

# The Effectiveness of Group Solution-Focused Guided Imagery Counseling Model to Overcome Problems of Primary School Students

**M. Ramli**

State University of Malang, Malang, Indonesia

e-mail: [m.ramli25@yahoo.com](mailto:m.ramli25@yahoo.com)

## **Abstract**

Upper grade primary school students, especially the sixth graders, are at the time of puberty, namely the beginning period of early adolescence. At this time, the reproductive organs are beginning to mature, affecting all aspects of the students' development, whether relating to the development of personal life, social, learning, and career planning. In the implementation of developmental tasks, upper grade primary school students face various problems: personal, social relations, learning, and career planning. The problems are physical and health development issues, self-development issues, social adjustment issues, academic development issues, and career planning issues. In order that upper grade primary school students to carry out their developmental tasks optimally, they need helping to overcome their problems with certain counseling models. Among them is a group solution-focused guided imagery counseling model. This counseling model was effective and efficient in helping adult counsees to overcome their recurrent problems. Given the effective and efficient counseling model for overcoming adult counselee problems, the counseling model is expected to be effective and efficient in helping upper grade primary school students to overcome their problems. Therefore it is necessary to examine the effectiveness of the counseling model for overcoming the problems of upper grade primary school students. To achieve this expectation, an experimental study with pre-post design with one experimental group was conducted. The objective was to know the effectiveness and efficiency of the counseling model in helping upper grade primary school students to construct solution for their problems. The subjects consisted of 96 upper grade primary school students taken randomly based on the primary school clusters in Malang City. Data were collected by problem solution rating scale and the data analyzed using *t* test with paired samples. The results showed that group solution-focused guided imagery counseling model effective and efficient to help upper grade primary school students construct solution for their problems. Based on the results of this study suggested that the counseling model could be used as an alternative counseling model in helping upper grade primary school students for constructing solutions for their problems. In addition, further researches need to be done with broader and diverse research subjects through a true experimental design.

Keywords: group counseling, solution-focused, guided imagery, students' problems, primary school

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

Primary school students are in the late childhood. However, in general, students at the end of primary school period, especially the sixth grade, are at puberty, the early adolescence. This can be understood from the period of human development according to Hurlock (Ramli, 2005) which stated that children aging 10/12 years to 13/14 years are at puberty/preteens. At this time, the reproductive organs are beginning to mature, affecting all aspects of the child's development, both relating to the development of personal life, social, learning, and career planning.

In its development, upper grade primary school students must learn to carry out the developmental tasks of puberty which is no longer in

the late childhood. On one side, the social environment thinks that they are still children but in terms of their development, they are already puberty. Therefore, there is often a conflict between themselves and their social environment, especially parents and teachers. The conflict was exacerbated by the exposure of some print, electronic, and internet media that were less supportive of their development in a positive direction. Therefore, upper grade primary school students potentially face a variety of issues, both personal, social relations, learning, and career planning. Their problems based on some researchers are as a matter of physical and health development, self-development problems, and social adjustment issues (Kartadinata, 1999); personal problems, social adjustment issues, and academic problems (Furqan, 2005).

In order for primary school students to carry out the tasks of development optimally, they need helping to construct solution for their problems. For that, many models of guidance and counseling can be used. One of the most effective and efficient models of guidance and counseling services for improving student personality qualities is a solution-focused counseling model (de Shazer, S. & Dolan, Y. 2007; Franklin & Hopson, 2008; Charlesworth & Jackson, 2004; Gingerich & Eisengart, 2000 ; Littrell, Malia, & Vanderwood, 1995; Capuzzi & Gross, 2009). However, the counseling model focuses most on effective and efficient solutions in individual counseling services so as to lack the real need for counseling services that require roving counselors in primary schools to assist many students at a time because of the limited number of the counselors while the students who need to be helped are numerous. Therefore, effective and efficient solution-focused counseling model should be developed as group counseling that can assist students in flexible groups as needed such as small groups, classroom groups, and large groups.

Therefore, the solution-focused counseling needs to be combined with guided imagery techniques that stimulate the group of students to perform imaginative activities step by step to construct solution for their problems (Learner & Klessmann, 1983; Omizo, Omizo, & Kitaoka, 1998; Roseman, 2000; Hall, et al., 2006). Thus the combination of solution-focused counseling with guided imagery techniques into a model of group solution-focused guided imagery counseling model. This counseling model is effective and efficient in assisting adult counselees to overcome their recurrent problems (Sklare, Sabella, & Petrosko, 2003; Sklare, 2014). Given the effective and efficient model of group solution-focused guided imagery counseling for overcoming problems, the counseling model is expected to be effective in assisting primary school students to construct solutions for their problems. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the effectiveness of group solution-focused guided imagery counseling model for constructing solutions for primary school students' problems.

