# Group Guidance Using Assertiveness Training Techniques **Improves Students' Interpersonal Communication Skills**

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## ABSTRAK

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## **ABSTRACT**

Keterbatasan dalam berkomunikasi interpersonal dapat menghambat perkembangan sosial siswa, serta mempengaruhi kemampuan siswa dalam membangun hubungan yang sehat, namun masih banyak remaja yang kurang memiliki kemampuan komunikasi interpersonal. Tujuan penelitian ini yaitu menganalisis pengaruh bimbingan kelompok menggunakan teknik assertive training dalam meningkatkan kemampuan komunikasi interpersonal siswa. Jenis penelitian adalah penelitian eksperimen dengan desain non-equivalent Control Group Design. Populasi penelitian berjumlah 362 orang siswa. Sampel penelitian ini yaitu 33 orang siswa. Metode yang digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data yaitu wawancara, kuesioner dan observasi. Instrumen yang digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data yaitu lembar kuesioner. Teknik yang digunakan untuk menganalisis data yaitu analisis statistik inferensial. Hasil penelitian menunjukan bahwa skor kemampuan komunikasi interpersonal kelompok kontrol meningkat dari 166,1 menjadi 167,1, sementara rata-rata skor kemampuan komunikasi interpersonal siswa kelompok eksperimen meningkat. Hasil uji hipotesis menunjukan terdapat perbedaan pada hasil kemampuan komunikasi interpersonal pada kedua kelompok. Disimpulkan bahwa teknik assertive training efektif dalam meningkatkan kemampuan komunikasi interpersonal siswa kelas VIII setingkat SMP/MTs.

Limitations in interpersonal communication can hinder students' social development and affect students' ability to build healthy relationships, but many adolescents still lack interpersonal communication skills. This study aims to analyze the effect of group guidance using assertive training techniques in improving students' interpersonal communication skills. The type of research is experimental research with a nonequivalent Control Group Design. The study population amounted to 362 students. The sample of this study was 33 students. The methods used to collect data are interviews, questionnaires, and observations. The instrument used to collect data is a questionnaire sheet. The technique used to analyze data is inferential statistical analysis. The results showed that the control group's interpersonal communication skills score increased from 166.1 to 167.1, while the average score of the experimental group students' interpersonal communication skills increased. The results of hypothesis testing show differences in interpersonal communication skills in both groups. It is concluded that the assertive training technique effectively improves the interpersonal communication skills of grade students at the junior high school level.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Communication plays a crucial role in building good relationships between individuals and on a societal scale in general. The goal of communicating is to convey a message so that it can be received by another person or group of people, hoping to achieve understanding and meet the desired needs (Alhaddad et al., 2015; Oktasari et al., 2019). The purpose of communication includes the need to be understood, appreciated, and accepted by others (Abdien, 2019; Oyedemi & Mogano, 2018; Shankar et al., 2021). Interpersonal communication is an individual's ability to communicate effectively and efficiently with others in social interactions involving the exchange of information, understanding, and responses between individuals (Kasmahidayat & Marcia, 2018; Rizky & Moulita, 2017). Interpersonal communication is unique because the individuals involved in the interaction create meaning in the communication process.

Understanding the message's meaning becomes important (Musrifah, 2021; Prasetyo & Anwar, 2021; Widiarti, 2017). Interpersonal communication can still occur even without verbal communication. Thus, interpersonal communication has a deeper depth than general communication.

However, the current problem is that many students still need better interpersonal communication skills. This finding is supported by previous research stating interpersonal communication skills and low self-confidence in junior high school students (Anggeraini & Farozin, 2019; Purba & Indriana, 2015). Students face challenges in building effective relationships with others. Students experience difficulties due to a lack of communication skills, resulting in problems in interpersonal relationships (Kesitawahyuningtyas & Padmomartono, 2014; Trisnani et al., 2016). Students face difficulties understanding and coping with various problems in their relationships with others. If these problems are handled properly and receive adequate attention, this can positively impact students' academic and non-academic achievements and social relationships (Munawaroh & Lubis, 2017; Widodo & Rozhana, 2018).

Low interpersonal communication skills in students impact the many problems that arise. How individuals perceive communication skills and problem-solving affects their approach to solving and overcoming problems. This shows that students with low communication skills also tend to have low problem-solving skills (Anggeraini & Farozin, 2019; Purba & Indriana, 2015). This aligns with interviews conducted with isolated students found through sociometric test results at MTsN 1 Bukittinggi. The analysis shows that isolated students are less able to interact with their classmates, meaning that isolated students have low interpersonal communication skills. Ineffective communication between two or more individuals can result in protracted conflict and damage relationships established for years. Students must have good interpersonal communication skills and overcome the associated difficulties. Therefore, the role of guidance and counseling teachers is very important in helping students face and reduce difficulties in interpersonal communication. One solution that can be offered to overcome interpersonal communication problems in students is by conducting counseling guidance. At the same time, guidance and counseling contain the interaction process between the counselor and the client as the subject and object of his knowledge (Hariko, 2016). This aims to help students achieve developmental tasks to the maximum (Juliawati, 2019; Oktaviani & Syawaluddin, 2023). The role of counselors or Guidance and Counseling Teachers as school educators in organizing guidance and counseling is important for improving students' potential and talents. Guidance and Counseling Teachers have a strategic role in guiding students to develop effective communication skills and helping them overcome problems related to interpersonal relationships (Amala & Kaltsum, 2021; Sentana et al., 2019).

