



Strengthening Students' Creative Character Through Group Counseling Services: A Qualitative Study with a Case Study Approach at MTsN 1 Sungai Penuh City

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Abstract. This study addresses the prevalent issue of limited learning creativity among students at MTsN 1 Sungai Penuh City, which manifests as a reluctance to express ideas, a lack of confidence in decision-making, and difficulties in problem-solving. The research aimed to investigate how students' creative character values are strengthened through the provision of group counseling services. It examines all stages of the process: planning, implementation, evaluation, as well as the obstacles encountered and their corresponding solutions. Employing a qualitative case study approach, the study utilized primary and secondary data. Information was gathered through observation, interviews, and documentation, and subsequently analyzed using data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. The validity of the data was ensured through prolonged field engagement, persistent observation, and methodological triangulation. The findings indicate that the planning and implementation of group counseling services were both successful, with guidance and counseling teachers effectively preparing for and using habituation to build students' confidence and learning motivation. The evaluation revealed significant positive changes in students, who demonstrated greater courage to express opinions and enhanced problem-solving abilities. Despite these successes, obstacles such as varied student characters, limited cooperation among group members, and a lack of adequate facilities were identified. In conclusion, the findings highlight that group counseling is a viable and effective strategy for fostering and strengthening creative character in students, with practical implications for improving educational outcomes through a supportive and structured intervention.

Keywords: Group Counseling, Creative Character, Student Creativity, Guidance and Counseling, Qualitative Study.

History Article: Received January 15, 2024. Revised March 03, 2024. Accepted July 30, 2024

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Introduction

National education, rooted in the mandate of the 1945 Constitution and Pancasila, serves to enlighten the nation and shape a dignified civilization (Suwardani, 2020). As mandated by law, the state guarantees that every citizen has the same right to quality

education (Rahmani, 2022). In this context, Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System explicitly states that the goal of education is to develop the potential of students to become creative individuals (Iqbal, 2023). This is in line with the Character Education Strengthening (PPK) program regulated in Presidential Regulation No. 87 of 2017. Creative character, defined as the ability to create new ideas or concepts, is very important in facing the challenges and changes of the times (Maskuroh, 2019). However, a common problem is the lack of creativity among students in the learning process, which is often caused by teacher-centered learning (Rozali et al, 2022).

However, in many schools, including MTsN 1 Kota Sungai Penuh, there are still fundamental problems related to student creativity in learning. This lack of creativity is evident from several indicators, such as students' reluctance to express new ideas, their lack of courage in making decisions, and the difficulties they face in solving problems (Sitepu, 2019). Initial observations and interviews with classroom teachers and guidance and counseling teachers confirm that teacher-centered learning often limits students' space for expression, thereby hindering the optimal development of their creative potential.

To overcome these problems, a systematic and planned intervention is needed. In this case, group counseling services are considered an appropriate approach. These services allow students to discuss and resolve personal problems through group dynamics, where they can learn from the experiences of their peers (Mawarids & Rosita, 2019). Based on the interview results, the principal of MTsN 1 Kota Sungai Penuh also fully supports the use of group counseling services as a collective effort by homeroom teachers and guidance counselors to strengthen students' creative character values, starting from the planning stage to the evaluation stage (Dananjaya, 2023).

Previous studies, such as those conducted by Asrid Diah Amili Putri (Putri & Widiastuti, 2018), I Wayan Dharmayana (Dharmayana & Pratami, 2019), and Egy Novita Fitri (Fitri & Marjohan, 2016) show that group counseling services are effective in increasing students' creativity, motivation, and problem-solving abilities. Based on these findings, this study aims to describe and measure the strengthening of students' creative character values through group guidance services at MTsN 1 Kota Sungai Penuh, by analyzing the stages of planning, implementation, evaluation, as well as existing obstacles and solutions (Wijayanti, 2020). The novelty of this study lies in its comprehensive analysis of the entire cycle of group counseling services in the specific context of strengthening creative character, as well as its practical implications for the educational environment at MTsN 1 Kota Sungai Penuh.

Method

Research Design

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study research design. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to focus on the process and understand the facts that occur directly in the field. Thus, data analysis can be carried out inductively and build theories based on findings at the research site. The case study type was chosen because this research aims to examine in an intensive, detailed, and in-depth manner several cases of students who lack creativity in learning. This is in line with the nature of case studies, which

investigate actual programs or events—in this case, efforts to strengthen creative character through group counseling services at MTsN 1 Kota Sungai Penuh.

