



The Effectiveness of Applying Discussion Techniques Through Group Counseling Services to Improve the Self-Concept of Junior High School Students

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of applying discussion techniques through group guidance services to improve the self-concept of students in Class VIII F at UPTD SMP Negeri 11 Naimata, Kupang City, in the 2025/2026 academic year. This study employed a quantitative research approach with a one-group pretest-posttest design. The population consisted of 28 students in Class VIII F, with a research sample of 7 students. The data collection instrument used was a self-concept questionnaire. The data analysis technique employed was a paired-samples t-test. The results showed that the provision of group guidance services using discussion techniques was effective in improving the self-concept of students in Class VIII F at SMP Negeri 11 Naimata, Kupang City, during the 2025/2026 academic year.*

Keywords: *Group Guidance; Discussion Technique; Self-Concept; Students*

Abstrak: *Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui efektivitas penerapan teknik diskusi melalui layanan bimbingan kelompok untuk meningkatkan konsep diri siswa kelas VIII F UPTD SMP Negeri 11 Naimata Kota Kupang Tahun Pelajaran 2025/2026. Penelitian ini merupakan jenis penelitian kuantitatif dengan desain one group pretest and posttest. Populasi dalam penelitian ini berjumlah 28 siswa kelas VIII F dengan Sampel penelitian berjumlah 7 orang. Alat pengumpul data yang digunakan berupa angket konsep diri. Teknik analisis data yang digunakan adalah uji beda sampel berpasangan (paired sampel t-test). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pemberian layanan bimbingan kelompok menggunakan teknik diskusi efektif dalam meningkatkan konsep diri siswa kelas VIII F SMP Negeri 11 Naimata Kota Kupang Tahun Pelajaran 2025/2026.*

Kata kunci: *Bimbingan Kelompok; Teknik Diskusi; Konsep Diri, Siswa*

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Introduction

Junior high school students are in the early stages of adolescence, which constitute an important developmental period, particularly in the formation of self-concept. During this stage, students experience various physical, cognitive, social, and emotional changes as part of the transition toward adulthood. Hurlock (2011) explains that early adolescence, which generally occurs at approximately 12–15 years of age, is characterized by rapid physical changes resulting from puberty, emotional instability, and an increasing need for recognition and acceptance from the social environment, particularly peers. These conditions make adolescents more sensitive to how they are perceived by others and encourage them to develop an understanding and evaluation of themselves. Therefore, early adolescence represents a strategic developmental stage for fostering students' self-concept.

Self-concept is an important aspect of adolescent development because it is associated with how individuals understand, evaluate, and perceive themselves in terms of their abilities, attitudes, and self-acceptance. Desmita, as cited in Novita & Sumiarsih (2021), explains that self-concept refers to an individual's perception of themselves, encompassing their beliefs, views, and evaluations of themselves. A positive self-concept can support students in developing self-confidence, expressing their opinions, actively interacting with their social environment, and optimally developing their potential. Conversely, a negative self-concept may be manifested in feelings of inferiority, lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, and a tendency to remain passive during learning activities. In line with this perspective, Gufron & Risnawita (2012) state that self-concept is an individual's overall impression of themselves, including perceptions of how they are viewed by others and evaluations of their achievements. Thus, self-concept plays an important role in shaping students' attitudes, behavior, and ability to adjust to both school and social environments. This condition indicates that the development of a positive self-concept among junior high school students requires serious attention through educational processes and guidance and counseling services in schools.

Problems related to self-concept were also identified among students in Class VIII F at UPTD SMP Negeri 11 Naimata, Kupang City. Based on interviews conducted by the researcher from March 2 to 6, 2026, information was obtained indicating behavioral characteristics associated with low self-concept among students. Several students were found to lack confidence when expressing their opinions in front of the class, to be afraid of making mistakes during discussions, and to participate less

actively in group activities. In addition, some students demonstrated doubts about their own abilities and tended to be reluctant to interact and participate actively in the learning process. These findings indicate that some students have not yet developed positive perceptions and evaluations of themselves. Therefore, appropriate assistance is needed to facilitate students in understanding, accepting, and developing themselves more effectively.

The interview findings were further supported by observations conducted by the researcher among students in Class VIII F at UPTD SMP Negeri 11 Naimata, Kupang City. The observations revealed several behaviors reflecting low self-concept, particularly during classroom learning activities. When the teacher directed attention toward them, some students tended to lower their heads or pretend to be busy writing so that they would not be selected to answer questions. A lack of confidence was also reflected in their body language, such as folding their arms across their chests, bending their bodies, and attempting to hide behind their classmates to avoid becoming the focus of attention. When answering questions, several students also spoke in a very low voice, making their responses sound almost like whispers.