Based on the research backgrounds, this research problem is whether group solution-focused guided imagery counseling model effective to help primary school students construct solutions for their problems. The objective of the study is to know the effectiveness of group solution-focused guided imagery counseling model in helping primary school students construct solutions for their problems. The results of the study are expected to

provide the following benefits. Theoretically, the results of the study are expected to provide empirical evidence of the effectiveness of solution-focused guided imagery counseling model in helping primary school students construct solutions for their problems. In practice, roving counselors of primary schools are expected to use this counseling model to help primary school students construct solutions for their problems effectively and efficiently.

## 2 METHODS

Based on the nature and types of research problems and objectives to be achieved, this study uses an experimental research design. The objective is to find out the effectiveness of using group solution-focused guided imagery counseling model to help primary school students construct solutions for their problems. The type of experiment used is the one group pretest and posttest design (Happner, Kivlighan, & Wampold, 2008).

The population of the study was students of primary schools in Malang City. The sample was taken by cluster random sampling. School clusters are public primary schools, private primary schools, and Islamic primary schools. The sample consisted of 96 primary school students in Malang City with 44 primary school students representing public primary school cluster, 27 Islamic primary school students representing Islamic primary school cluster, and 25 primary school students representing private primary school cluster. The steps of research activities are as follows: (1) conducting workshop of using group solution-focused guided imagery counseling model for helping primary school students construct solutions for their problems, (2) applying group solution-focused guided imagery counseling model for helping primary school students construct solutions for their problems through experimental activities, (3) conducting analysis of experimental data, and (5) making conclusions about the effectiveness of group solution-focused guided imagery counseling model for helping primary school students construct solutions for their problems in Malang City.

The experiment data were collected by rating scales of problem solutions. The scales were used to identify the change of problem solution level experienced by primary school students in Malang City. The scales were filled on the step 1 and step 13 of the group solution-focused guided imagery procedures. The experimental media used counselee's worksheets containing directions of the implementation of steps of group solution-focused

guided imagery procedures starting from step 1 to step 13. It is preceded by the introduction to the experimental implementation. Data obtained from the experimental activities were analyzed by paired sample *t*-test. The *t* test is used to analyze data of primary school students' problem solution level in step 1 (pretest) and step 13 (posttest).

### 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study were presented based on the type of primary school students' problems, the mean score of pretest and posttest of primary school students in the experimental group, and hypothesis testing as follows.

Table 1. Types of Primary School Students' Problems in Malang City

NO	TYPES OF PROBLEMS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1	Personal	27	28
2	Social	32	33
3	Learning	34	36
4	Career	3	3
Total		96	100

Table 1 showed that 28% of primary school students in Malang City face personal problems. As many as 33% of primary school students have social problems, 36% of the students have learning problems, and 3% of them have career problems.

#### 3.1 Pretest and Posttest Scores of Experimental Group

The scores of pretest and posttest for problem solution of primary school students in Malang City as experimental group listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Mean Scores of Pretest and Posttest for Problem Solution of Experimental Group

NO	Mean Pretest Score	Mean Posttest Score
1	4.91	9.09

Table 2. showed that the mean score of pretest for problem solution of primary school students was 4.91, while the mean score of their posttest was 9.09 of interval scores 1 to 10.

#### 3.2 Hypothesis Testing

The effectiveness of group solution-focused guided imagery counseling model to help primary school students construct solutions for their problems in Malang City was found based on the result of the mean difference of pretest score and posttest score for problem solution by primary school students in Malang City as experimental group. To know the difference of both mean scores of problem solution was used *t* test with paired samples.

The results of the analysis showed that the mean of pretest score of experimental group students was 4.91 and the mean score of the group's posttest was 9.09. The value of  $t = -13.734$  with a confidence level of 0.000. The analysis showed that there was a significant difference between the mean of pretest score and post-test score for problem solution of primary school students in Malang City. The mean score of posttest for problem solution by primary school students of Malang City as experiment group is higher than mean score of pretest of the group. Therefore, it can be concluded that the group solution-focused guided imagery counseling model was effective to help primary school students construct solutions for their problems.

Thus, the use of group solution-focused guided imagery counseling model had a significant effect on the improvement of problem solution for primary school students in Malang City. This showed that the counseling model is effective to improve the problem solution for primary school students in Malang City. Therefore, the counseling model is feasible to be used by roving counselors to help primary school students to construct solutions for their problems.

#### 3.3 Discussion

One of the research results showed that upper grade primary school students have various problems similar to junior high school students, such as learning problems, social problems, personal problems, and career problems. This happened because today, the problems of life are increasingly complex and the media coverage of events are diverse and massive in the news so that affect the

living conditions of all people, including children who are in primary schools. This situation supported the signals of Kartadinata (1999) and Furqan (2005) that in general, the problems for primary school students can be grouped into personal, social, learning, and career issues (Kartadinata, 1999; Furqan, 2005).

Thus, primary school students who are in the late childhood, really are at the time of puberty, namely early of early adolescence. This finding is suitable with Hurlock's theory for period of human development about puberty /preteens (Ramli, 2005). Therefore, the results of the study that showed 28% of primary school students in Malang City have personal problems, 33% of students have social problems, 36% of students have learning problems, and 3% of them have career problems supported Hurlock's theory that upper grade primary school students are in early adolescence/puberty.