The steps taken in this case study research are: (1) determining the case, (2) determining the research questions, (3) selecting the appropriate case, (4) determining the relevant data, (5) preparing the data collection stages, (6) collecting data, (7) analyzing data, and (8) writing the results into a paper (Iswadi et al, 2023). The subjects of this study were 15 students selected through purposive sampling, consisting of 5 seventh-grade students, 5 eighth-grade C students, and 5 ninth-grade C students. Purposive sampling was used in this study. Five students were selected from each grade level. This was considered to be sufficient data saturation. The main instrument in this study was the researcher himself (human instrument), assisted by the following tools, Observation Sheet, Used to observe students' creative characters in their daily lives during group counseling sessions. Interview Guidelines, Structured to guide interviews with informants. Document Analysis, Required to analyze relevant documents from guidance counselors and schools.

Data analysis uses Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which is a continuous process until the data is considered saturated. The three main stages are, Data Reduction, Summarizing and focusing on relevant data, looking for themes and patterns. Data Display, Presenting data in the form of brief descriptions, charts, or matrices to facilitate understanding. Conclusion Drawing/Verification, Drawing preliminary conclusions which are then verified with strong evidence from the field. These conclusions can become new findings that clarify the research object. To achieve data reliability, researchers use three techniques. Extension of Field Studies, Increasing the frequency of visits to the research location to verify the accuracy of the information obtained. Persistent Observation, Conducting careful and continuous observation to accurately record data and the sequence of events. Triangulation, Comparing data from various sources, tools, and different times (for example, comparing interview results with observations) to check the degree of validity of information.

Results

At MTsN 1 Kota Sungai Penuh, an important step has been taken to strengthen students' creative character. Guidance and Counseling (BK) teachers have developed a comprehensive plan as a guideline for implementing group counseling services. This plan was carefully designed, covering several key components such as material selection, objectives, activity targets, resource materials, a series of counseling activities, and an assessment or evaluation plan. In addition, this document also includes the allocation of time and place for implementation, ensuring that the entire process runs in an organized manner. Once completed, this plan was submitted for approval by the principal and the Deputy Head of Academic Affairs and Quality Improvement, marking its readiness for implementation.

Based on observations conducted on February 23, 2024, the learning tools developed by the BK teachers were deemed excellent. The plan contains all the essential components and complies with the standards for planning group counseling services. This shows that the guidance counselors at MTsN 1 Kota Sungai Penuh are highly dedicated and have prepared

everything thoroughly. This structured plan provides clear guidelines so that the strengthening of students' creative character through group counseling services can run more smoothly and effectively, achieving the objectives that have been set.

The implementation of the creative character building program at MTsN 1 Kota Sungai Penuh focuses on enhancing student creativity through group counseling services. In practice, Guidance and Counseling (BK) teachers use several key indicators to measure the success of the program. These indicators include students' ability to express themselves uniquely and generate new ideas, their courage in making quick and accurate decisions, and their problem-solving skills. This program is a direct embodiment of the madrasah's motto, "CREATIVE AND QUALITY," and in its implementation, BK teachers always coordinate with the head of the madrasah as the main policy maker.

This program has shown very positive results. The response from the homeroom teachers of grades VII C, VIII C, and IX C, as well as their students, has been very good. This group counseling service has proven to be effective in increasing student creativity, as seen from several tangible achievements. Now, students are more courageous in expressing their opinions, able to make decisions independently, and successfully overcome various problems in the learning process.

The evaluation of the creative character building program at MTsN 1 Kota Sungai Penuh aims to measure the success of group counseling services in enhancing student creativity. This evaluation process was conducted on three groups of students with specific challenges: first, a group that was unable to come up with original ideas; second, a group that was still hesitant in making quick and accurate decisions; and third, a group that experienced obstacles in learning due to fear and mistakes in their actions.

The guidance counselors at MTsN 1 Kota Sungai Penuh have carried out the evaluation in accordance with the standards, based on the established indicators and objectives. The evaluation technique used was observation. Through observation, teachers collected information about students' progress in developing their creative character. The results of this evaluation are very important because they form the basis for teachers to design improvements and more effective strategies for strengthening students' creative character in the future.

The implementation of creative character building through group counseling services at MTsN 1 Kota Sungai Penuh was not without several obstacles that hampered the process. One of the main obstacles was the diverse characters of the students. This diversity often made it difficult for guidance counselors to unite the group dynamics. In addition, the lack of cooperation among members of the counseling group was also a problem, making it difficult to achieve the objectives of the service optimally.

