

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GROUP COUNSELING IN ENHANCING SELF-CONFIDENCE AMONG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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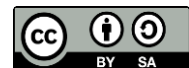
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Abstract

Self-confidence is a critical component of children's personal and academic development, enabling them to engage actively in learning and social interactions. Elementary school students with low self-confidence often face challenges in expressing themselves, participating in group activities, and achieving academic success. This study investigates the effectiveness of group counseling in enhancing self-confidence among elementary school students. The research employed a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test and post-test control group. The sample consisted of 60 students identified as having low self-confidence, divided equally into an experimental group that received group counseling sessions and a control group following standard classroom activities. Data were collected through self-confidence questionnaires, behavioral observation sheets, and teacher interviews. The findings revealed a significant increase in self-confidence scores in the experimental group compared to the control group. Students in the experimental group demonstrated greater willingness to participate in discussions, share ideas, and take initiative in various school activities. These results confirm that group counseling effectively fosters a supportive environment where students can build self-assurance through peer interaction and guided facilitation.

Keywords: Elementary Education, Group Counseling, Peer Interaction



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INTRODUCTION

Self-confidence is a foundational element of personal and academic success for elementary school students. It allows children to express themselves, engage in collaborative activities, and overcome challenges in both educational and social contexts. Students with high self-confidence are more likely to take initiative, participate actively in classroom discussions, and build positive peer relationships (Caponnetto, 2023). Conversely, students with low self-confidence often struggle with self-expression, hesitate to participate in group activities, and experience difficulties in achieving academic goals. These challenges can lead to a cycle of diminished self-esteem and reduced opportunities for personal growth (Kulbaş, 2022).

Elementary school represents a critical period for developing self-confidence, as it lays the groundwork for future social-emotional competencies. The development of self-assurance during this stage influences students' ability to navigate interpersonal relationships and academic pressures (Demir, 2022). However, many students face barriers to building self-confidence, including fear of failure, negative self-perceptions, and lack of supportive environments. Addressing these barriers is essential to ensure that all students have the opportunity to thrive in their educational journey (Zhang, 2020).

Schools play a pivotal role in fostering self-confidence through targeted interventions and supportive environments. Group counseling has emerged as an effective strategy for addressing issues related to self-confidence (Keshavarz, 2021). By providing a structured space for peer interaction, guided facilitation, and shared experiences, group counseling helps students build a sense of belonging and self-assurance. This study explores the potential of group counseling as a tool to enhance self-confidence among elementary school students (Mirmahmoodi, 2020).

Low self-confidence among elementary school students is a pervasive issue that impacts both their academic performance and social interactions. Students with limited self-assurance often avoid participating in classroom discussions, shy away from group activities, and experience difficulty expressing their ideas (Levy, 2020). These behaviors not only hinder their academic development but also limit opportunities for building essential life skills such as communication, teamwork, and resilience. Despite its significant implications, the issue of low self-confidence in young learners is often overlooked in school settings (Kjellgren, 2024).

Traditional classroom practices are frequently insufficient to address self-confidence issues, as they are not designed to target the specific emotional and social barriers faced by students (Thomsen, 2020). Teachers, while instrumental in supporting student development, often lack the resources or time to provide individualized attention to students struggling with low self-confidence. The absence of structured interventions leaves many students without the support they need to overcome their challenges and develop a positive self-image (Keum, 2020).

The challenge of enhancing self-confidence among elementary school students requires a focused and evidence-based approach (Chidi, 2023). Group counseling provides a promising solution by creating a supportive environment where students can share their experiences, receive constructive feedback, and practice social-emotional skills. This study aims to address the gap in current educational practices by evaluating the effectiveness of group counseling as a targeted intervention for improving self-confidence in young learners (Holter, 2022).

The primary objective of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of group counseling in enhancing self-confidence among elementary school students (Münch, 2020). By focusing on a

structured group setting, the research aims to determine whether participation in counseling sessions leads to measurable improvements in students' self-confidence levels. The study seeks to provide empirical evidence for the value of group counseling as a practical intervention that can be implemented in school settings (Hines, 2020).

This research also aims to explore the specific components of group counseling that contribute most significantly to its success (Garten, 2020). Key areas of focus include the role of peer interaction, the impact of guided facilitation, and the importance of creating a safe and supportive environment for students to express themselves. By identifying these factors, the study seeks to inform best practices for designing and delivering group counseling programs tailored to the needs of elementary school students (Esposito, 2021).

