



# Impact of Musical Activities on the Social Skills of the Indonesian High School Students



## ARTICLE INFO

### Article Type

Original Research

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### How to cite this article

Widyaningrum A, Rohmansyah NR, Hiruntrakul A. Impact of Musical Activities on the Social Skills of the Indonesian High School Students. Health Education and Health Promotion. 2024;12(1):139-144.

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### Article History

Received: December 4, 2023

Accepted: February 24, 2024

ePublished: March 25, 2024

## ABSTRACT

**Aims** This study aimed to determine the efficacy of musical activities and behavioral skills training strategies in group supervision in developing the social skills of high school pupils.

**Materials & Methods** This randomized controlled study used a sample of high school pupils of Semarang City, Indonesia, in April 2022. The employed tool was a 106-item student social skills scale. The Gregory model's content validity earned a score of 0.94, indicating strong validity. Cronbach's alpha reliability test resulted in a score of 0.961. The Wilcoxon and the Mann-Whitney tests were used in SPSS 25 software.

**Findings** There was no significant difference between the pre-test social skills scores of the students in the experimental ( $326.69 \pm 27.15$ ) and control ( $329.62 \pm 32.89$ ) groups ( $p > 0.05$ ). Also, the social skills score of the experimental group ( $333.51 \pm 26.63$ ) was not significantly higher than the control group ( $332.28 \pm 34.01$ ) after the educational courses ( $p = 0.517$ ).

**Conclusion** Music activities do not improve high school students' social skills.

**Keywords** Musical Activities; Education; Teacher; Behavioral Skills Training; Social; Skills

## CITATION LINKS

[1] The use of behavioral skills training to improve staff performance of discrete ... [2] Using behavioral skills training and equivalence-based instruction to teach children safe responding to dangerous stimuli: A ... [3] Using behavioral skills training to teach parents to implement three-step prompting: A component analysis and ... [4] Comparative study of 5G signal attenuation estimation ... [5] Using behavioral skills training to teach implementation of behavioral interventions to teachers and ... [6] Dynamic tree-based routing: Applied in wireless sensor ... [7] The use of behavioral skills training to teach graph analysis ... [8] Use of behavioral skills training with teachers: A ... [9] A hybrid approach based on PSO and boosting technique for data ... [10] Detection of attacks and anomalies in the internet of things system ... [11] Using behavioral skills training to teach high school students to ... [12] Training practitioners to conduct a functional behavior assessment via ... [13] Pre-service teacher-delivered behavioral skills training: A pyramidal ... [14] Hierarchical weighted framework for emotional distress detection using personalized ... [15] Parent-implemented behavioral skills training ... [16] Training behavioral technicians to implement naturalistic ... [17] The teaching interaction procedure and behavioral skills training for ... [18] Examining the effects of behavioral skills training on social praise delivery in ... [19] Effects of behavioral skills training on teacher implementation of ... [20] Improving the interview skills of college students using ... [21] Improving pre-service teachers' performance skills through ... [22] Behavioral skills training with teachers: Booster training for improved ... [23] A design model for using virtual reality in behavioral ... [24] Behavioral skills training with adult interventionists: ... [25] Using computer-based instruction to teach implementation ... [26] Training human service staff to implement behavioral ... [27] Using acceptance and commitment training to enhance the effectiveness ... [28] A further evaluation of behavioral skills training for implementation ... [29] Using behavioral skills training to promote the generalization ... [30] Behavioral skills training in Portuguese children with ... [31] Using behavioral skills training with preservice teachers ... [32] A component analysis of behavioral skills training ... [33] Generalization and maintenance of caregivers' effective ... [34] Establishing fire safety skills using ... [35] Scaling up behavioral skills training: Effectiveness of large-scale ... [36] Training behavior analysts to conduct functional analyses ... [37] A comparison of immediate and post-session feedback with behavioral ... [38] Effects of behavioral skills training on teachers conducting ... [39] Effects of group behavioral skills training on ...

