Content Mastery Services using Small Group Discussion Learning Model to Improve Students' Interpersonal Communication Abilities

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ABSTRAK

Keterampilan komunikasi interpersonal yang kurang baik akan menghambat siswa dalam membina dan memelihara hubungan yang harmonis. Komunikasi yang efektif apabila dimanfaatkan dengan baik berpotensi untuk mencegah dan menyelesaikan permasalahan atau konflik antar individu, kelompok, suku, bangsa, dan ras. Upaya peningkatan kemampuan komunikasi interpersonal siswa dilakukan dengan memberikan layanan penguasaan materi melalui model pembelajaran diskusi kelompok kecil. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengevaluasi efektivitas layanan penguasaan materi melalui model pembelajaran diskusi kelompok kecil dengan membandingkan capaian sebelum dan sesudah perlakuan. Penelitian ini menggunakan metodologi kuantitatif. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian eksperimen semu dengan desain kelompok kontrol non ekivalen. Populasi penelitian adalah siswa SMP, dengan sampel yang diambil dengan teknik Purposive Sampling, yaitu dua kelas yang tergolong dalam kontak interpersonal sedang, yang keduanya ekivalen. Penelitian ini menggunakan paradigma Skala Likert untuk pengumpulan data, yang selanjutnya dianalisis menggunakan Uji Wilcoxon Signed Ranks dan Uji Mann-Whitney U, yang difasilitasi oleh SPSS versi 26. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa layanan penguasaan topik dengan menggunakan model diskusi kelompok kecil secara efektif meningkatkan keterampilan komunikasi interpersonal siswa. Kesenjangan keterampilan komunikasi interpersonal antara siswa dalam kelompok eksperimen, yang menerima layanan penguasaan konten melalui model diskusi kelompok kecil, dan mereka dalam kelompok kontrol, yang hanya diberikan layanan penguasaan konten terstruktur, adalah 0,000, yang menunjukkan probabilitas di bawah 0,05 (0,000 < 0,05).

ABSTRACT

Poor interpersonal communication skills will hinder students in building and maintaining harmonious relationships. Effective communication if utilized properly has the potential to prevent and resolve problems or conflicts between individuals, groups, tribes, nations, and races. Efforts to improve students' interpersonal communication skills are carried out by providing material mastery services through small group discussion learning models. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of material mastery services through small group discussion learning models by comparing achievements before and after treatment. This study uses quantitative methodology. This study is a quasi-experimental study with a non-equivalent control group design. The study population was junior high school students, with samples taken using the Purposive Sampling technique, namely two classes classified as moderate interpersonal contact, both of which are equivalent. This study uses the Likert Scale paradigm for data collection, which is then analyzed using the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test and the Mann-Whitney U Test, facilitated by SPSS version 26. This study concludes that topic mastery services using the small group discussion model effectively improve students' interpersonal communication skills. The gap in interpersonal communication skills between students in the experimental group, who received content mastery services through a small group discussion model, and those in the control group, who were only given structured content mastery services, was 0.000, indicating a probability below 0.05 (0.000 < 0.05).

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1. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary education necessitates a bidirectional approach, incorporating feedback to attain established educational objectives. The objectives in education are solely learning objectives, with the overarching aim of attaining an elevated standard of educational quality. Learning objectives cannot be dissociated from the communication that occurs between educators and learners to foster reciprocal interaction. One of the most important aspects of our social life and the relationships we have with others is communication. The term "interpersonal communication" refers to communication that occurs between a small number of certain individuals who have the goal of achieving certain goals through relationships with several other individuals (Fletcher & Tan, 2021; Wulandari et al., 2020). In line with what was conveyed by previous study the fundamental aspect of learning is the communication process that occurs between teachers and students (Maryanti et al., 2012). After that, if communication and learning actions are carried out effectively, then the learning outcomes will be satisfactory. Interaction is a two-way street, that interaction is also known as an expression of communication, and that there would be no interaction if there was no communication. A procedure, a message, and an influence are examples of what is meant by the word "communication" (Fauziah et al., 2022; Inah, 2015). Communication, if utilized properly and correctly, can prevent and eliminate difficulties or conflicts that occur between individuals, groups, tribes, nations and races, and can even strengthen ties of friendship and strengthen bonds of brotherhood between the world's human inhabitants.