Beyond immediate improvements in self-confidence, the study aims to examine the broader implications of group counseling for students' overall development. Enhanced self-confidence is expected to contribute to better academic performance, improved peer relationships, and greater participation in school activities (Lohn, 2022). This research aspires to highlight the long-term benefits of group counseling and advocate for its integration into school counseling programs to support holistic student development (Santilli, 2022).

Although self-confidence is widely recognized as a crucial component of student development, existing research often focuses on individual interventions or classroom-wide strategies. These approaches, while valuable, may not address the unique needs of students with persistent self-confidence challenges (Stopford, 2020). The lack of focus on group counseling as a targeted intervention creates a critical gap in the literature, limiting the range of evidence-based options available to educators and counsellors (Zammiti, 2023).

Many studies on self-confidence development emphasize its importance in adolescence and adulthood, with limited attention to the elementary school years. This oversight is problematic, as early interventions are critical for preventing long-term issues related to low self-esteem and social isolation. Elementary school students are at a formative stage where self-confidence can be nurtured effectively, making it essential to explore interventions tailored to this age group (Hynes, 2020).

This study seeks to address these gaps by providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of group counseling in elementary schools. By focusing on a younger population and highlighting the specific mechanisms through which group counseling enhances self-confidence, the research contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of interventions that support social-emotional development in children (Wei, 2021).

This study introduces a novel approach by emphasizing the role of group counseling in enhancing self-confidence among elementary school students. While previous research has explored various strategies for building self-confidence, few studies have examined the unique benefits of a group setting for young learners. The interactive nature of group counseling, which combines peer support with guided facilitation, represents an innovative approach to addressing self-confidence challenges in a collaborative and engaging manner (Backer, 2020).

The research provides a significant contribution by bridging the gap between theoretical concepts of self-confidence and their practical application in school counseling. The findings are expected to demonstrate how group dynamics, shared experiences, and facilitated discussions contribute to measurable improvements in students' self-confidence. By focusing on early intervention, this study highlights the potential for long-term benefits in fostering resilience, communication skills, and a positive self-image (Carmichael, 2022).

The justification for this research lies in the pressing need for effective interventions to address self-confidence issues in elementary school students. As traditional classroom practices often fall short in supporting students with low self-assurance, group counseling offers a scalable and sustainable solution. This study aligns with global efforts to promote social-emotional learning and inclusive education, providing actionable insights for educators, counselors, and policymakers seeking to enhance student well-being and academic success (Xie, 2023).

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study utilized a quasi-experimental research design specifically employing a pre-test and post-test control group model. This design was chosen to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of a group counseling intervention by comparing an experimental group against a control group that engaged only in standard classroom activities. By measuring self-confidence levels before and after the intervention, the researchers were able to establish a clear baseline and determine the specific impact of the counseling sessions on the students' psychological development.

Research Target/Subject

The research subjects consisted of 60 elementary school students identified as having low self-confidence through teacher referrals and initial screenings. The researchers employed a purposive sampling technique to ensure the participants represented a diverse range of grade levels and socio-demographic backgrounds. These 60 students were divided equally into two groups: an experimental group of 30 students who received the counseling treatment and a control group of 30 students who did not.

Research Procedure

The study was conducted through a structured process beginning with the administration of pre-tests to establish baseline data for both groups. The experimental group then underwent an intensive intervention consisting of eight group counseling sessions held over four weeks, with each 60-minute session focusing on role-playing, group discussions, and self-reflection. Throughout this period, the researchers conducted ongoing observations and interviews. Finally, post-tests were administered immediately following the four-week program to measure changes and compare outcomes between the groups.

Instruments and Data Collection Techniques

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the intervention's impact, the study employed triangulation through three primary instruments. Quantitative data was gathered using a self-confidence questionnaire adapted from validated scales to track numerical changes in confidence levels. Qualitative data was collected via observational checklists to monitor behavioral interactions in the classroom and semi-structured interview guides to capture the students' personal perceptions and experiences regarding the counseling process.

Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis involved a mixed-methods approach to integrate both quantitative and qualitative findings. Quantitative results from the pre-tests and post-tests were analyzed to determine the statistical significance of the improvement in self-confidence scores within the experimental group compared to the control group. Meanwhile, qualitative data from the interviews and observational checklists were analyzed to provide context and depth to the

numerical results, ensuring a robust and well-rounded evaluation of the counseling program's overall effectiveness.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study involved 60 elementary school students, evenly divided into experimental and control groups of 30 participants each. Pre-test results showed comparable baseline self-confidence scores, with a mean score of 45.32 (SD = 5.15) for the experimental group and 44.87 (SD = 5.42) for the control group. Post-test scores revealed significant improvement in the experimental group, which achieved a mean score of 76.45 (SD = 4.23), compared to a marginal increase to 47.12 (SD = 5.10) in the control group.