Furthermore, the observations indicated that some students lacked sufficient confidence in their own abilities. This was evident in their tendency to immediately change their answers when the teacher approached to check their work, their reluctance to express answers using their own words or understanding, and their tendency to display gloomy facial expressions and withdraw when receiving corrections from the teacher. Several students also appeared anxious and worried about making mistakes because they feared receiving punishment if their answers were considered incorrect. These behaviors demonstrate the presence of doubts regarding students' abilities and a lack of confidence in expressing themselves within the learning environment. Such conditions indicate that some students require assistance in developing a more positive self-concept.

One approach that can be implemented to help students improve their self-concept is through group guidance services. Prayitno & Amti (2013) explain that group guidance is a support service provided to individuals through a group setting to facilitate personal development, social skills, and problem-solving through group dynamics. The implementation of group guidance services provides students with opportunities to interact, share their experiences and thoughts, and receive support from other group members. Through this process, students can learn to appreciate themselves and others, recognize their experiences and problems,

and develop a more positive understanding of themselves.

One technique that can be applied in group guidance services is the discussion technique. The discussion technique provides students with opportunities to actively express their opinions, exchange ideas, listen to the perspectives of others, and respond to various issues. Corey (2016) explains that discussion techniques in group guidance can support increased member participation, self-reflection, and the development of positive attitudes toward oneself and others. Through group interactions, students have opportunities to recognize their abilities, strengths, and weaknesses through processes of reflection and feedback from other group members. This process is expected to help students develop a more realistic and positive understanding and evaluation of themselves.

Support for the use of discussion techniques in group guidance services can also be found in previous research. Suryani & Kurniawan (2023) demonstrated that the implementation of discussion techniques in group guidance was effective in improving students' social skills and self-concept. Furthermore, Nugroho & Sari (2023) found that the use of discussion techniques in group guidance services increased students' self-confidence by 28% among junior high school students in Yogyakarta. Another study conducted by Rahayu & Suryani (2017) also demonstrated that group guidance services using discussion techniques were effective in improving students' self-concept. These findings indicate that interaction dynamics, the exchange of ideas, and opportunities for self-expression provided through discussion techniques have the potential to serve as effective means of helping students develop more positive evaluations of themselves.

Based on the empirical conditions identified through interviews and observations, supported by theoretical perspectives and findings from previous studies, the implementation of discussion techniques through group guidance services is considered relevant as an effort to improve the self-concept of students in Class VIII F at UPTD SMP Negeri 11 Naimata, Kupang City. Therefore, the research problem is formulated as follows: Is the implementation of discussion techniques through group guidance services effective in improving the self-concept of students in Class VIII F at UPTD SMP Negeri 11 Naimata, Kupang City, in the 2025/2026 academic year? In accordance with this research problem, this study aims to determine the effectiveness of implementing discussion techniques through group guidance services in improving the self-concept of students in Class VIII F at UPTD SMP Negeri 11 Naimata, Kupang City, in the 2025/2026 academic year.

Method

Research Design and Setting

This study employed a quantitative approach with a pre-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design. The study was conducted at UPTD SMP Negeri 11 Naimata, Jl. Taebenu, Naimata Village, Maulafa District, Kupang City, East Nusa Tenggara, from October 2025 to June 2026. The design involved one group that received an initial measurement (pretest), treatment, and a final measurement (posttest). The treatment consisted of group guidance services using discussion techniques to improve students' self-concept.

Participants, Sample, or Data Sources

The population consisted of 28 students in Class VIII F at UPTD SMP Negeri 11 Naimata, Kupang City, in the 2025/2026 academic year. The sample consisted of 7 students selected using purposive sampling based on the criterion of having a low level of self-concept. The sample selection was consistent with the research objective, namely to improve students' self-concept through group guidance services using discussion techniques.

Instruments and Measures

Data were collected using a closed-ended self-concept questionnaire with a four-point Likert scale consisting of strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. The self-concept questionnaire was adapted from an instrument developed by Laga (2024) in a study examining the relationship between self-concept and students' self-confidence. The instrument covered four aspects of self-concept: physical, psychological, social, and moral aspects, comprising 41 items. The validity test indicated that all items were valid, while the reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha produced a coefficient of 0.891, indicating that the instrument was reliable.

In addition to the data collection instrument, the study used an intervention guideline for implementing discussion techniques through group guidance services. The guideline was developed based on the stages of group guidance and the aspects of self-concept.

Procedure and Research Ethics

The study was conducted in three stages: pretest, treatment, and posttest. During the pretest, all students completed the self-concept questionnaire to identify students with low self-concept. The 7 students who met the criteria subsequently received group guidance services using discussion techniques in four sessions, with each session lasting 2 × 45 minutes.