When it comes to meaningful human relationships in a professional setting, interpersonal communication is the primary source of meaningful partnerships. Interpersonal communication skills are key to productive interactions in everyday life (Febtriko et al., 2019; Kiemer et al., 2015). Students must realize that in order to solve the difficulties they face, they need knowledge, perspectives, and positive meanings about interpersonal communication or interpersonal communication in general. Interpersonal communication is a key factor in students' future success. The sending of a message by one person and the receiving of the message by another person or a small group of individuals is an example of interpersonal communication. This type of communication can have a variety of effects and gives those involved the ability to provide quick feedback (Lim & Tan, 2022; Minarsi et al., 2017). In order to be able to create, develop, and maintain friendly, warm, and productive communication with other people, it is necessary to have basic skills that are included in interpersonal communication (Dockrell et al., 2014; Widyastuti, 2017). Previous study also stated that communication that takes place in a dialogical manner is called interpersonal communication (Sahputra et al., 2016). In this type of communication, the communicator anticipates receiving input from the recipient, which results in interaction between the two parties.

It is difficult for students to adjust to their environment if they have low interpersonal communication skills. For example, it is difficult for students to express their point of view during a conversation, difficult to start and end a conversation with older people, and so on. A large number of students, precisely 47.02 percent, do not have strong skills in the field of interpersonal communication (Kanti, 2014; Suryaningsih & Nursalim, 2014). Due to their lack of interpersonal communication skills, they will not be able to build and maintain harmonious relationships. It is inevitable that such individuals will become disconnected from their environment if this situation is allowed to continue (Fani, 2019; Fauziah et al., 2022). The deficient interpersonal communication abilities of kids adversely impact their emotional intelligence in social interactions within the educational setting. Previous study it was also elucidated that proficient communication skills among pupils yield numerous advantages in life, one of which is the establishment of positive social relationships with others (Carolina & Mahestu, 2020). Another opinion it was also elucidated that proficient communication skills among pupils yield numerous advantages in life, one of which is the establishment of positive social relationships with others (Fikriyanda et al., 2021; Putri & Sawitri, 2020).

According to a statement from the American Research Institute RAND which shows that junior high school is a crucial age for early adolescents, research data shows that 57.65% of junior high school students are included in the problematic category (Wendari et al., 2016). This is in accordance with the statement. From several researchers who study interpersonal communication such as research conducted by previous study it is generally known that the percentage of students involved in interpersonal communication with each other is included in the medium group, which is 34%, while the percentage included in the low category is 41% (Shahid et al., 2022). Specifically, as many as 67.4% of students are included in the low group, namely a group characterized by the inability of students to develop and adapt to their social environment, feel uncomfortable when talking to people they don't know, and do not dare to express their thoughts in public (Black et al., 2015; Dockrell et al., 2014).

Based on the description that has been presented previously, it is known that the level of interpersonal communication skills is still not visible. This can be seen from the Likert scale model given to students and the information that researchers obtained from guidance and counseling teachers at the

school. Previous study state speech, language, and/or communication development impacts a variety of aspects, including scholastic progress in school, general abilities, positive relationships with others, and employment opportunities (Silviana et al., 2021). Lack of training for students in interpersonal communication is a contributing factor to the low level of effective interpersonal communication (Boonmoh & Kulavichian, 2023; Wariyanti et al., 2018). Therefore, the researcher's goal is to provide students with one of the services offered in Guidance and Counseling (BK), namely content mastery services, to help them improve their ability to communicate with each other in an interpersonal environment.

According to the statement, topic mastery services are considered to be appropriate because they offer a chance for students to overcome their limits in communicating (Safitri & Moesarofah, 2020). The content mastery service is one of the offerings supplied by guidance and counselling. This program assists students in comprehending and cultivating constructive learning attitudes and habits, alongside skills and resources tailored to their learning pace and complexity level (Hasanah et al., 2017; Morrar et al., 2017). Asserted that, as a student, it is vital to comprehend and master topic mastering services. Content mastery services are inadequate if students are merely supplied with material; they require training and practical application through established methods to effectively master interpersonal communication abilities.

Research conducted by previous study emphasizes that the success of interpersonal communication is positive if the result of communication is cooperation, and negative if the result of communication leads to collaboration, conflict, or disagreement (Fauziah et al., 2022). Other study if someone is able to develop an atmosphere that supports the creation of efficient communication, then that person will not have difficulty in creating interpersonal communication, regardless of whether they are in the context of family, society, or school (Yulianti, 2020). The small group discussion learning model is one technique that teachers can use to develop their students' interpersonal communication skills. This model can be used to teach students in small groups. Each group consists of four to five students who participate in the small group discussion learning model which is one component of the teaching and learning process. The purpose of this model is to carry out learning through discussion. To facilitate the development of students' communication skills gradually, this learning model encourages students to involve themselves in the learning process, for example by having the confidence to express their opinions.

