

Reducing Public Anxiety in Students Through Behavioral Counseling with Systematic Decentization Techniques

Ni Kadek Oki Yuniantari^{1*}, I Ketut Gading², Kadek Ari Dwiarwati³ 

^{1,2,3} Bimbingan Konseling, Universitas Pendidikan Ganesaha, Singaraja, Indonesia

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ABSTRAK

Banyaknya siswa yang mengalami kecemasan berkomunikasi di depan umumnya disebabkan karena kurangnya rasa percaya diri ketika berkomunikasi dikhalayak umum, sehingga untuk mengatasi permasalahan tersebut, diperlukan adanya bimbingan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan siswa. Adapun tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui apakah konseling behavioral dengan teknik desensitisasi sistematis efektif mereduksi kecemasan berkomunikasi siswa. Penelitian ini tergolong kedalam jenis penelitian kuantitatif menggunakan pendekatan penelitian kuasi eksperimental dengan desain Non-equivalent Control Group. Populasi dalam penelitian ini yakni 199 siswa SMP. Penarikan sampel dilakukan dengan cara scanning untuk mendapatkan subjek, sehingga didapatkan responden sebanyak 32 orang siswa kemudian di bagi menjadi 2 yang dimana hasil yang diperoleh sebanyak 16 orang siswa yang memiliki kecemasan dalam berkomunikasi di depan umum kategori tinggi. Pengumpulan data kecemasan berkomunikasi depan umum dikumpulkan dengan metode pengumpulan data penelitian ini menggunakan jenis data primer yakni teknik kuesioner dengan skala likert. Uji validitas instrumen dilakukan dengan berkonsultasi dengan ahli (expert judgement) sedangkan uji reliabilitas instrumen menggunakan rumus Alpha Cronbach. Hasil analisis penelitian menunjukkan bahwa skor F' hitung ($F'h$) sebesar 26,923 dengan derajat kebebasan (df) 31 dan nilai signifikansi (Sig) 0,00. Skor ini dibandingkan dengan skor F' tabel ($F't$) yang memiliki df yang sama. Hasilnya, skor F' hitung (26,923) lebih besar daripada skor F' tabel (2,659). Sehingga berdasarkan hasil penelitian tersebut, maka dapat disimpulkan bahwa konseling behavioral dengan Teknik desensitisasi sistimatis terbukti efektif dalam mengurangi kecemasan berkomunikasi di depan umum pada siswa SMP.

ABSTRACT

The large number of students who experience anxiety about communicating in public is generally caused by a lack of self-confidence when communicating in public, so to overcome this problem, guidance is needed to improve students' abilities. This research aims to determine whether behavioral counseling using systematic desensitization techniques effectively reduces students' communication anxiety. This research is classified as quantitative using a quasi-experimental approach with a Non-equivalent Control Group design. The population in this study was 199 junior high school students. Sampling was carried out by scanning to obtain subjects, so 32 students were obtained as respondents, then divided into 2, where the results obtained were 16 students who had high category anxiety in communicating in public. Data collection on public communication anxiety was collected using this research data collection method using primary data, a questionnaire technique with a Likert scale. Instrument validity testing was carried out by consulting with experts (expert judgment), while instrument reliability testing used the Alpha Cronbach formula. The results of the research analysis show that the calculated F' score ($F'h$) is 26.923 with a degree of freedom (df) of 31 and a significance score (Sig) of 0.00. This score is compared with the F table score ($F't$), which has the same df . As a result, the calculated F' score (26.923) is greater than the table F' score (2.659). So, based on the results of this research, it can be concluded that behavioral counseling using systematic desensitization techniques has proven effective in reducing junior high school students' anxiety about communicating in public.

*Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: okiyuniantari23@gmail.com (Ni Kadek Oki Yuniantari)

