

Improving the Interpersonal Communication Skill Through Classical Guidance

Abd Kholiq^{1,*} Budi Purwoko¹, Endang P. Sartinah¹

¹ *Guidance and Counseling Department, Graduate School, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya 60213, Indonesia*

**Corresponding author. Email: abd.18009@mhs.unesa.ac.id*

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to improve the interpersonal communication skill of students in a senior vocational high school through the classical guidance service. This quasi-experimental research used a pretest and posttest design. Twenty class students were assigned as an experimental group and other twenty were assigned as the control group based on the acquisition of low scores on the interpersonal communication scale. The experimental group received a classical guidance to improve interpersonal communication for five sessions. To test the difference in the acquisition of interpersonal communication scores, Mann Whitney analysis was used. Result showed that the experimental group got the score of 10.75 and the mean rank of the posttest in the experimental group was 30.25. The difference in mean between pre-test and post-test result meaning that there is a significant increase in interpersonal communication skills after students took classical guidance for 5 sessions. Then it can be concluded that the classical guidance could significantly improve the interpersonal communication among students in a senior vocational high school.

Keywords: *Interpersonal communication skill, Senior vocational high school, Classical guidance*

1. INTRODUCTION

Humans are social beings. Given that, it means that there is a necessity for them to communicate with others. Humans can not live alone ([1]–[3]). They surely need other people, and need help from others, (not limited to family, relatives, and friends). This can be proven from daily activities that are always related to other people, both on the personal and social relationships. According to DeVito [4], he defined communication as the process of sending and receiving messages between individuals or among a group of individuals, with some reactions and some instant feedback.

Interpersonal communication has to do with increasing student relationships within the school, family, and community as a means to get along with peers. Students who are less able to develop interpersonal communication skills find it very difficult to interact and adapt to their environment ([5]–[7]).

Based on interviews with guidance and counseling teachers at one Vocational High School in a city in Indonesia, they told that the guidance and counseling teachers have been conducting orientation services so that students know the school environment

appropriately and thus they are able to establish effective relationships with their peers, with politeness and attitude. Moreover, the guidance and counseling teachers at that school also considered the need for classical guidance services with a wide variety of activities which are urgently needed by students to improve their interpersonal communication skills. Classical guidance is often referred to as a program to assist students through classical activities that are presented systematically, in order to help students develop their potential optimally ([8]–[11]).

Furthermore, the results of interviews with guidance and counseling teachers also revealed that there are students who experience problems or challenges in communication with peers even with their teachers, this is because students lack of confidence in communicating, especially the first-year students who still needs to adjust to the new environment. In detail, students feel ashamed to convey their personal social problems. They also experienced the fear of expressing opinions in front of the class, lack of confident, and the fear of making mistakes.

A plethora of studies have discussed about the use of classical guidance. A Study by Sutarti [11] revealed that classical guidance could improve the students' reading

interest. Moreover, a research by Tanjung et al., [12] reported that classical guidance could also be applied to improve the students' reading ability of students. It was also reported that classical guidance was feasible to be implemented to improve students' mathematics ability [10]. However, study on the use of the classical guidance to improve the interpersonal communication is still rare. Therefore, this study aimed to conducting experiments to improve the interpersonal communication skill of students in a senior vocational high school through the classical guidance service.

2. METHOD

This study applied the quasi-experimental design in which involve the control group and the experiment group. Participants were students from the same grade of one senior high school which named as Ten A and Ten B groups. They were selected purposively based on the same level of the education. Moreover, this study used the pretest and posttest to collect the data [13]. Data were collected by using interpersonal communication scales that are adapted based on DeVito's theory [4] which consists of five (5) aspects, namely openness, empathy, supportive attitude, positive attitude, and equality. Then, data were analyzed with the Mann Whitney Test.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results are depicted and also explained under subheadings as follows:

3.1. Result

This study conducted a test to find out whether or not there was a chance of a significant difference in the mean interpersonal communication scores in class Ten A (as an experimental group) and class Ten B (as a control group) through the SPSS (Statistical Product and Service Solution) program for Windows Release 16.0.

