

Implementing Group Counseling to Change Student's Insight Pattern about Learning in the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The learning system that suddenly changes becomes a learning problem students experienced. The current research will reveal whether the application of group counseling during the Covid-19 pandemic can change students' insight about the learning system and process. The research subjects are students of the VII grade and the VIII grade in a junior high school in Barru city. To determine the number of the sample, the researcher used purposive sampling technique with certain consideration, namely 15 students whose negative perception about the learning system during the Covid-19 pandemic condition. To collect data, researchers applied observation technique, distributed questionnaire, and took documents. The results of the current study indicate that after being given group guidance during several meetings, from those 15 students, 10 students (66.66%) strongly agree with the learning system applied in this Covid-19 pandemic condition, 5 students (33.33%) agree, there are no students who disagree and strongly disagree.

Keywords

Covid-19 condition, group counseling, learning problem, students' insight

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INTRODUCTION

The quality and learning process in schools is currently experiencing a big challenge due to the spread of the Covid-19 virus. Various sources state that Covid-19 is a global pandemic whose spread is so worrying (Nugroho, 2020). As a result, the government is working with all parties to reduce the rate of the Covid-19 spread by issuing a policy that citizens carry out social and physical distancing. With this policy, all teacher and student activities that are usually carried out in schools must now be stopped. Learning activities are transformed into online learning from their own homes.

The application of social distancing also has an impact on the application of systems and learning processes in schools. In the emergency period of the spread of the virus, the government urges all educational institutions not to carry out direct or face-to-face teaching and learning processes. Learning must be done remotely or online.

The online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic was a very important aspect of the education process. Education can provide results as expected if three main aspects exist, namely learning, training, and guidance. To get good educational results, all educational institutions must carry out well, comprehensively, and professionally the guidance process.

Learning is a process of changing individual behavior through interaction with the environment (Michael, 1962). The learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic is still carried out even though a lot of improvement is always needed in term of its implementation at schools. Implementation of learning in the situation of the corona virus spread should ideally be carried out by all counseling teachers in schools. This has not been maximally realized because there are still many schools that carry out the guidance process but the implementer are not counselors or counseling teachers who are qualified as expert counselors.

In carrying out the task of mentoring during the Covid-19 pandemic, one of the activities carried out by the counseling teacher is providing group guidance to students in a limited number and distance saving. However, this is still a problem. One of the problems that often arise is that there are still many students who are anxious when faced by the counseling teacher. Some students sometimes feel scared even though it is only for an attendance check activity.

According to Olson (2003) many students still think that the school counselor is the school police and only deal with students with problems. As a result, students feel anxiety when faced by the counseling teacher. Students are rarely even reluctant to come by their selves to the counseling teacher. This indirectly makes it difficult for them to obtain guidance services optimally.

Students are sometimes afraid of the counseling teacher because they think that students who are confronted by their counseling teacher have problems or have violated the rules. In addition, there is a negative insight in them about the figure of the school counselors or counseling teachers. Based on the background previously mentioned, the researcher investigated the implementation of group counseling to change student's insight pattern about learning in the Covid-19 pandemic.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Anna (1944) and supported by Glauber (1953), Group counseling services are efforts made by counselors to help solve personal problems through group activities in order to achieve optimal development. Through this process, students can combine all their potential and abilities to overcome the problems they face. In line with the opinion of the two experts, Knight (2015) through his research explains that group counseling is assistance to individuals in group situations that are preventive and healing, and are directed at providing convenience in their development and growth.

Luthans (2005) states that group counseling is defined as the process of providing guidance and assistance carried out by utilizing group dynamics. This guidance involves a mediator, namely a professional counselor to guide the implementation of providing assistance so that students can overcome the problems faced and can develop a good personality in harmony with their environment. In practice, group members interact to one another and share experiences to solve a problem faced by group members. The assistance and guidance provided is still individual, but in a group atmosphere with the hope that group members can overcome the problems they face.

In a research conducted by Piatak (2016), it was revealed that group guidance is a kind of counseling services that allow students to have the opportunity to discuss and alleviate the problems they experience through group dynamics. Group dynamics are lively, pulsating, moving, characterized by interactions among group members. Group counseling is one of the counseling services, in an effort to help dynamic interpersonal individuals and conscious behavior, which is held in a group setting.