1. INTRODUCTION

Education can be successful if its implementation runs effectively and efficiently. For education to run well, as a student, you need communication to interact both in the learning process and everyday life. Communication is when individuals or groups create and utilize information to establish relationships with the environment and other individuals (Rasimin et al., 2021; Widodo et al., 2021). Communication can be in words or actions that do not involve words. This is used to assess students' understanding and communication skills in front of an audience (Rinaldi, 2019; Widodo et al., 2021). It is further explained that communication is a form of interaction through conveying messages from the sender or speaker to the recipient or interlocutor (Apriatama et al., 2022; Astuti et al., 2017). Through communication, a person can convey ideas or messages to the person they are talking to, so it is very important for humans as a form of social interaction (Rizki & Lestari, 2021; Selenda et al., 2022). The communication process can be carried out through two-way and one-way communication, where two-way communication is generally carried out by two or more people conversing with each other (Lailani & Wibowo, 2019; Ummah & Handayani, 2022). One-way communication is a form carried out by one person to a group of people to achieve a certain goal (Adison & Suryadi, 2021; Widodo et al., 2021). One-way communication in public is generally carried out in front of many people to convey various information (Fitria & Yudhawati, 2019; Ibtandi et al., 2019). It is just that the reality in the field shows that not all students can communicate well in public. People not used to speaking in public will tend to experience communication anxiety, which is indicated by a nervous attitude and not focusing when speaking (Amali, 2020; Bukhori, 2017).

Anxiety is a psychological condition involving fear, worry about the future, and nervousness, which can influence a person's behavior, including normal and undesirable behavior (Gunawan et al., 2022; Suarti et al., 2020). Anxiety has an important role in increasing motivation to achieve goals, but excessive levels of anxiety can have a negative impact (Khairunisa, 2019; Rufaidah & Karneli, 2020). It is further explained that excessive anxiety will hinder students' achievement at school because of the emergence of difficulties in learning, applying knowledge, and taking exams (Hasanah & Saugi, 2021; Julianto et al., 2018). This happens especially when students are faced with difficult subjects and are pursuing high grades. Students who feel anxious about carrying out activities can be considered to have public speaking anxiety, which hinders communication (Amali, 2020; Lianasari & Purwati, 2021). Students who experience public speaking anxiety will have difficulty asking and speaking, especially in learning situations, and feel tense when asked to speak in front of friends (Dhema, 2023; Rasimin et al., 2021). Speaking anxiety is a form of fear that can hinder students' communication skills, even if they have mature thinking (Fatmah et al., 2021; Habibullah et al., 2019). Communication anxiety involves fear and worry when interacting with others, especially the inability to understand or express oneself in a foreign language (Khairunisa, 2019; Kusuma et al., 2023).

Students who experience communication anxiety are often less active in presentations; they may only show understanding by nodding when the material is presented, but after the lesson is finished, students are often confused about the material that has been discussed (Hamandia, 2022; Humaidi et al., 2020). In addition, students who experience anxiety tend to rely on one person in group discussions and feel afraid to present assignments in front of the class (Nafia & Fatah, 2022; Rusman & Nasution, 2021). This aligns with the results of observations and interviews conducted in seventh grade at SMP Negeri 5 Amlapura. Observation results show that many students experience anxiety when making presentations in class. They show symptoms such as being nervous, trying to form groups with smarter students, bringing lots of books as preparation, being reluctant to answer friends' questions, and some even making excuses such as going to the bathroom to avoid their turn to present. During individual presentations, some students experienced difficulty breathing, answering questions, cold sweats, pale faces, and speaking in front of the class. The results of interviews with Guidance Counseling teachers show that many students experience anxiety when communicating, especially in class. They tend to choose to remain silent when teachers ask for opinions, and when asked to present assignments, many feel hesitant and afraid to speak in front of classmates. Only a few students are active, while others just listen and choose to be silent, even though they may not fully understand the lesson material. Some students prefer to answer questions in writing because they feel more comfortable and do not experience embarrassment, inferiority, or lack of self-confidence. If allowed to continue, it will certainly impact students' low self-confidence.

One effort that can be made to overcome students' communication anxiety is by providing behavioral counseling with systematic decentering techniques. Behavioral counseling guidance is a form of guidance carried out by observing individual behavior patterns to solve and provide solutions to problems that arise from deviant behavior patterns (Lianasari & Purwati, 2021; Suardika, 2022). Guidance and counseling are carried out because of legal obligations and to help students develop their potential. The foundation of guidance and counseling is important for counselors who provide guidance and

understanding in providing guidance and counseling services that are logically, ethically, and aesthetically effective (Purnama & Yustiana, 2022; Utari & Lathifah, 2023). The behavioral approach in guidance and counseling aims to change behavior with the belief that humans have the potential for good or bad behavior and that every behavior can be learned (Fauziah et al., 2020; Wahyuni & Efastri, 2019). Behavioral counseling involves systematic desensitization techniques to reduce anxiety and change undesirable behavior (Martin et al., 2022; Zulkifli et al., 2022). This approach focuses on learning principles, which enable changes in human behavior, including undesirable behavior, through experience or learning that leads to permanent behavioral changes (Indika et al., 2022; Yusuf, 2021).