Another obstacle faced is external factors, namely the limited facilities and infrastructure available at the madrasah. This has the potential to limit the types of activities that can be carried out. Finally, time is also a challenge. The limited time available for group counseling services results in short sessions that are not fully effective. All of these obstacles are important evaluation points for guidance counselors to find better solutions in the future.

Discussion

This section critically interprets and analyzes the findings of research related to group counseling service planning at MTsN 1 Kota Sungai Penuh. The findings show that the planning process carried out by guidance counselors is comprehensive, systematic, and in accordance with theoretical principles (Bahri, 2020). The main conclusion is that this careful planning serves as a crucial foundation that ensures the smooth running and effectiveness of group counseling services (Rimayati, 2023).

These findings directly support and reinforce the implied research objective, which is to show that good planning is a prerequisite for the successful strengthening of students' creative character values. The availability of detailed planning components—ranging from the determination of materials and objectives, activity targets, to evaluation—indicates structured thinking (Uno, 2023). This is not merely a formality, but an operational strategy that actually guides the entire service process (Rosyada, 2023).

This interpretation is consistent with existing literature. As stated by Rauzah, 2023, effective planning can significantly improve the outcomes of group counseling services. This study provides practical validation of this theory, showing that successful implementation in the field is rooted in previously developed tools (Junarto & Suhattanto, 2022).

This study also introduces the perspective that structured planning is the result of student needs analysis (Arsini et al, 2023). The existence of detailed planning shows that guidance counselors not only follow guidelines but also have a deep understanding of the specific problems faced by students (Zalfa, 2023). Thus, the services provided become more personalized and relevant. Overall, the findings of this study do not contradict previous studies but complement them by providing empirical evidence that adherence to professional counseling planning guidelines is directly correlated with the smooth running and potential success of services (Ibnu, 2023).

The implementation of strengthening students' creative character values through group counseling services at MTsN 1 Kota Sungai Penuh has been successfully carried out, marked by changes in students' creativity attitudes in line with the indicators of creative character values. Several significant changes were found after students participated in this service. Increased Courage to Express Opinions: With the group counseling service, students became more courageous in expressing their opinions and ideas. This happened because they were accustomed to expressing their opinions, both to convey personal problems and to respond to the problems of other group members (Fifin, 2023). (Safitri & Istati, 2022) Group counseling services are effective in improving students' ability to express their opinions. Increased Courage to Make Decisions: Students appear to be more courageous in making learning decisions. Guidance counselors strive to increase students' self-confidence through this service, which ultimately helps students make the right decisions (Sopiah & Sriharini, 2023). Group counseling can increase students' self-confidence (Darusman, 2023).

Based on the above explanation, it can be concluded that the strengthening of students' creative character values at MTsN 1 Kota Sungai Penuh has been carried out well and in a structured manner, in accordance with the steps of group counseling services that have been proven effective.

The evaluation of students' creative character values through group counseling services at MTsN 1 Kota Sungai Penuh was conducted to measure the success of the activity. The technique used by the guidance counselor was to observe the creativity of students in groups, then describe it in a table. This approach was chosen because there was no standard character evaluation model to be used as an operational standard.

One of the reasons for the unsuccessful implementation of character education is the absence of a character education evaluation model that serves as an appropriate, efficient, and effective operational guideline (Salirawati, 2021). Group counseling does not yet have a standard reference for assessing its activities (Syahfitri, 2023).

Based on the evaluation results, strengthening students' creative character values through counseling services at MTsN 1 Kota Sungai Penuh can generally increase student creativity when referring to creative character value indicators, due to the noticeable change in students' attitudes before and after the service.

Group counseling services can develop student creativity (Virly et al, 2023). This increase in creativity can be seen in various aspects, such as students who dare to express their opinions, are able to make the right decisions, and are able to solve learning problems (Pangestu & Sutirna, 2021). Seeing these positive changes in attitude, it can be concluded that strengthening students' creative character values at MTsN 1 Kota Sungai Penuh has been successful.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that strengthening students' creative character values through group counseling services at MTsN 1 Kota Sungai Penuh has been successfully implemented and has shown positive results. This success is based on comprehensive planning and systematic implementation by guidance counselors, which is in line with counseling service theory. The main contribution of this study is the demonstration of the success of non-standard evaluation in the field, which offers practical solutions for measuring character education outcomes in the absence of a standard evaluation model. In practical terms, this study proves that group counseling services are an effective means of enhancing student creativity in terms of courage to express opinions, decision making, and problem-solving skills. For further research, it is recommended to expand the study to a larger or more diverse population to test the generalization of the findings. In addition, the development of more standardized evaluation instruments for character education could be an important area of focus in the future.

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