The intervention was conducted through the stages of group formation, transition, activity, and termination. During the activity stage, discussions focused on four aspects of self-concept: physical,

psychological, social, and moral aspects. Students were given opportunities to express their opinions, share experiences, engage in self-reflection, and receive feedback and support from other group members. After all treatment sessions were completed, the students were administered the same questionnaire as a posttest to determine changes in their self-concept following the intervention.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using a paired-samples t-test to determine differences in self-concept scores before and after the intervention. The analysis was conducted using SPSS version 22 for Windows. Statistical decisions were based on the significance value obtained from the test to determine the effectiveness of implementing discussion techniques through group guidance services in improving students' self-concept.

Results and Discussion

Results

Pre-test Results

Table 1. Pre-test Results Data

NO	NAME	TOTAL SCORE	CATEGORY
1	CRA	79	RENDAH
2	DAS	103	TINGGI
3	DAF	107	TINGGI
4	FRAW	72	RENDAH
5	FMA	107	TINGGI
6	FMMM	74	RENDAH
7	GMS	101	TINGGI
8	HRH	72	RENDAH
9	IASO	101	TINGGI
10	JGF	108	TINGGI
11	JAF	108	TINGGI
12	KDS	102	TINGGI
13	LLJ	104	TINGGI
14	MF	97	SEDANG
15	MJM	94	SEDANG
16	MAND	75	RENDAH
17	MYM	103	TINGGI
18	MM	91	SEDANG
19	MGRB	94	SEDANG
20	MWB	91	SEDANG
21	NGS	78	RENDAH
22	RSML	92	SEDANG
23	RDS	105	TINGGI
24	SLZA	73	RENDAH
25	SNP	92	SEDANG
26	YDAM	97	SEDANG
27	ZYD	91	SEDANG
28	NJK		SEDANG

Based on the predetermined criteria, of the 28 respondents, 7 respondents were classified as having a low level of self-concept, 10 respondents were classified as having a moderate level, and 11

respondents were classified as having a high level. The 7 respondents who were classified in the low category were subsequently selected as the participants in this study (Table 2).

Table 2. Self-Concept Scores of the Research Participants

NO	STUDENT NAME	CLASS	TOTAL SCORE	CATEGORY
1	CRA	VIII A	79	RENDAH
2	FRAW	VIII A	72	RENDAH
3	F.M.M M	VIII A	74	RENDAH
4	HRH	VIII A	72	RENDAH
5	MAND	VIII A	75	RENDAH
6	NGS	VIII A	78	RENDAH
7	SLZA	VIII A	73	RENDAH

For a clearer presentation of the results, the pre-test scores are presented in the diagram below

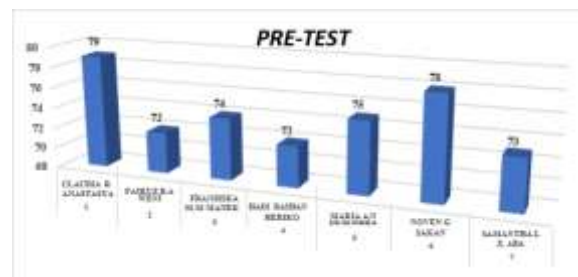


Figure 1. Pre-test Score Data

Post-test Results

Table 3. Post-test Results Data

NO	NAME	SCORE
1	C R A	136
2	F R A W	130
3	F M M M	123
4	H R H	118
5	M A N D	132
6	N G S	133
7	S L Z A	122

For a clearer presentation of the results, the post-test data are presented in the diagram below.

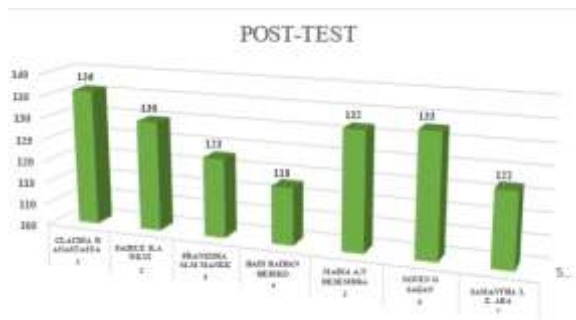


Figure 2. Post-test Score Data

Differences Between Pre-test and Post-test Scores

Table 4. Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Scores

NO	NAME	PRE-TEST	POST - TEST
1	C R A	79	136
2	F R A W	72	130
3	F M M M	74	123
4	H R H	72	118
5	M A N D	75	132
6	N G S	78	133
7	S L Z A	73	122

For a clearer presentation, the data are shown in the following figure.