The behavioral therapy approach views behavior as a response to external and internal stimuli. Behavioral counseling aims to eliminate detrimental behavior and encourage new positive behavior (Abdillah & Fitriana, 2021). Systematic desensitization techniques in behavioral counseling help overcome various anxiety-provoking situations, such as phobias and test fears, by reducing the anxiety response through gradual and structured exposure (Almizri & Karneli, 2021; Astuty & Winarso, 2021). Systematic desensitization techniques aim to train clients to respond to anxiety in conflicting ways (Heiriyah et al., 2022; Heiriyah & Aminah, 2022). This involves using relaxation to associate an anxiety-provoking stimulus with a relaxed state, changing the anxiety response gradually. Several previous studies have revealed that applying the behavioral counseling model with systematic desensitization techniques can minimize anxiety in the learning process in ninth-grade junior high school students (Suardika, 2022). Other research results reveal an influence on students' anxiety levels in facing semester exams at STKIP Andi Matappa when implementing systematic behavioral counseling desensitization techniques, which are in the low category (Yusuf, 2021). The results of further research reveal that behavioral counseling services using systematic desensitization techniques can significantly reduce students' feelings of lack of self-confidence (Indika et al., 2022). Based on several research results, it can be said that behavioral counseling using systematic desensitization techniques can positively influence the student learning process. It is just that in previous research, there have been no studies that specifically discuss reducing anxiety about communicating in public in students through behavioral counseling with systematic decentering techniques. So, this research focuses on this study to determine whether behavioral counseling with systematic desensitization techniques effectively reduces students' communication anxiety.

2. METHOD

This research is classified as quantitative using a quasi-experimental research approach with a Non-equivalent Control Group design. The population in this research was 199 people from six classes, taken using purposive sampling techniques. Based on the population data, control, and experimental class samples were selected using the Slovin formula with 16 people each. This research data collection method uses primary data, a questionnaire technique with a Likert scale. The questionnaire technique is used to collect data on adversity intelligence and self-regulation. As well as using documentation techniques to help collect learning achievement data and several other documents. Validity and reliability tests are used to test the questionnaire. This research calculated the content validity test using the Lawshe formula. The empirical validity test on questionnaire items in the SPSS program used Karl Person's technique, Product Moment correlation due to polytomy item scores with a Likert scale. The number of items that will be tested for validity is 32 for the anxiety item about public communication. This research processed the validity test using the SPSS version 25 program. The reliability testing used internal consistency with the reliability criteria coefficient from Cronbach's Alpha and processed using the SPSS version 25 program. Content validity, empirical validity, and reliability were used to test the instrument. The data analysis methods and techniques (assumption tests) in this research use descriptive statistics with analysis techniques using the data distribution normality test, homogeneity of variance test, T-test, and Scheffe test, which are processed using SPSS version 25. I also calculated statistical hypotheses using (1) simple/single regression processed using SPSS version 25. Further, the instrument grid used to examine communication anxiety is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. First Cycle Table of Student Learning Outcomes in the First Cycle

No	Aspect	Indicator	Item Number		Total
			Positive (+)	Negative (-)	
1	Mood aspect	Tense, anxious	2,32	1	3
		Panic		3,31	2
		Worry		4	1

No	Aspect	Indicator	Item Number		Total
			Positive (+)	Negative (-)	
2	Cognitive Aspect	Anxiety and concern regarding an individual's anticipated disaster	5,6,9	7,10	5
3	Somatic Aspect	Immediate aspects (sweat, dry mouth, shallow breathing, rapid pulse)	16	13,18	3
4	Motor Behavior	Nervous, feeling uneasy, not talking much.	8,14,22,25	19,21,23,	7
		Shaking, stuttering speech	17,24		2
		Avoidance behavior (leaving behind something that causes anxiety)	28,30	27,29	4

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The data obtained in this study includes initial test score data and final test score data for anxiety about communicating in public. The initial test score data was obtained from the pre-test scores for anxiety about public communication. The results of the frequency distribution of anxiety about communicating in public can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Comparison of Statistical Data on Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores for the Control and Experimental Groups

Data	Pre-test		Post-test	
	Control Group	Experiment Group	Control Group	Experiment Group
N	8	8	8	8
Lowest Score	104	106	98	86
Highest Score	112	112	108	102
Mean	108.75	109.75	103.25	96.13
Md	109	110	103.5	96.5
Mo	111	112	103	96
SD	2.54	1.92	3.03	4.62

From the table data, it can be seen that there was a decrease in the average score in the control group by $(108.75 - 103.25) = 5.5$, while in the experimental group, there was a decrease in the average score by $(109.75 - 96.13) = 13.62$. The analysis results can be seen in Figure 1 in more detail.