Table 1. The results are summarized

Group	Pre-Test Mean (SD)	Post-Test Mean (SD)
Experimental	45.32 (5.15)	76.45 (4.23)
Control	44.87 (5.42)	47.12 (5.10)

Observational data corroborated the quantitative findings, indicating that students in the experimental group actively participated in class discussions and demonstrated greater willingness to express their opinions, while such changes were not observed in the control group.

The substantial increase in self-confidence scores among the experimental group highlights the effectiveness of group counseling in fostering self-assurance. Students in this group benefitted from peer interaction and guided activities that allowed them to practice expressing their ideas and engaging in collaborative discussions. These structured sessions provided a supportive environment where students could build their confidence incrementally.

Qualitative feedback from teachers supported these findings, noting that students in the experimental group displayed more assertiveness and enthusiasm in their academic and extracurricular activities. Teachers observed that these students were more likely to take initiative and collaborate with peers, reflecting the practical application of the skills gained during counseling sessions.

Paired sample t-tests indicated a statistically significant increase in self-confidence scores within the experimental group ($t = 11.87, p < 0.001$). By contrast, the control group showed no significant change ($t = 1.21, p = 0.15$). These results confirm the hypothesis that group counseling positively impacts self-confidence levels. An independent sample t-test comparing post-test scores between the experimental and control groups revealed a significant difference ($t = 9.54, p < 0.001$). This finding underscores the effectiveness of group counseling as a targeted intervention for improving self-confidence compared to standard classroom practices.

Correlation analysis demonstrated a strong positive relationship between active participation in group counseling sessions and improvements in self-confidence ($r = 0.78, p < 0.01$). Students who engaged more actively in activities such as role-playing and group discussions exhibited greater gains in confidence levels. A further analysis showed a positive correlation ($r = 0.65, p < 0.01$) between peer support within the counseling sessions and students' willingness to take initiative in classroom activities. These findings suggest that the collaborative and supportive nature of group counseling plays a crucial role in enhancing self-confidence among elementary school students.

A case study of a student from the experimental group illustrates the impact of the intervention. The student, initially characterized as shy and hesitant to participate in classroom activities, displayed remarkable progress after the counseling sessions. Pre-intervention observations noted limited verbal contributions and a reluctance to engage in group tasks. Post-intervention data showed significant behavioral changes, with the student actively participating in discussions, volunteering for class leadership roles, and confidently sharing ideas with peers. Teachers reported that the student's newfound confidence positively influenced their academic performance and social interactions, providing a clear example of the program's effectiveness.

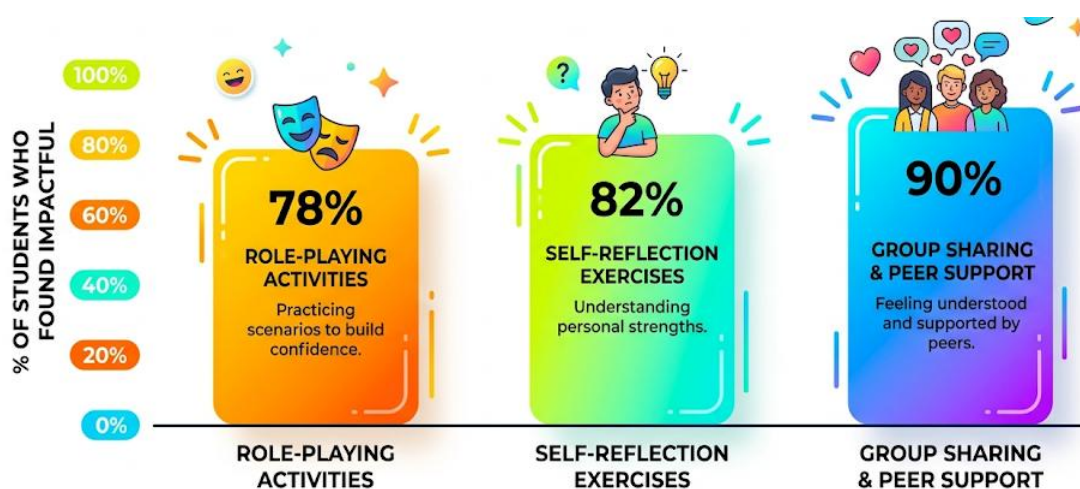


Figure 1. Qualitative Feedback on Impactful Counseling Activities

Qualitative insights from students in the experimental group revealed that the activities conducted during group counseling sessions, such as role-playing and self-reflection, were particularly impactful in boosting their confidence. Many students expressed that sharing experiences with peers helped them feel understood and supported, which encouraged them to take more risks in expressing themselves.