The current situation of the Covid-19 pandemic that still occurred, forces the learning system to adapt to new normal condition. Many students are not ready for the conditions of learning that take place in pandemic conditions as a policy of the government. Teachers and students must implement the virus prevention protocol in all activities, included in the teaching and learning activity (Aida, 2020).

This pandemic situation has suddenly changed the system and learning process. If under normal conditions previously, learning is generally done directly face to face, then it is easier for teachers to directly control student learning outcomes. Through face to face directly, the teacher also provides feedback and reinforcement to students who find problems in learning. However, when faced with online learning where teachers and students do not meet directly in one room, everything becomes difficult, especially for students.

A research conducted by Rahardjo and Pertiwi (2020) has emphasized the need for maximum effort from teachers and counselors to maintain student motivation and performance in learning. The change in the learning system that occurred during this period had an impact on students' motivation and performance. Therefore, the role of teachers and counselors is very vital to change students' insights about the learning system in these conditions.

Teachers' role in changing students' insight towards learning is very important. This has been indicated in a study conducted by Haryanto, Weda, and Nashruddin (2018) that the teaching and guidance provided by the teacher is very important to shape the character of students. That research indicates that the principles of politeness that the teacher applies in the learning process can be an alternative to provide insights to students about the value of learning.

Flemming, Booth, Hannes, Cargo, and Noyes (2018) had also investigated the contemporary and new developments for the implementation and the evaluation process of group guidance for the use of learning. The findings of that research prove that some guidelines can be applied in the implementation of group guidance services as an effort to broaden students' insight about learning. The main concern for researchers is to maintain students' enthusiasm for learning despite changes in the system due to the different condition and situation from usual.

Another research conducted by Abdi, Sugiharto, and Sutoyo (2019) in relation to the importance of providing guidance to students in dealing with unusual learning conditions. Those researchers investigated the psychological conditions felt by students in learning. Conditions, systems, and processes that suddenly change certainly affect the students' psychology. Therefore, that research concluded the importance of teachers and counselors to continue providing guidance to students.

Difficulties found by students if they learn in an unusual situation could also be overcome by the implementation of the guidance services. That had been examined by Nashruddin, Alam, and Tanasy (2020) through a descriptive qualitative research. Those researchers wanted to investigate how the perceptions of teacher and students about online learning. That study found that initially the students' perceptions were different, and some of them felt difficulties. However, after they were given group guidance services from teachers, all students were able to implement it successfully.

According to Westwood (2008) the goals to be achieved in counseling are personal development, discussion and solving of personal problems experienced by all group members in order to avoid problem through the help of other group members. The role of those members is in actively discussing various problems. It is strengthened also by William (2009) that the main purpose of group counseling in learning process is the personal development and social development of group members as well as improving the quality of teamwork for a variety of meaningful purposes for the participants.

After conducting an experimental study, Hong, Greene, Roberson, Francis, and Keenan (2017) concluded that the goal of group counseling is to follow the wishes of the counselor to:

- increase learning insight
- guidance in decision making
- develop awareness
- improve personal qualities
- help in self-acceptance

Another opinion about the purpose of group counseling was expressed by Moriña (2017). The research she conducted indicated that the goals of group counseling include:

- directing students to be able to improve their abilities
- helping students to overcome personal problems
- training students to be skilled in making decisions
- providing instructions in solving problems
- directing the individual development process
- directing students to take actions based on their abilities

According to Murk (2006) there are two techniques that are usually applied in the implementation of group counseling, namely general technique and game technique. The general technique in group counseling was further described by Tosun (2015) in a study, that the general technique refers to the development of group dynamics that are recognized by all group members to achieve service objectives. Furthermore, game technique had been studied by Wang, Sun, and Wickersham (2017) and they found that in group counseling, game techniques could be applied, either as a distraction or as a medium containing certain coaching materials.

Insight is an integral part of the learning process, and is a mental activity that takes place continuously (Adams & Pierce, 2006). The process that takes place is acquiring knowledge and manipulating knowledge that is learning, analyzing, understanding, assessing, reasoning, imagining, and expressing. This opinion is confirmed by Kettunen, Vuorinen, and Sampson Jr (2015) through their research that insight is one of the critical success factors in learning.