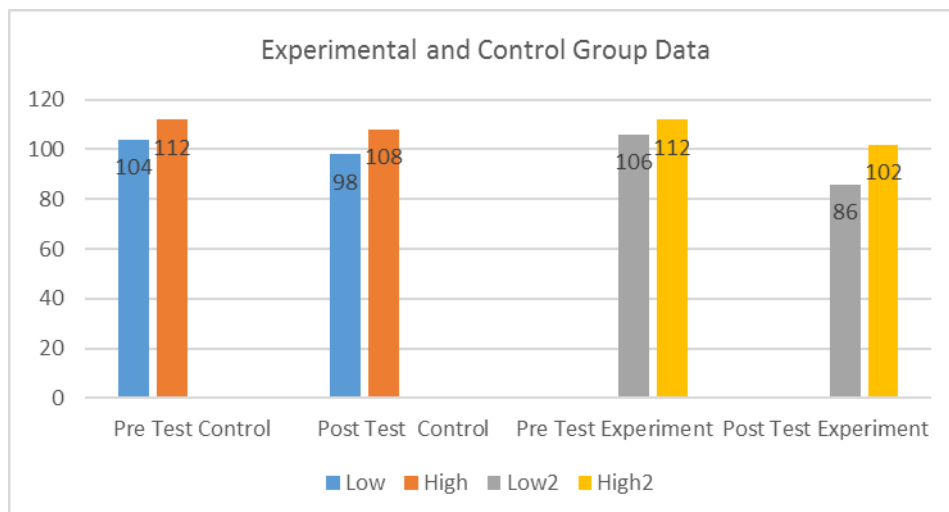


Figure 1. Histogram of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores for the Control and Experimental Groups

After obtaining the pre-test and post-test data, the research continued with the data normality test. The results of the data normality test can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Normality Test

Data	Sig. (2 Tailed)		
	Kolmogorov Smirnov	Shapiro-Wilk	Description
Control Group Post-test	0.200	0.995	Sig (2-tailed) > 0.05= normal
Experimental Group Post-test	0.200	0.361	Sig (2-tailed) > 0.05= normal

The normality test for the distribution of post-test data on public communication anxiety for the control and experimental groups showed a standard error index of 0.100 (P=0.995) and 0.209 (P=0.361), respectively, indicating a distribution close to normal (in the range of up to +2). The results of calculating the normality of the distribution of pre-test and post-test data on anxiety about public communication in the control and experimental groups show that the data collected from class VII students at SMP Negeri 5 Amlapura in this study had a normal distribution. This condition meets the requirements for the analysis to be carried out. The next analysis is the data homogeneity test, which can be seen in [Table 4](#).

Table 4. Homogeneity Test

Data	Levene Statistic	dn	Db	Sig. (2-tailed)	Description
Post-test Anxiety Communicating in Public	1.024	3	28	0.327	Sig 0.327 > 0.05 = Homogen

The results of calculations using the SPSS 25.0 program show that the post-test data on public communication anxiety in this study has a homogeneous variant. Next, the data was analyzed using the t-test to evaluate the effectiveness of behavioral counseling using the Systematic Desensitization Technique in overcoming anxiety about public communication. Comparisons were made between the experimental group (receiving behavioral counseling with Systematic Desensitization Techniques) and the control group (receiving conventional counseling). The t-test results are significant if the t count exceeds the t table. A summary of the results of the independent sample t-test and Scheffe's t-test can be seen in [Table 5](#) and [Table 6](#).

Table 5. T-test

Data	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Post-test Control Group and Experimental Group	12.450	31	0.000

Table 6. Scheffe-test

Data	F'h	F't	df	Sig.	Description
Post-test	26.923	2.659	31	0.000	F'h > F't = sig

In [Table 6](#), the calculated F' score (F'h) is 26.923 with a degree of freedom (df) of 31 and a significance score (Sig) of 0.00. This score is compared with the F' table score (F't) which has the same df. As a result, the calculated F' score (26.923) is greater than the table F' score (2.659). Therefore, the Scheffé test results show a significant difference in communication anxiety between the experimental group (behavioral counseling with Systematic Desensitization Techniques) and the control group (conventional counseling).