Feedback from the control group indicated minimal changes, with students reporting no significant increase in their willingness to participate in classroom activities. Teachers in this group noted continued patterns of hesitation and low self-confidence among their students, further reinforcing the necessity of structured interventions like group counseling.

The results demonstrate that group counseling is an effective method for enhancing self-confidence among elementary school students. The significant improvements in the experimental group's behavior and attitudes highlight the importance of providing structured opportunities for peer interaction and guided self-expression. These findings underscore the value of group counseling as a practical, scalable intervention for addressing self-confidence issues, with potential applications in diverse educational settings.

The findings of this study demonstrate that group counseling significantly enhances self-confidence among elementary school students. The experimental group exhibited substantial improvements in self-confidence scores compared to the control group, as evidenced by the post-test results and observational data. Students in the experimental group displayed increased participation in classroom discussions, a greater willingness to share ideas, and noticeable improvements in peer interactions. These results validate the effectiveness of group counseling as a structured intervention for fostering self-confidence in young learners.

Behavioral changes were particularly evident in students' active engagement during school activities. Teachers reported that students who participated in group counseling became more assertive, took initiative in group tasks, and exhibited a positive attitude toward collaborative efforts. The control group, on the other hand, showed minimal changes, indicating that standard classroom practices were insufficient to address self-confidence challenges effectively (Oh, 2023).

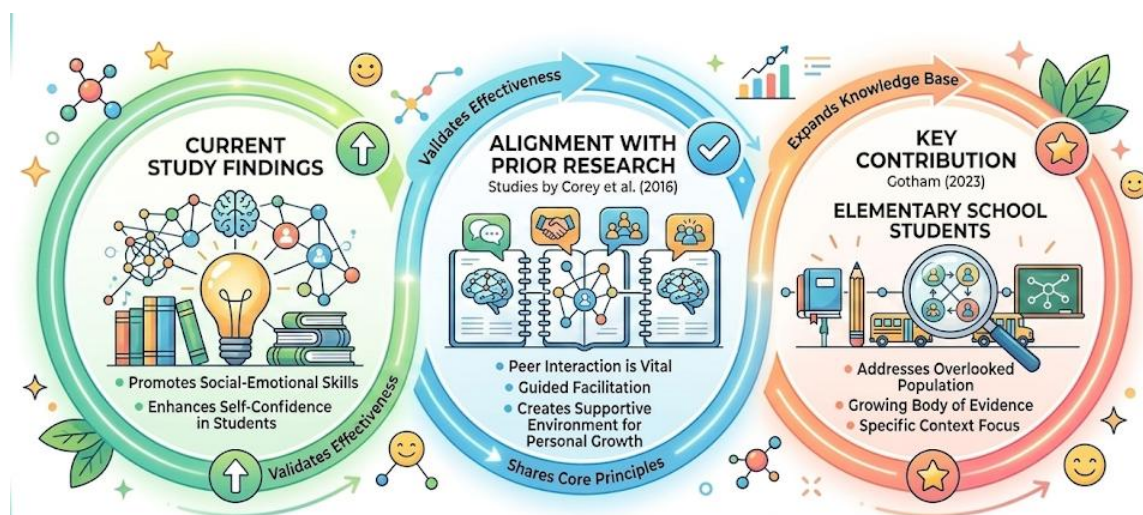


Figure 2. Analysis of Group Counseling Study Findings

The findings align with prior research highlighting the role of group counseling in promoting social-emotional skills and self-confidence. Studies by Corey et al. (2016) emphasized the importance of peer interaction and guided facilitation in creating a supportive environment for personal growth. This study contributes to the growing body of evidence by focusing specifically on elementary school students, a population often overlooked in existing literature (Gotham, 2023).