Guidance and counseling are services that play an important role in supporting primary and secondary education. This is because guidance and counseling help students develop the skills and abilities needed to achieve educational goals (Ahmad, 2013). Guidance and counseling teachers can provide various services to students with difficulty in interpersonal communication skills (Gunawan & Amalia, 2020; Yuliastini et al., 2020). Communication skills are one of the main skills counselors must master to carry out counseling practices (Hariko, 2017). Counseling services provide opportunities for students to develop Effective Daily Living and deal with Disrupted Effective Daily Living that occurs in students' daily lives. In this case, one form of service that can be provided is group guidance.

Group guidance has several advantages in helping students to improve their interpersonal communication skills (Putri, 2019; Riansyah & Wulandari, 2017). Intensive group dynamics and discussion of these topics encourage the development of feelings, thoughts, perceptions, insights, and attitudes that support the realization of more effective behavior. From group guidance, students can gain experience, knowledge, and information related to the ability to communicate with peers (Suryani, 2017; Utamy et al., 2021). Group guidance is seen as one of the services every student needs. Group services and guidance specifically aim to meet students' self-development needs (Istatik et al., 2020; Putri, 2019; Riansyah & Wulandari, 2017). In addition, group guidance also provides an opportunity for students to gain support and input from peers and professional guidance. This helps students improve their interpersonal communication skills and strengthen their ability to communicate with others. Providing assertive training techniques in group guidance is expected to be the best solution for students' interpersonal communication skills. Assertive Training Technique is a training method used to train someone to express themselves firmly and honestly without hurting other people's feelings (Amaliyah et al., 2016; Dewantari, 2017). This involves an individual's ability to communicate their desires and thoughts while still being considerate of the feelings and rights of others.

Previous research findings also stated that group guidance services can make it easier for students to improve positive behavior (Arimbi, 2020; Istatik et al., 2020). Previous research also revealed that group guidance services improve students' interpersonal communication (Affandi et al., 2020; Yuliana, 2019). To build quality interpersonal relationships, students need to master social skills and reflect through the ability to interact and behave according to certain situations to be socially accepted by others. In this study,

assertive training is one effective solution to this problem. However, there has yet to be a study on group guidance using assertive training techniques to improve students' interpersonal communication skills. Based on this, this study aims to analyze group guidance's effect on improving students' interpersonal communication skills using assertive training techniques.

#### 2. METHOD

This type of research includes experimental research with a non-equivalent Control Group Design. This semi-experiment design uses an experimental group and a control group (Creswell, 2014). This experimental research design has a control group and an experimental group that is not selected randomly and given a pre-test to determine the initial condition of each individual to be sorted into an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group is then given treatment, while the control group is not. This is intended to determine whether there is a difference between the experimental and control groups. Measurements are done twice before and after the experiment using the same instrument: a questionnaire. In this study, researchers provide treatment, and the changes that occur due to the treatment are then seen.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### Result

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of group guidance services using assertive training techniques to improve students' interpersonal communication. The data obtained are the results of pretests and post-tests related to students' interpersonal communication skills. Interpersonal communication instruments are used to determine the condition of students' interpersonal communication. Based on the results of the sum of the values obtained from giving pre-tests to respondents, the average value in the experimental group was 133, while in the control group, it was 166.1. From these results, the researcher treated the experimental group using assertive training technique group guidance services. In the control group, group guidance services were carried out without special treatment or with discussion techniques.

Furthermore, treatment was given based on the pre-test results from both groups. After all students were given a questionnaire (pre-test), then two groups were selected with the lowest scores: the experimental group and the control group. The experimental group was given treatment through group guidance using assertive training techniques, while the control group was given group guidance services with discussion techniques. The treatment was carried out in 8 meetings with a time of 1 x 40 minutes for each meeting. The post-test was carried out after the treatment was completed. Then, a post-test questionnaire was given on students' interpersonal communication skills. The purpose of the post-test is to obtain final data on students' interpersonal communication skills. The results of the data analysis show the post-test value after being given treatment in the form of group guidance services using assertive training techniques for the control group. The average value obtained was 191 for the experimental group and 167.1 for the control group.

In hypothesis testing, the Mann-Whitney U test was used. This analysis provides a more comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of assertive training techniques in improving students' interpersonal communication skills without requiring the data to meet the assumption of normal distribution. The results of the data analysis show dig. (2 tailed) of 0.004 <0.05, so it is significant, and the hypothesis proposed by the author can be accepted. This means a significant difference exists between the two groups tested in this study. Thus, the hypothesis "The results of students' Interpersonal Communication skills after group guidance in the experimental group are better than the control group" is accepted. The results of the data analysis are presented in Table 1.