From the Mann-Whitney test coefficient, it can be seen in the Statistical Test output that the statistical value of the small Z test is - 1,313 and the sig.2-tailed value is 0,189 > 0,05. Therefore the test results showed that there is no significant difference between scores Interpersonal communication experimental group students and control group students on the results of the interpersonal communication pre-test.

Moreover, there is a the difference in scores on the results of the pre-test and post-test in the experimental group with the Mann Whitney test with 0.050, with the mean rank pre-test of the experimental group is 10,75 and the mean rank post test of the experimental group is 30,25. The difference in the mean rank pre-test and mean rank post-test of the experimental group is 19,50, meaning that there is a significant increase in

interpersonal communication skills after students took classical guidance for 5 session.

This study also found a significant difference between the acquisition score of the control group and the experimental group score of class Ten with the results of the Mann Whitney Test analysis obtained a significance coefficient of $p = 0,000 < 0,050$ which indicates the experimental group got higher interpersonal communication scores than the control group. In other words, the classical guidance service applied to class Ten A as an experimental group succeeded in increasing interpersonal communication scores (from mean rank pre-test of 10,75 it increased to mean rank post-test of 30,25). The further analysis on the pre-test and post-test results in the experimental group with the Mann Whitney test showed that Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) $p = 0,000 < 0,050$ of class Ten B as a control group who do not get classical guidance services (with a mean rank of 18,08).

The increase in interpersonal communication of class Ten A after obtaining classical guidance services was also shown by the results of the Mann Withney Test analysis between the pre-test results and the post-test results of Ten A students as an experimental group that obtained the results of the analysis with a significance value of $p = 0,000 < 0,050$. The hypothesis is that "Classical guidance can significantly improve interpersonal communication among first year students thus can be accepted. Classical guidance that was held during 5 meetings turned out to be successful in significantly increasing student understanding in five aspects of interpersonal communication, namely openness, empathy, supportive attitude, positive attitude, and equality.

Through this experiment it can be revealed that class Ten Students can understand and then be able to practice the five aspects of effective interpersonal communication, as stated by DeVito [4] namely: 1) Openness, which contains sub-aspects that lets students to be open and can interact with friends. It also means that students are no longer resistant in receiving and conveying information. Another sub-aspect is the desire to honestly respond to all the stimuli that come to them, 2) Empathy, students feel as perceived by other students and try to feel it the same way as other students' feelings, 3) Supportive, an attitude of mutual support in communication, meaning students interact verbally and nonverbally, 4) A positive attitude, consisting of three sub-aspects, being positive towards oneself, towards peers, and expressing positive feelings in situations of dialogic interaction, and 5) Equality, meaning that communication becomes effective if students who communicate with each other have similarities in certain aspects, namely the similarity of positions as fellow students, the same status as a speaker and alternately as

a listener, the similarity in terms of experience and knowledge.

3.2. Discussion

DeVito [4] expressed interpersonal communication as the process of sending and receiving messages between two people, or a small group of people with some reactions and some instant feedback. Moreover, Cangara [14], Berger [15] and Donovan [16] explained that interpersonal communication is a process of communication that takes place between two or more people face to face. Therefore, it can be concluded that interpersonal communication is a dynamic and complex phenomenon involving at least two people, namely communicators and communicants. Both are intentionally oriented to each other as subjects and objects of communication whose actions symbolize their respective insights, both to themselves and to their communication partners. In essence, interpersonal communication is an interaction between two people face to face (face-to-face).