Discussion

Based on the research analysis results, it can be seen that behavioral counseling using the Systematic Desensitization Technique is very effective in overcoming students' communication anxiety. These findings then show that the guidance and assistance provided by adults to students will greatly influence students' abilities in both academic and non-academic fields. Behavioral counseling is an approach to guidance and counseling that focuses on changing behavior through concrete steps ([Fauziah et al., 2020](#); [Wahyuni & Efastri, 2019](#)). It recognizes that behavior can be changed through learning and replaced by a new behavior and that individuals have the capacity for good or bad behavior ([Purnama & Yustiana, 2022](#); [Utari & Lathifah, 2023](#)). To make learning more interesting, teachers must continue to innovate with different learning methods. One is public communication, where the teacher gives an investigation assignment about a problem to grouped students. Each student has a specific assignment, and after they complete it, the results are discussed and presented to the class, followed by a discussion. In

the context of class discussions, some students may feel anxious because they have to perform in front of the teacher and classmates. This is caused by the need to feel confident in speaking in front of the class. Not all students have sufficient skills or confidence to overcome this anxiety (Afifah & Nasution, 2023; Azmi et al., 2021).

Humans, as social creatures, are certainly required to have the ability to communicate, and humans use this communication ability to interact with each other. Communication allows humans to exchange thoughts and views to fulfill life's needs (Rizki & Lestari, 2021; Selenda et al., 2022). Public communication is a form of oral communication carried out in front of many people through the process of conveying ideas, thoughts, messages, and opinions to provide information, entertain, and influence listeners through certain methods and structures (Rinaldi, 2019; Widodo et al., 2021). Anxiety that arises in the process of communicating in public often occurs in students who are not used to speaking in front of many people. Communication anxiety is generally caused by internal factors such as students' lack of motivation and self-confidence (Khairunisa, 2019; Rufaidah & Karneli, 2020). Anxiety is a subjective experience involving mental tension and feelings of anxiety as a general reaction to difficulty in coping with problems or insecurity (Amali, 2020; Lianasari & Purwati, 2021; Mulyadi, 2020). Although anxiety is important for motivation, problems arise when students' anxiety is too high and has a negative impact. Anxiety arises from pressure and creates uncomfortable feelings such as fear and worry that influence behavior (Fatmah et al., 2021; Habibullah et al., 2019). Public speaking anxiety usually stems from negative views or irrational thinking, not from a lack of ability (Khairunisa, 2019; Kusuma et al., 2023). It is an emotional response to feelings of threat that may not always be obvious. Healthy anxiety can be motivating, but if it is excessive, it can hurt an individual's physical and mental well-being.

Anxiety experienced by students can disrupt various aspects of life, including learning achievement, especially in the educational context. Students anxious about public speaking often have a negative view of others' judgments of them, leading to a fear of rejection or ridicule. Some students may even skip class or pretend to be sick to avoid talking in class. This anxiety can affect academic achievement, learning motivation, and student participation. Although asking questions in class is common, some students experience anxiety, which is characterized by symptoms such as sweating, pale face, difficulty speaking, panic, repetition of words, and trembling (Julianto et al., 2018; Nafia & Fatah, 2022; Rusman & Nasution, 2021). The characteristics of communication anxiety can, of course, be overcome through guidance and counseling services. Guidance and counseling services can, of course, be continuous assistance from a mentor with guidance methods and techniques aimed at improving individual development so that they can be independent and make a positive contribution to themselves and the surrounding environment (Hamandia, 2022; Humaidi et al., 2020).

Several previous studies have revealed that applying the behavioral counseling model with systematic desensitization techniques can minimize anxiety in the learning process in ninth-grade junior high school students (Suardika, 2022). Other research results reveal an influence on students' anxiety levels in facing semester exams at STKIP Andi Matappa when implementing systematic behavioral counseling desensitization techniques, which are in the low category (Yusuf, 2021). The results of further research reveal that behavioral counseling services using systematic desensitization techniques can significantly reduce students' feelings of lack of self-confidence (Indika et al., 2022). So, based on several research results, it can be said that behavioral counseling using systematic desensitization techniques can positively influence the student learning process.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis and discussion results, it can be concluded that behavioral counseling using systematic desensitization techniques has proven effective in reducing junior high school students' anxiety about communicating in public. Counselors need to manage students' emotions and concerns to overcome students' anxiety when speaking in front of the class. Hence, Guidance Counseling teachers have an important role in providing training and support to overcome this anxiety, which impacts academic achievement.

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