students who were identified as experiencing excessive anxiety based on an assessment using the Problem Identification Tool (AUM). AUM is used to identify students' anxiety symptoms more objectively and measurably, so as to ensure that interventions are given to students who really need help. Each student will be given group guidance services with guided imagery techniques to help them overcome anxiety. In each cycle, students will follow a series of group guidance sessions designed to increase their understanding of anxiety and help them develop anxiety management skills through guided imagery techniques.

Data collection techniques in this study include observation, interview, and questionnaire to measure changes in anxiety before and after the intervention. Observations were conducted during the guidance sessions to assess students' engagement and their response to the guided imagery technique. In-depth interviews with students will be conducted after each cycle to gain insight into their experiences and perceived changes. Questionnaires were used to measure students' anxiety levels before and after the intervention, to ascertain whether the guided imagery technique was successful in reducing excessive anxiety. The data obtained from these three techniques will be analysed qualitatively and quantitatively to get a clear picture of the impact of the intervention on students' anxiety.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results showed that the application of guided imagery technique significantly reduced excessive anxiety in students. Evaluation results from cycle I and II showed that all students felt significant improvements in affective aspects. Most students reported feeling calmer after the sessions, as well as increased confidence when facing situations that previously caused anxiety. The guided imagery technique, which was taught during the sessions, not only provided relaxation benefits but also provided positive experiences that made students more open to the guidance process. The following is a data reduction table of student evaluation results:

Table 1. Data reduction of student evaluation results

No	Statement	Siklus I			Siklus II		
		Agree	Disagree	%	Agree	Disagree	%
a	Affective (positive questions)						
	I feel calmer after attending the mentoring session.	5	-	100%	5	-	100%
	I feel more confident facing situations that were previously anxiety-inducing.	5	-	100%	5	-	100%
	I enjoyed the guided imagery technique that was taught.	5	-	100%	5	-	100%
	I feel that the support from the group helps reduce anxiety.	5	-	100%	5	-	100%
b	Cognitive (new understanding)						
	I understand the concept of guided imagery technique well	5	-	100%	5	-	100%
	I can explain how this technique works to others	4	1	80%	5	-	100%

	I feel like I have gained new knowledge on how to manage anxiety.	5	-	100%	5	-	100%
	I know the steps to take when experiencing anxiety.	5	-	100%	5	-	100%
	Psychomotor (performance)	Agree	Disagree	%	Agree	Disagree	%
	I can do the guided imagery technique well	3	2	60%	5	-	100%
c	I feel comfortable applying this technique in everyday situations	5	-	100%	5	-	100%
	I can manage stress using the techniques I have been taught	3	2	60%	5	-	100%
	I practise this technique regularly after mentoring sessions	4	1	80%	5	-	100%

Furthermore, the data from the counsellor's observation can be seen in the following table.

Table 2. Reduction of counsellor observation data

No	Aspects observed	Siklus I		Siklus II	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
1	Participant Engagement	5	-	5	-
2	Communicative	4	1	5	-
3	Emotional Reaction	4	1	5	-
4	Performing Guided Imagery Technique	5	-	5	-
5	Group Dynamics	4	1	5	-
6	Draw conclusions	5	-	5	-

Meanwhile, the results of monitoring changes in student behaviour can be reported as follows:

Table 3. Data reduction of counsellor monitoring results

No	Aspects observed	Siklus I		Siklus II	
		Ya	Tidak	Ya	Tidak
1	Participant Attendance	5	-	5	-
2	Engagement in Activities	4	1	5	-
3	Application of Engineering in Daily Life	5	-	5	-
4	Change in Anxiety Level	4	1	5	-
5	Establish communication with the counsellor	3	2	5	-
6	Anxiety levels have not reduced or new problems arise	1	4	5	-

Cognitively, students showed an improved understanding of the concepts and procedures of the guided imagery technique. They were able to explain how the technique works to others and felt they had gained new knowledge on how to manage anxiety. This shows that the group guidance not only had an impact on students' emotional feelings, but also enriched their knowledge about strategies that can be applied in daily life. In addition, in terms of psychomotor, although in cycle I there were still students who were less communicative and not able to apply the technique well, cycle II showed significant positive changes. All students were able to perform the guided imagery technique well and felt comfortable applying it in everyday situations.

The level of student engagement in the guidance sessions also increased drastically. All students actively participated in group discussions and showed positive emotional reactions during the

sessions. This reflects that they felt safe and comfortable in the group environment, which is one of the main objectives of group guidance itself.

The results of this study show that the application of guided imagery techniques can significantly reduce excessive anxiety in students. Evaluation in cycle I and II revealed that all students felt significant improvements in affective aspects. Based on the data reduction table of student evaluation results, all students stated that they felt calmer after attending the guidance session and felt more confident when facing situations that previously caused anxiety. The guided imagery technique proved to not only provide relaxation benefits but also created positive experiences that motivated students to be more open to the guidance process.

In the cognitive aspect, students showed a good understanding of the guided imagery technique. Most students were able to explain how the technique works to others and felt they had gained new knowledge on how to manage anxiety. This data shows that group guidance using guided imagery techniques not only impacts the emotional aspects of students, but also provides knowledge enrichment that can be applied in their daily lives. The application of this technique gives them new insights to manage anxiety independently, thus reducing their dependence on external interventions.

On the psychomotor aspect, although there were some students who could not apply the guided imagery technique well in cycle I, cycle II showed significant improvement. All students can now perform this technique well and feel comfortable using it in everyday situations. This reflects that with continuous practice and mentoring, students are able to internalise the technique and apply it to manage their stress and anxiety effectively. This improvement also shows that the group guidance intervention can have a sustainable impact on students' skills in managing anxiety.

Cycle II showed higher student engagement in the guidance sessions, with all students actively participating in the group discussions. Positive emotional reactions and healthy group dynamics indicated that they felt safe and comfortable in the group environment. This is very important, as creating a sense of safety is one of the main objectives in group guidance services. Overall, this study shows that guided imagery techniques can be used effectively in the context of group guidance to reduce excessive anxiety in students, as well as increase their engagement and understanding of anxiety management strategies.

CONCLUSIONS

The application of group guidance services with guided imagery techniques proved to be effective in reducing excessive anxiety in students of class XI F2 SMA Negeri 10 Medan. This study shows that this technique not only provides relaxation benefits, but also increases students' self-confidence and understanding of how to manage anxiety. The results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of guidance and counselling practices in schools as well as enriching knowledge about anxiety management techniques.

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