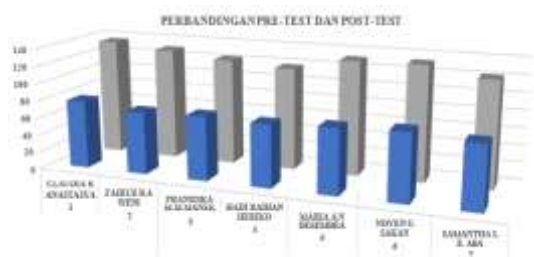


Figure 3. Differences Between Pre-test and Post-test Scores

Hypothesis Testing

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing

Paired Samples Test							df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lo wer	Up per	t		
Pai r 1	PR E-	-	4.865	1.839	-	-	6	0.000
	TES	53.0		57.4	48.5	28.8		

T	00			99	01	24		
-								
POS T-								
TES T								

Singgih (2016) states that the decision-making criteria for the paired-samples t-test are based on the significance value (Sig.) obtained from the SPSS output, as follows:

- If the Sig. (2-tailed) value is < 0.05 , H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted.
- Conversely, if the Sig. (2-tailed) value is > 0.05 , H_0 is accepted and H_a is rejected.

Based on the aforementioned decision-making criteria, the Sig. (2-tailed) value of $0.000 < 0.05$ indicates that H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of discussion techniques through group guidance services is effective in improving the self-concept of students in Class VIII F at UPTD SMP Negeri 11 Naimata, Kupang City, in the 2025/2026 academic year.

In addition to comparing the significance value (Sig.) with the probability level of 0.05, hypothesis testing in the paired-samples t-test can also be conducted by comparing the calculated t-value with the critical t-value.

The decision-making criteria are as follows:

- If the calculated t-value $>$ the critical t-value, H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted.
- Conversely, if the calculated t-value $<$ the critical t-value, H_0 is accepted and H_a is rejected.

Based on the Paired Samples Test output presented above, the calculated t-value is negative, with a value of -28.824 . The negative t-value occurs because the mean pre-test score is lower than the mean post-test score. In this context, the negative sign indicates the direction of the difference rather than a negative effect. Therefore, the absolute value of the calculated t-value is 28.824.

The critical t-value is then determined based on the degrees of freedom (df) and the significance level ($\alpha/2$). The output indicates a df value of 6, while $\alpha/2 = 0.05/2 = 0.025$. Based on these values, the critical t-value is 2.44691.

Based on the table above, the Sig. (2-tailed) value was $0.000 < 0.05$. Therefore, based on the hypothesis decision-making criteria, H_0 was rejected and H_a was accepted. Accordingly, the results of this study indicate that group guidance services using discussion techniques are effective in improving the self-concept of Class VIII F students at UPTD SMP

Negeri 11 Naimata, Kupang City, in the 2025/2026 academic year.

Discussion

The results of the study indicate that the provision of group guidance using discussion techniques was effective in improving the self-concept of Class VIII F students at UPTD SMP Negeri 11 Naimata, Kupang City, in the 2025/2026 academic year. This finding is evident from the students' self-concept before and after the intervention. Before participating in the group guidance service, 7 students were categorized as having low self-concept. Following the intervention, the students' self-concept improved to the high category. Thus, it can be concluded that group guidance using discussion techniques had a positive effect on improving students' self-concept.

These findings are consistent with the study conducted by Hardiknas & Nursalim (2016), which demonstrated that group guidance using discussion techniques was effective in improving students' self-concept. Through discussion activities, students have opportunities to express their opinions, exchange experiences, and receive feedback from other group members, thereby developing a better understanding of themselves and forming more positive self-evaluations. These findings support the present study, which demonstrates an improvement in students' self-concept after participating in group guidance services using discussion techniques.

The improvement in students' self-concept in this study cannot be separated from the implementation of group guidance using discussion techniques. According to Kurniawan & Pranowo (2018), group guidance is a guidance and counseling service involving a number of students in discussing specific issues determined by the guidance counselor. In this study, discussion activities provided students with opportunities to express their opinions, share experiences, and receive responses from other group members. This process helped students develop a better understanding of themselves, thereby contributing to an improvement in their self-concept.

Therefore, group guidance services using discussion techniques were demonstrated to be effective in supporting the improvement of students' self-concept.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that group guidance services using discussion techniques are effective in improving the self-concept of Class VIII F students at UPTD SMP Negeri 11 Naimata, Kupang City, in the 2025/2026 academic year. Before the intervention, 7 students were categorized as having low self-concept. After participating in group guidance services using

discussion techniques, the students' self-concept improved to the high category. Therefore, discussion techniques through group guidance services can be used as an alternative guidance and counseling intervention to help improve students' self-concept.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest, whether financial or non-financial, related to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

Author Contributions (Optional)

The author was responsible for all aspects of the research, including conceptualization, methodology, investigation, data collection, data curation, formal analysis, writing—original draft, writing—review and editing, and supervision of the research process.

Generative AI Disclosure

Generative AI tools were used to assist with language editing, translation, and manuscript preparation. The author remains fully responsible for the accuracy, originality, integrity, and final content of the article.

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