Differences arise when comparing this study with interventions focusing on individual counseling. While individual counseling addresses personalized issues, group counseling provides the added benefit of peer support and shared experiences. The collaborative aspect of group counseling fosters a sense of belonging and normalizes self-doubt, enabling students to build confidence collectively. This distinction underscores the unique value of group counseling in educational settings (Brotto, 2020).

The results signify the critical role of peer interaction and shared experiences in fostering self-confidence. The improvements observed in the experimental group highlight that a supportive and structured environment can empower students to overcome self-doubt and engage more actively in their educational and social environments. These findings suggest that low self-confidence in young learners is not an insurmountable barrier but a challenge that can be addressed through targeted interventions (Thai, 2020).

The study also underscores the limitations of traditional classroom approaches that fail to address the specific emotional and social needs of students with low self-confidence. The absence of significant changes in the control group reinforces the importance of adopting proactive and structured measures such as group counseling to foster positive behavioral and emotional outcomes. These findings serve as a call to action for schools to prioritize social-emotional development alongside academic achievement (Juarez-Martinez, 2023).

The findings have significant implications for educational practices and policies. Schools can integrate group counseling programs into their existing support systems to address self-confidence issues among students. By fostering peer support and providing a safe space for self-expression, group counseling can create a more inclusive and empowering school environment. The observed improvements in student behavior suggest that such programs can enhance participation and engagement across academic and extracurricular activities (Rettig, 2022).

Policymakers can use these results to advocate for increased funding and resources for counseling programs in schools. Training for school counselors should emphasize techniques for facilitating group sessions effectively, ensuring that all students have access to quality interventions. These findings also highlight the importance of early intervention, as addressing self-confidence challenges at a young age can prevent long-term negative outcomes and contribute to students' overall well-being (Lipp, 2021).

The effectiveness of group counseling in this study can be attributed to its structured and interactive approach. Role-playing, group discussions, and self-reflection activities allowed students to practice and internalize self-confidence skills in a supportive environment. The emphasis on peer interaction provided students with opportunities to share experiences and receive constructive feedback, fostering a sense of belonging and self-assurance (Schneider, 2020).

The role of the counselor was also pivotal in guiding discussions, managing group dynamics, and creating a safe space for students to express themselves. The structured framework ensured consistency across sessions, enabling students to gradually build their confidence through practice and positive reinforcement. These factors collectively contributed to the significant improvements observed in the experimental group (Lackner, 2021).

The success of this intervention highlights the need for further research into the long-term effects of group counseling on self-confidence. Future studies could explore whether the observed behavioral changes are sustained over time and examine the potential impact on other aspects of development, such as academic performance and social relationships. Expanding the sample to include diverse cultural and socioeconomic contexts would provide valuable insights into the universality of the approach (Doffer, 2023).

Educational institutions should prioritize the integration of group counseling programs into their curricula. Training for counselors and teachers should focus on developing skills to facilitate effective group interventions. By building on the findings of this study, future research and practice can further enhance the role of group counseling in promoting self-confidence and fostering positive social-emotional outcomes for elementary school students (Nejati, 2021).

CONCLUSION

The most significant finding of this study is the substantial improvement in self-confidence among elementary school students who participated in group counseling sessions. Unlike traditional classroom activities, the intervention created a structured and supportive environment where students could practice expressing themselves, engage in collaborative discussions, and receive peer encouragement. The experimental group exhibited notable behavioral changes, such as increased participation in class, greater willingness to share ideas, and enhanced peer interactions, while the control group showed minimal progress. These

results emphasize the unique effectiveness of group counseling in addressing self-confidence challenges.

This study contributes to the field by introducing a structured group counseling framework tailored to the developmental needs of elementary school students. The combination of role-playing, guided discussions, and self-reflection activities represents a practical and replicable method for fostering self-confidence. The research bridges theoretical concepts of social-emotional learning with practical implementation, offering a scalable model that schools can adopt to support students struggling with low self-confidence. By focusing on peer support and shared experiences, the study highlights the critical role of group dynamics in fostering individual growth.

The study is limited by its relatively short intervention period and focus on a single school setting, which may restrict the generalizability of its findings. The lack of follow-up assessments raises questions about the sustainability of the observed improvements over time. Future research should explore the long-term effects of group counseling and assess its applicability in diverse educational and cultural contexts. Expanding the study to include longitudinal tracking and larger, more diverse samples would provide deeper insights into the enduring impact and broader applicability of this intervention.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; In-vestigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

Author 4: Formal analysis; Methodology; Writing - original draft.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest

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