As a method for exchanging ideas and experiences, small group discussion is a technique that ensures that every student has an equal opportunity to contribute their views and reactions to the views and reactions of their classmates. Students engage in direct communication with each other, share information, and voice their perspectives to find solutions to problems related to the topic through the use of a model known as small group discussion (Fajrin et al., 2022; Kim & Kim, 2021). To give students the opportunity to stimulate their creativity in the form of ideas or concepts in the problem-solving process, students are given the task of studying the subject matter and explaining its contents in small group discussions. Students will have a greater degree of freedom to voice their points of view, and they will also have the opportunity to share their thoughts with other students and gain a lot of information (Heliawati et al., 2021; Hudriyah et al., 2021). This model is based on a number of learning theories that highlight the fact that students are able to direct themselves and take an active role in their own education. According to previous study in terms of learning, the small group discussion model is directly related to skills in basic and advanced investigation, skills in strengthening, and skills in opening and closing lessons (Djamarah et al., 2010). What is meant by the term "small group discussion learning" is a regular process involving a group of individuals in cooperative face-to-face interaction for the purpose of sharing knowledge, making decisions, and finding solutions to problems. However, not all conversations that take place in small groups are considered discussions.

The problem of low interpersonal communication in students is increasingly interesting to study considering the many negative impacts it has on the students themselves. Therefore, this study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of material mastery services through small group discussion learning models by comparing achievements before and after treatment. The novelty of this study combines content mastery services with small group discussion learning models, which have not been widely applied in an integrated manner in the context of developing students' interpersonal communication skills. This innovation aims to create a more effective, personal, and collaborative learning method in supporting the development of students' social skills.

2. METHOD

Experimental research design, also known as experimental design, is used in this study. The form of design used is a quasi-experimental structure. Experimental research gives researchers the ability to

control both independent and other variables (Yusuf, 2014). This means that the level of certainty of answers to research results can be further controlled in terms of internal and external validity. The quantitative model with the type of research used is a quasi-experiment with a non-equivalent control group design model (Yusuf, 2014). An example of a design that can be considered a quasi-experiment is a control group that does not have the same characteristics as the other groups. This design is a type of experimental design that is carried out with a preliminary trial before the treatment is given and a preliminary trial after the treatment is given to the experimental group and the control group. However, the selection of samples is not done randomly. The quasi-experimental experimental group was given treatment with a small group discussion model in content mastery services to improve students' interpersonal communication skills. While the control group was given content mastery services without using the small group discussion model. After being given treatment, a posttest was given to find out the results of the services that had been implemented.

The pupils who participated in this study were those who were enrolled in the ninth grade at State Junior High School 29 in Padang City. There are a total of 259 students enrolled in the ten classes that make up the ninth grade. The researcher chose class IX as the population for this study because the results of the Likert scale that the researcher obtained showed that there were issues that were directed at the students' interpersonal communication skills. Additionally, the researcher chose class IX as the population because the recommendations of the students' BK teachers at the school were taken into consideration. The sample is a representation of the population in terms of both its size and its characteristics. For the purpose of determining the sample, the researcher employed a technique known as purposive sampling or purposive sampling. The selection of this method of purposive sampling was carried out on the basis of considerations on the level of interpersonal communication skills of the research population, which were found to be at a low level. This was revealed through the utilisation of the interpersonal communication skills instrument.

Based on the results of obtaining instrument data that was administered to students in terms of selecting the experimental group and the control group, the results of the selected considerations were classes IX.8 and IX.9, which would be used as samples in this study. This was due to the fact that both classes were suitable with the considerations that were discussed earlier. One of the prerequisites for carrying out the experiment is that the two sample groups must be comparable to one another. The fact that all of the students in each group had the same level of proficiency in interpersonal communication is the key to the study's equity. By comparing the scores that each group received on the pretest, we were able to determine whether or not the two groups were equivalent (Rahima & Herlinda, 2017; Suardana et al., 2018). The data analysis technique used is descriptive data analysis. Data analysis uses inferential statistical tests using non-parametric methods, especially the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test and the Mann-Whitney formula.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Description of Research Data Results

The results of the data on students' interpersonal communication skills provided for students' interpersonal communication skills before being given content mastery services using the small group discussion model. The overall picture of students' interpersonal communication skills can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Tabulation of Overall Data on Students' Interpersonal Communication Skills

Category	Score interval	f	%
Excellent	≥ 157	4	8.00
Good	127 - 156	21	42.00
Moderate	87 - 126	11	22.00
Poor	67 - 96	14	28.00
Very Poor	≤ 37	0	0
Total		50	100

Base on Table 1, the overall interpersonal communication skills of students are as follows: 14 students fall into the very poor category, comprising 28.00%; 11 students are classified as moderate, representing 22.00%; 21 students are categorised as good, accounting for 42.00%; and 4 students are in the very good category, making up 8.00%. The result of the wilcoxon signed ranks test analysis is show in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Analysis