Interpersonal communication has many implications on students' lives. Students who have higher skills in interpersonal communication are able to adapt well, enjoy more satisfaction in associating with friends and are not bothered by feelings of depression or anxiety [17], [18]

In order to have the effective interpersonal skill, DeVito [4] argued that interpersonal communication needs to start with five aspects namely openness, empathy, supportiveness, positive attitude (positiveness) and equality. The effectiveness of interpersonal communication is very strategic as an effort to create happiness in students' lives for some reasons including: 1) Interpersonal communication helps students' intellectual and social development, 2) The identity of students is formed through communication with others. 3) It helps students to understand the reality around them and to challenge their honesty on their surroundings, 4) Mental health of students is also largely determined by the quality of communication or the effectiveness of student relationships with peers.

The Guidance and Counseling program in schools is based on aspects of development that are formulated in the competency standards of students 'independence with regard to students' interpersonal communication at the Vocational High School level, namely seeking the maturity of relationships with peers and awareness of social responsibility. Guidance and counseling teachers supported by school personnel are required to equip students with provisions to achieve aspects of development and improve students' skills in interpersonal communication. Specifically, Guidance and Counseling aims to help students being able to

achieve developmental tasks that include personal, social, learning, and career aspects.

Santoso [19] and Namai [20] revealed that classical guidance is an assistance service designed to make direct contact with students. It is a guidance service with a total of between 20 - 40 people joining together in classical activities that are systematically presented, and are developmental and preventive as well as discovering the self-understanding and understanding of others oriented to the fields of learning, personal, social and career. Moreover, this program aims at providing accurate information and help individuals to plan decisions in his life and develop their potentials optimally.

Classical guidance service is a preventive service to prevent problems that are specifically directed at a proactive process. Based on the ASCA model (Association of School Counsellors in America), classical guidance is a form of activity that is included in the basic service component [21] The basic service components are developmental, systematic, and structured o improve learning, personal, social and career competencies. In this activity the teachers give lessons on various skills and knowledge through various approaches and techniques intended to increase knowledge or skills of students so that they can applied it to them to achieve the optimal development [22]. As it is given in a classroom setting, classical guidance is generally organized using methods that resemble learning. On this basis, classical guidance is also defined as learning about development in a structured and systematic manner designed to help students achieve developmental competencies expected in accordance with the level of development being experienced.

By its structured and systematic nature, the guidance activities should contain clearly programmed activity material, both in the form of long-term programs (annual or semester) and small-term programs in the form of activity units (known as Guidance and Counseling Service Units and Guidance and Counseling Implementation Plan). As it has been programmed, classical guidance has more developmental and preventive functions, if the teacher considers the time allocation in delivering classical guidance in the perspective of overall guidance activities, the weight of the time allocation for classical guidance activities is between 35% - 45% for elementary school level, 25% - 35% in junior high school level and 15% - 25% in senior high school / vocational school level.

Classical guidance as a strategy in Guidance and Counselling services aims to deliver service programs that develop students' potential or achieve developmental tasks (concerning physical, emotional, intellectual, social and moral aspects) so as to achieve educational goals. The purpose of national education in

the Law No. 20 on The National Education System, 2003, that education is a conscious and planned effort to create an atmosphere of learning and learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have religious and spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the skills needed by them, and society.

Thus classical guidance is carried out by using several group guidance techniques in accordance with students' needs by considering the situation of group dynamics to create benefits as a medium through several strategies such as : 1) Establishing an emotional relationship between the B guidance and counselling teacher and students who are educating and guiding. 2) The occurrence of direct communication between the guidance and counselling teacher and students who provide opportunities for students to convey class problems or "pour out their hearts". 3) The occurrence of face-to-face, dialogue and observation of the guidance and counselling teacher teacher on the condition of students during the learning atmosphere in the classroom. 4) Understanding of students' thoughts, feelings, desires and behavior as an effort to prevent, cure, repair and maintain and develop.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study the following conclusions can be made: Classical guidance program can significantly improve the interpersonal communication among first year students of vocational high school. Moreover, based on the research conclusions, it is recommended for guidance and counseling teachers to further develop classical guidance services as an effort to maintain students 'skills in carrying out effective interpersonal communication with fellow students and with teachers and other education personnel in schools, given the strategy of effective interpersonal communication for students' mental health.

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