

COUNSELLING ACTION RESEARCH (PTBK): IMPROVING SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH CLASSICAL SERVICES WITH A PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING APPROACH FOR STUDENTS IN CLASS XI F3

Sabar Halimah Sitorus¹, Sri Ngayomi Yudha Wastuti², Sri Astuti³

¹²Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara

³SMA Negeri 10 Medan

Correspondence Email : halimahsitorus7@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study aims to improve students' social relationships through classical guidance services using a Problem Based Learning (PBL) approach. The subjects were 29 students from class XI F3 at SMA Negeri 10 Medan, with 22 students identified as having difficulties in social interaction, such as low empathy, interpersonal conflict, and poor communication. This research employed the Guidance and Counseling Action Research (PTBK) model, implemented in two cycles. Each cycle consisted of planning, action, observation, and reflection stages. The findings indicated that the PBL-based classical guidance service was effective in enhancing students' social relationships. This was evidenced by the increase in average questionnaire scores from 62.06% (moderate category) in the pre-cycle, to 77.93% (high category) in the first cycle, and reaching 87.93% (very high category) in the second cycle. The PBL approach encouraged students to analyze real social problems, reflect empathetically, and develop collaborative problem-solving skills. Therefore, classical guidance with a PBL approach can be recommended as an effective strategy for improving social skills in high school students.

Keywords: social relationship; classical guidance; problem-based learning; empathy; action research

INTRODUCTION

The issue of social relationships among adolescents, especially in schools, has become an important concern in this digital era, (Kurniawan, 2017). Although adolescents are virtually connected through social media, the quality of face-to-face interactions is declining. This means that students face challenges in building empathy, interacting and co-operating, which negatively impacts their social and emotional well-being, (Garvin, 2018; Larasati & Marheni, 2019). Good interpersonal communication between parents and adolescents is essential in developing social skills. The inability to interact well can lead to feelings of isolation and anxiety, (Fahlevi et al., 2020). Communication issues are often overlooked in schools, despite having a major impact on students' personal development.

Several factors contribute to poor social relationships among adolescents. One of the main causes is the inability to manage emotions, which leads to anxiety in social interactions and decreased self-confidence, (Annisa & Supriatna, 2022; Haryono & Kurniasari, 2018). In addition, negative associations and socio-economic disparities also have a significant impact. Students from different backgrounds often have difficulty adapting to their new social environment, thus worsening the quality of relationships, (Nur et al., 2023). The use of social media also contributes; it offers a platform to interact, but can also lead to narcissistic behaviours that are more likely to isolate individuals, (Nasution et al., 2023; Purnomo et al., 2023; Saputra et al., 2025). The impact of a lack of good social relationships among adolescents is worth looking at. Students who experience difficulties in social interaction tend to experience stress and decreased motivation. They often experience social anxiety which can worsen the situation, including bullying, (Ratnawati, 2020; Ulfianasari et al., 2022). The lack of interaction can result in significant long-term impacts on adolescents' mental health and their overall quality of life, (Nasution et al., 2023).

Classical services that have been implemented in schools generally focus on large groups, providing generalised information, (Darminto, 2020; Novianti & Tobing, 2020). However, this approach often does not meet the needs of individuals with regard to specific social relationship issues. Therefore, there is an urgent need to develop more targeted approaches, such as Problem Based Learning (PBL), (Friska Realita et al., 2022). PBL, which prioritises solving real problems, can lead students to take an active role in analysing and finding solutions to the social problems they face, as well as improving their social skills in a real context, (Kusumah & Rosiana, 2023). The advantages of PBL lie in its ability to activate student engagement, providing them with opportunities to practice social skills and collaborate in relevant situations, (Nur Azmy & Hartini, 2021). This approach not only enhances students' understanding of healthy social relationships but also fosters a higher sense of empathy, (Novianti & Tobing, 2020). Thus, this study aims to explore the application of PBL in improving social relationships of students in class XI F3. The hope of this study is to have an overview of how a problem-based approach can positively impact students' social well-being in school.

The urgency of this study lies in improving the quality of social relationships among students, which has great implications for their social and emotional development. With social problems such as bullying and isolation, better approaches to help students build the necessary social skills are essential. This research is expected to contribute to more effective guidance services in schools, with more focus on interactive learning that can be applied in their daily social context.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used the Guidance and Counselling Action Research (PTBK) approach with quantitative and qualitative methods. This approach was chosen to provide a comprehensive picture of the changes that occurred in students from the qualitative side, such as improvements in social interactions, as well as quantitative measurements of measurable changes, such as levels of engagement and empathy. The subjects of this study consisted of 29 students in class XI F3, with 22 students identified as experiencing problems in social relationships. They were the focus of the intervention as they had difficulties in interacting with classmates or managing their social relationships. The study was implemented in two cycles to ensure that the intervention provided could be evaluated and adjusted to achieve optimal results.

Each cycle in this study consisted of four main stages. The first stage is planning, where the researcher develops a Service Implementation Plan (SSP), materials to be used, educational videos, as well as case studies relevant to the social relationship problems faced by students. The second

stage is implementation, namely the provision of classical services with a Problem-Based Learning (PBL) approach, where students engage in group discussions and simulations designed to encourage their social skills. This approach allows students to actively solve social problems faced in groups, providing them with opportunities to improve communication and cooperation.