Test Statistics	Posttest - Pretest
Z	-4.373
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000

Base on Table 2, the probability value of Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) for the interpersonal communication competence of students in the experimental group is 0.005, which is below the threshold of 0.05 (0.005 < 0.05). The null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected, whereas the alternative hypothesis (HI) is accepted. The initial hypothesis examined in this study is validated: "There exists a significant difference in the interpersonal communication skills of students in the experimental group before and after engaging in content mastery services utilising the small group discussion model." The result of wilcoxon is show in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Analysis of Differences

Test Statistics	Posttest - Pretest
Z	-4.376
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000

Base on Table 3, the probability value of Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) for the interpersonal communication competence of students in the experimental group is 0.005, which is below the threshold of 0.05 (0.005 < 0.05). The null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis (HI) is accepted. Consequently, the second hypothesis examined in this study is validated: "There exists a significant difference in the interpersonal communication skills of students in the experimental group, prior to and following their participation in content mastery services." The result of the mann-whitney test is show in Table 4.

Table 4. Results of the Mann-Whitney Test Analysis

Parameters	Results
Mann-Whitney U	164.000
Wilcoxon W	489.000
Z	-2.884
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.004
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	164.000

Base on Table 4, the significance probability (2-tailed) for the interpersonal communication abilities of students in the experimental and control groups is 0.004, which is below the threshold of 0.05 (0.004 < 0.05). The U value (164,000) indicates that the experimental group's ranking (content mastery service employing the small group discussion model) is inferior to that of the control group (content mastery service excluding the small group discussion model). The W value corroborating the U value indicates that the application of topic mastery services through the small group discussion model influences students' interpersonal communication levels.

Discussion

This study concluded that content mastery services using small group discussion models were effective in improving students' interpersonal communication skills. There was a significant difference in students' interpersonal communication skills in the experimental group before (pretest) and after (posttest) the implementation of content mastery services using small group discussion models. There was an increase in students' ability to communicate in interpersonal situations before and after the implementation of the content mastery service (Cong & Li, 2022; Shahid et al., 2022). The experimental group that received services with small group discussion models showed better interpersonal communication skills than the control group, although both groups were placed in the "good" category based on the classification of interpersonal communication skills. The experimental group had a higher score. This study is supported by other findings that highlight the benefits of small group discussions in education. Previous studies have found that small group discussions promote active student engagement, improve social skills, and strengthen interpersonal relationships through collaboration (Callan & Johnston, 2022). Studies by other study mention that collaborative learning models, such as small group discussions, are effective in improving students' communication skills and understanding of learning

materials (Nair, 2018). Other studies have also highlighted the importance of small group interactions for developing students' interpersonal skills, which not only improve academic performance but also social skills (Liu et al., 2017).

This study has several important implications, for teachers and school counselors, the results of this study indicate that small group discussion-based content mastery services can be an effective method for improving students' interpersonal communication skills. This approach can be applied in various subjects to support collaborative learning. For curriculum development, these findings can be the basis for including small group-based learning models in students' social skills development programs. For students, this method helps them improve their self-confidence and ability to interact, which will be useful in their social and professional lives.

However, this study has several limitations that need to be considered. This study may have been conducted on a limited population or sample, so generalization of the results to a wider population should be done with caution. The study only evaluated the effectiveness of the small group discussion model. Other approaches or methods that may also be effective were not explored. If the study was conducted in a short period of time, the results may not reflect the long-term effects of implementing the model. Other variables, such as differences in individual student characteristics or the influence of the learning environment, may have influenced the results but were not revealed in depth. Considering the reinforcement from other articles and the implications generated, this study makes a significant contribution to education, especially in developing interpersonal communication skills through small group discussion-based services. Future researchers are advised to address the existing limitations by expanding the scope of the study and extending the duration of the intervention.

4. CONCLUSION

It is demonstrated that students' interpersonal communication abilities can be improved by the utilisation of content mastery services, as supported by the three hypotheses that were tested in this research. The ability of students to improve their interpersonal communication skills can be improved more effectively through the use of topic mastery services that include small group discussions. In light of the fact that the scores acquired by the experimental group were higher than those obtained by the control group, which utilised content mastery services but did not make use of the small group discussion model, this is clear. For the purpose of encouraging students to be able to carry out good interpersonal communication, both in terms of openness, empathy, support and supportive behaviour, positive attitudes, and similarities, the content mastery service with the small group discussion model that has been proven effective in this study can be concluded to have the goal of encouraging students to be able to communicate effectively with one another.

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