	Interpersonal Communication Skills
Mann-Whitney U	12.000
Wilcoxon W	67.000
Z	-2.877
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.004
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	0.003 <sup>b</sup>

#### Table 1. Mann Whitney U Test

The results of the N-Gain test were used to evaluate the effectiveness of group guidance using assertive training techniques to improve students' interpersonal communication skills. The N-Gain analysis of the results of this study will provide a deeper picture of the effectiveness of the treatment in improving

students' interpersonal communication skills in both groups. Based on the results of the N-gain score test calculation, the average result of the n N-gain score for the experimental group (assertive training technique) was 58.7%, included in the fairly effective category, with a minimum N-gain score of 49% and a maximum of 72%. The average N-gain score for the control group was 8.9%, and it was included in the ineffective category, with a minimum N-gain score of -4% and a maximum of 18%. The results of the N-Gain score test are presented in Table 2.

No. ——	Experimental Group	Control Group
	N-Gain Score (%)	N-Gain Score (%)
1	49	10
2	55	3
3	53	9
4	49	10
5	56	-4
6	69	2
7	58	10
8	55	13
9	72	18
10	71.00	18
Average	58,7	8,9
Minimum	49%	-4%
Maximum	72%	18%

#### Table 2. N-Gain Score Test Results

The results of this analysis indicate that group guidance using assertive training techniques is quite effective in improving students' interpersonal communication skills in class VIII MTsN 1 Bukittinggi. At the same time, group guidance without special techniques is ineffective in improving interpersonal communication skills in eighth-grade MTsN 1 Bukittinggi students.

#### Discussion

The results of this study indicate a difference between students' interpersonal communication skills after providing group guidance services with assertive training techniques and without using assertive training techniques. This is due to several factors. First, group guidance services with assertive training techniques can improve students' interpersonal communication skills. The experimental group that received group guidance treatment using assertive training techniques showed a greater increase in all aspects of interpersonal communication. Students' interpersonal communication skills can be influenced by several aspects, namely openness, empathy, positive attitudes, support, and equality (Prasetyo & Anwar, 2021; Rizky & Moulita, 2017; Widiarti, 2017). Assertive training is a process that helps individuals improve their interpersonal skills (Amaliyah et al., 2016; Dewantari, 2017). Group guidance with assertive training techniques can allow students to practice expressing themselves and solving interpersonal problems with their group mates. Students' interpersonal communication skills become the main focus in improving the quality of their group interactions (Mayasari & Prabowo, 2022; Sumini et al., 2020). This shows the importance of choosing the right method or technique in developing effective interventions for developing students' interpersonal communication skills.

Second, group guidance services with assertive training techniques can improve students' selfabilities. The advantage of the experimental group lies in the use of assertive training techniques specifically focused on developing interpersonal communication skills. This method provides a structured forum for students to practice communication skills in a more focused manner, allowing them to learn how to convey their thoughts, emotions, and needs more effectively (Gading, 2020; Ramadhan et al., 2022; Selfi, 2017). As a result, students in the experimental group could describe clear changes in their interpersonal communication skills. Interpersonal communication skills also affect students' levels of happiness and wellbeing (Prasetyo & Anwar, 2021; Purba & Indriana, 2015). Students who have good interpersonal communication skills tend to be happier because they can interact with others effectively and build positive relationships (Kesitawahyuningtyas & Padmomartono, 2014; Trisnani et al., 2016). This can increase their self-confidence and social acceptance, which in turn can help improve their quality of life and well-being. Interpersonal communication plays an important role in human life. Teenagers especially need a loving attitude and must practice being good listeners and respecting others (Affandi et al., 2020; Munawaroh & Lubis, 2017). Although all students certainly do interpersonal communication, the ability of students to communicate with others is different. Students with high interpersonal communication skills will find it easier to adapt to the environment (Purba & Indriana, 2015; Yuliana, 2019).

Previous findings stated that using assertive training techniques in group guidance makes students more active in discussions because students can express their feelings assertively (Hasbahuddin et al., 2019; Selfi, 2017). Other research also states that this assertive training technique makes it easier to train students' interpersonal communication skills, especially in discussions in group guidance activities (Amaliyah et al., 2016; Ramadhan et al., 2022). Providing group guidance services using assertive training techniques can improve students' interpersonal communication skills. The implication of this study is to provide deeper insight into the impact of assertive training techniques on the progress of students' interpersonal communication in the context of group guidance. Providing assertive training techniques in group guidance is expected to be the best solution for students' interpersonal communication skills.

## 4. CONCLUSION

The data analysis showed differences between the two groups, namely the experimental group, which used assertive training techniques, which proved more effective in improving students' interpersonal communication skills. The success of the experimental group in achieving significant changes highlights the importance of using focused and structured methods in developing students' interpersonal communication skills. It is concluded that providing group guidance services using assertive training techniques can improve students' interpersonal communication skills.

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