The third stage is observation, where the researcher records students' development in terms of empathy and social interaction. This observation involves recording students' attitudes, behaviours, and reactions during discussion and simulation activities. Finally, the reflection stage, where the results that have been achieved are evaluated to determine the effectiveness of the interventions that have been carried out, as well as to design improvements for the next cycle. Data was collected using questionnaires, interviews, and documentation. Questionnaires were used to measure measurable changes in social relationships, while interviews and documentation provided more in-depth descriptions of students' experiences. The data collected was analysed descriptively to describe the changes that occurred and comparatively to compare the students' conditions before and after the intervention.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Pre-Action

Prior to the intervention, the initial assessment results showed that students' social relationships were in the moderate category, with an average score of 62.06%. This indicated significant problems in their social relationships, especially in the aspect of empathy, where many students showed individualistic attitudes that hindered communication and collaboration between classmates. Another problem found was the presence of minor conflicts between students, which were more temporary but enough to disrupt the smooth running of their social interactions. Most students found it difficult to empathise with friends who had different opinions or views, leading to a lack of understanding of the importance of good cooperation and communication in their social environment.

Cycle I

In Cycle I, the intervention started with two meetings, where students were divided into small groups to discuss case studies about conflicts in friendship. Following these sessions, there was a significant improvement in students' social relationships, with the average questionnaire score reaching 77.93%. This improvement reflects that students began to show greater interest in discussing and sharing opinions within the group. They began to be more open in conveying ideas and communicating more effectively. However, some students are still less reflective in realising the impact of their actions on their peers. Some students have not fully internalised the importance of empathy and cooperation in solving existing social problems. This suggests that despite the progress, a more in-depth and contextualised approach is still needed to optimally develop their social skills.

Cycle II

In Cycle II, a more contextual approach was taken by using simulations of real conflicts, such as differences of opinion in an organisation. In this session, students were given the opportunity to perform empathic roles, communicate, make group agreements, and reflect on their interactions. The results showed more significant progress, with the average score increasing to 87.93%. In addition, 85% of students showed active empathic behaviour, which means they were able to understand and feel the feelings of their friends who had different views or who were facing problems. This simulation approach provides students with hands-on experience to resolve conflicts and work together to find solutions, which strengthens their social and emotional skills. By conducting simulations, students can learn more about the importance of empathy and co-operation in real situations, which brings a positive impact in their social relationships.

Discussion

The results of this study show that the application of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) approach in group guidance can significantly improve students' social relationships, especially in the aspects of empathy and social interaction. Before the action was taken, the initial assessment results showed that the average score of students' social relationships was in the moderate category, namely

62.06%. This reflected significant problems in students' social relationships, such as a lack of empathy, individualistic attitudes, and mild conflicts between students. These problems indicate that students need support in developing social skills, particularly in terms of empathising and collaborating.

In Cycle I, the intervention was carried out by dividing students into small groups and discussing case studies regarding friendship conflicts. The results showed significant improvement, with the average questionnaire score reaching 77.93%. Students began to show more active involvement in the discussion and began to express their opinions. This shows that PBL can encourage students to be more open and share their views within the group. However, despite the improvement, some students were still less reflective, indicating that they had not fully understood or internalised the skills learned. This became an important concern for the improvement of the intervention in the next cycle.

Cycle II brought a more contextualised approach by using simulations of real conflicts, such as dissent in organisations. This approach gave students the opportunity to play empathic roles, make group agreements, and reflect on their interactions. The results showed more significant progress, with the average score increasing to 87.93%, and 85% of students showing active empathic behaviour. This indicates that simulations that are more relevant to real situations are able to deepen students' understanding of the importance of empathy and cooperation. Direct experience in solving social problems through simulation gives students the opportunity to better understand others' perspectives and learn to collaborate in resolving conflicts.

The success of PBL in improving social relationships is in line with Vygotsky's social constructivist theory, which emphasises that learning occurs through social interaction and collaboration with others. Vygotsky stated that students' social skill development is strongly influenced by their social context and interactions with other individuals. In this study, students learnt through group discussions and shared reflections, which strengthened their social skills through hands-on experience. This process facilitates better internalisation of social skills and allows students to apply them in their daily lives. The Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) model from CASEL (2020) also provides a theoretical basis that supports these findings. SEL emphasises the importance of developing social and emotional skills, including empathy, emotion management, and healthy communication skills. The application of PBL in this study provided space for students to practice these skills in a real and relevant context, which in turn improved their social relationships. PBL allows students to learn not only from theory, but also through practical experiences involving concrete social skills.

Overall, this study shows that PBL is an effective method to improve students' social relationships, especially in the aspects of empathy and social interaction. By combining active learning and reflection, PBL provides opportunities for students to thrive in an environment that supports their social-emotional development. Therefore, this approach has great potential to be applied more widely in guidance and counselling services in schools, to help students overcome the social challenges they face and strengthen their social skills for the future.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study underline the importance of a contextualised and applicable approach in social guidance, which allows students to practice social skills in a supportive environment. Classical services with a Problem Based Learning approach were significantly able to improve students' social relationships. The improvement occurred in the aspects of empathy, communication, and conflict resolution. PBL as an approach in classical guidance services is proven to be able to create contextualised and participatory learning, which encourages students to understand the feelings and perspectives of others. It also shows that interventions involving simulation of real social problems are more effective in preparing students to face social challenges in their daily lives. It is hoped that the application of this technique can continue to be applied and developed in schools to improve the quality of students' social relationships and social skills more thoroughly.

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