The susceptibility of upper grade primary school students to face problems because of congenital puberty, increasingly complex living conditions, and the students' problem solution ability that is relatively low as part of this research findings, namely the mean pretest score for constructing problem solution was 4.91 of interval scores 1 to 10. Therefore, potential problems of primary school students today are increasingly complex, while they are less skilled to construct solutions for their problems as a part of the research results.

The low ability of primary school students in constructing solutions for their problems is affected by various factors. Among them are less optimal improvement of non-academic skills of students than academic skills, the assumption that problem solving is the business of adolescents and adults so that primary school children do not need it. In addition, the adult environment is more concerned with physical health of children than mental health of primary school students so this attitude affected the low efforts to improve the ability of children to construct solutions for their problems.

The low ability of primary school students to overcome their problems becomes homework for educators, namely parents, classroom teachers, subject teachers, religious teachers, physical and health education teachers, and guidance and counseling teachers/counselors. Therefore, regulation of the minister for education and culture No. 111/2014 proposes the existence of special personnel of guidance and counseling in primary school is very appropriate. Upper grade primary school students entering the shifting of

developmental tasks from childhood to adolescence are difficult times that need wise facilitations by educators so that they can effectively carry out their developmental tasks as young generation who are growing and developing.

The complex condition of the potential problems faced by primary school students and their low ability to overcome their problems, it is necessary to find its solutions. One way to do this is the use of the group solution-focused guided imagery counseling model. This approach is relatively effective and efficient to be implemented in primary school because there is no special officer of guidance and counseling so that the limited number of roving counselors can provide more optimal services for many primary school students in a group counseling meeting.

The use of group solution-focused guided imagery counseling model is effective in assisting primary school students to construct solutions for their problems. This significant improvement indicated that the model is appropriate, effective, and efficient to be used to help primary school students construct solutions for their problems, such as learning problems, social problems, personal problems, and career problems.

The effectiveness of the counseling model is partly due to the suitability of the counseling model for the improvement of problem solution skills with the characteristics of primary school students being the subjects of the service target. Thus, the characteristics of group solution-focused guided imagery counseling model for the improvement of students' ability to construct solutions for their problems acceptable practically in improving the ability of primary school students in Malang City to construct solutions for their problems. In a sense, that the counseling model really can significantly improve the ability of primary school students in Malang City to construct solutions for their problems.

The effectiveness of the counseling model is in line with a positive and optimistic view of human nature (Corey, 2013; Gladding, 2009) that human beings are healthy and competent creatures for developing solutions that improve their lives. Human beings have the ability to solve challenges in their life. Regardless of the environmental influence on humans, the counselor believes that while in counseling services, counselees are able to construct solutions to their problems. Furthermore, the effectiveness of the counseling model is in accordance with the basic rules of counseling as counselors in counseling, namely they should (a)

avoid the problem solving/exploration, (b) be efficiently in counseling service, the counselors should achieve the goal optimally with the least number of intervention meetings, (c) recognize that the insights and causes of problem do not provide a solution so the counselors should focus on the action rather than discuss the counselees' problems, (d) focus on the present and future. If the counselees realize that the current solution already exists on them then it can increase their confidence. If the counselees think about what will happen in the future and realize that the solutions are available, then it can build confidence that things will be better (Charlesworth & Jackson, 2004). Thus, through group solution-focused guided imagery counseling model, primary school students are convinced that they are capable and have advantages to construct solutions for their problems.

The findings of the effectiveness of group solution-focused guided imagery counseling model in assisting primary school students in Malang City to construct solutions for their problems supported and strengthened previous researches. Among them, findings of Sklare, Sabella, & Petrosko (2003) who conducted a preliminary study on the influence of group solution-focused guided imagery counseling to overcome recurrent problems. The results showed that the model effectively and efficiently helped the counselee overcome their problems. Assisted counselees were students and practitioner counselors. Similarly, the above research findings supported the implementation of Sklare, Sabella & Petrosko (2003) research suggestions that required further researches about the effectiveness of group solution-focused guided imagery counseling for different age groups of students and practitioners, such as primary school, junior high school, and/or senior high school students.

#### 4 CONCLUSIONS

The research results and their discussion can be concluded that group solution-focused guided imagery counseling model is effective to help primary school students construct solutions for their problems in Malang City. Based on the conclusion then put forward suggestions as following: (1) group solution-focused guided imagery counseling model should be used by counselor as an alternative model to improve the quality of counseling services to help primary school students construct solutions for their problems in Malang City, (2) group solution-focused guided imagery counseling model should be tested

on a wider backgrounds and more diverse backgrounds of primary school students so that the counseling model can be applied to primary school students not only in Malang City but also outside of it, and (3) further researches should be done to examine the effectiveness of the counseling model using a pure experimental research design to find a stronger and more robust conclusion for its application to help primary school students construct solutions for their problems.

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