According to Artiles, Koleski, and Christensen (2006), in teaching, teachers should apply the principles of fun and contextual learning. Furthermore, Barker (2008) added that teachers need to use varied methods, be skilled in good classroom management. In relation to the development of the modern world, from the result of their research, Heift and Schulze (2015) suggested that teachers should be able to utilize sophisticated and up-to-date media, attract students' attention, and evaluate properly.

RESEARCH METHOD

This quantitative descriptive study is carried out at a junior high school in Barru Regency. The approach used in this research is a quantitative approach that relies on the collection and analysis of quantitative data, using a questionnaire. The sample was 15 students from grades VII and VIII who were selected using purposive sampling technique.

Tabel 1. The Research Sample

No	Grades	Boys	Girls	Sampel
1	VII	4	5	9
2	VIII	3	3	6
	Total	7	8	15

The data analysis technique used in this research is descriptive statistics in the form of a percentage. Data was analyzed quantitatively with the following formula:

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

Note:

F : Frequency

N : Number of Respondents

P : Percentage Figure

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

From 15 samples studied, 10 students (66.66%) state that they strongly agree if group counseling activities during the Covid-19 pandemic helps them in overcoming their learning problems, 5 students (33.33%) agree, no one disagrees, and no one strongly disagrees. This is shown in the following table.

Tabel 2. Group counseling helps to alleviate problems

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
strongly agree	10	66,66%
agree	5	33,33%
disagree	-	-
strongly disagree	-	-
Total	15	100%

From 15 samples studied, 8 students (53.33%) strongly agree that group counseling activities during the Covid-19 pandemic are still carried out in schools, 7 students (46.66%) agree, and no one said they disagree and strongly disagree. It is presented in the following table.

Tabel 3. Group counseling needs to be carried out in school

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
strongly agree	8	53,33%
agree	7	46,66%
disagree	-	-
strongly disagree	-	-
Total	15	100%

The data above indicates that 15 students (100%) state that they agree if group counseling activities are still held in schools to help students overcome their learning problems.

Furthermore, related to the implementation of group counseling during the Covid-19 pandemic makes students more open to express opinions. From 15 students

who are used as the research sample, 2 students (13.3%) strongly agree, 2 students (13.3%) agree, 10 students (66.6%) disagree, and 1 student (6.66%) strongly disagrees. The following table is presented.

Tabel 4. Group counseling makes students more open to expressing opinions

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
strongly agree	2	13,30%
agree	2	13,30%
disagree	10	66,66%
strongly disagree	1	6,66%
Total	15	100%

This data shows that only a small proportion of students think group counseling can make students more open to expressing opinions.

Furthermore, the statement about the counseling guidance during the Covid-19 period really needs to be implemented in schools, from 15 students, 7 students (46.66%) strongly agree, 7 students (46.66%) agree, 1 student (6.66%) disagrees, and no one strongly disagrees. This can be seen in the following table.

Tabel 5. Counseling guidance really needs to be implemented in schools

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
strongly agree	7	46,66%
agree	7	46,66%
disagree	1	6,66%
strongly disagree	-	-
Total	15	100%

This indicates that most students state that counseling is necessary in school. From 15 students, 14 students agree with the statement that counseling really needs to be held in schools. Only 1 student disagrees with the statement.

Regarding the role of counseling guidance during the Covid-19 period, it is as important as learning activities. There are 7 out of 15 students (46.66%) who agree and 8 students (53.33%) who disagree. No one strongly agrees and strongly disagrees.

Tabel 6. Counseling guidance is as important as learning activities

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
strongly agree	-	-
agree	7	46,66%
disagree	8	53,33%
strongly disagree	-	-
Total	15	100%

This data illustrates students who agree are less than students who disagree with the statement that counseling guidance during the Covid-19 pandemic is as important as learning activities. However, the difference is not very significant.

Finally, regarding the statement that group counseling is a method that can be applied to change students' insights about learning. After the researcher summarizes the data from the questionnaire results, it is found that 21.34% of respondents strongly agree that group counseling during the Covid-19 pandemic can be applied to change students' insights about learning, and 36.62% of respondents agree. There are no respondents who disagree with the statement.

CONCLUSION

From the results of the research data analysis that has been carried out, the researcher draws the following conclusions:

- Teachers can apply group counseling as an alternative method to change students' insights about learning in the current covid-19 pandemic.
- The results of data analysis indicate that the implementation of group counseling can change students' insights, especially junior high school students, about learning during the Covid-19 pandemic.

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