## Introduction

The behavioral skills training (BST) technique contains a training package that combines several specific methodologies to create an effective technique for teaching someone's behavioral skills compared to other methods [1, 2]. The behavioral skills training method includes several theories, such as Bandura's social learning, Skinner's operant learning theory, structured learning theory, and the cognitive approach theory, which is carried out in an integrated manner in the training process which includes providing instructions, modeling, practice, feedback, and continued with practice, direct. Behavioral skills training is used to intervene with students who do not have social skills or acquisition and fail to display social skills or performance at school [3, 4]. This is confirmed by the results of a literature analysis conducted, explaining that since the 1970s, BST-like steps have been used by many experts in teaching behavioral skills to someone, but did not have a standard term until 2004, which was named BST by Sarokoff & Sturmey [5, 6].

Music activities and BST techniques have been proven to be very effective in teaching various behavioral skills [7-10]. This shows that the BST technique, from year to year, continues to experience development and refinement, which is considered effective in providing any behavioral skills training treatment that is expected according to current developments compared to other techniques. The behavioral skills training technique is a form of intervention to teach social behavioral skills that are simulated through role-playing [11, 12]. Effective BST training is given to students in schools to anticipate cases of sexual harassment and kidnapping, which teaches skills for preventing kidnapping and sexual harassment through instruction procedures, modeling, practice, and feedback [13].

In the United States, behavioral skills training techniques have proven effective and can be used to improve students' social skills at school [14]. Behavioral skills training techniques can be used to teach new social skills to normal American teenagers based on the behavior analysis model in the form of ABA [15]. Breidenbach's research in 1984 explained that the application of behavioral skills training techniques to 34 school-age children who were developing into several groups to practice anger management showed results in the form of increased anger management before and after the intervention [12]. In connection with social behavior skills training, it has been proven effective in dealing with adolescents with deficits in social skills with peers [16]. Behavioral skills training through methods of instruction, modeling, practice, and feedback has been proven to be used to improve the social skills of children with mild intellectual disabilities [17]. The application of behavioral skills training techniques was carried out outside of guidance and counseling

services, so it is not yet known with certainty the effectiveness of behavioral skills training when applied to guidance and counseling services in high school environments.

Based on interviews on March 12-20, 2022, with guidance and counseling teachers, namely three high schools in the city of Semarang, Indonesia, which is supported by the results of the needs assessment analysis, found that there are still social problems experienced by students in the form of lack of social skills, such as dependence on social media rather than interacting directly, lack of confidence in front of other people, personal information, which becomes the consumption of other people, and difficulty adapting to new environments. Interview results on March 18, 2022, with high school guidance and counseling teachers in general, showed that there were still problems with social skills that emerged in the form of students making fun of each other, which led to bullying, awkward socializing with other people, prolonged conflicts with friends, and difficulty expressing opinions in class. Problems that often arise within the scope of students at school are social interaction problems in learning activities and social interaction problems in playing activities [18].

Various previous studies to overcome social problems experienced by students can be applied through one of the behavior modification techniques in the form of BST [19]. When interviewed, guidance and counseling teachers at the three schools stated that efforts to overcome students' social problems at school, guidance and counseling teachers had not been completely successful. This is proven by discovering several social problems still relatively frequently experienced by students based on the results of the guidance and counseling teacher's need assessment regarding lack of socialization and healthy interactions. Apart from that, it was found that in providing guidance and counseling services to overcome social problems, students had not fully used a behavioristic approach, specifically, behavior modification techniques and BST. The results of interviews with guidance and counseling teachers in three schools revealed that the application of behavior modification techniques and BST to overcome social problems coherently has never been implemented.

Starting from various research on behavioral skills training techniques, we aimed to conduct a scientific intervention study to determine the effectiveness of behavioral skills training techniques in group guidance for improving the social skills of high school students.

## Materials and Methods

The randomized controlled trial was conducted in April 2022 in two control and experimental groups. The research population was All high school students of Semarang City, Indonesia; according to the Morgan

table, 384 were needed. Considering a 10% drop, 422 students were selected by lottery. The samples were randomly divided into two experimental (n=211) and control (n=211) groups.

The employed tool was a 106-item student social skills scale [13]. This scale contains statements that were favorable or unfavorable (Table 1). The scoring of the favorable statements was very suitable (4

points), suitable (3 points), not suitable (2 points), and very unsuitable (1 point). The scoring of the unfavorable statements was the opposite as very suitable (1 point), suitable (2 points), not suitable (3 points), and very unsuitable (4 points). The Gregory model's content validity earned a score of 0.94, indicating strong validity. Cronbach's alpha reliability test resulted in a score of 0.96.

**Table 1.** Social skills instrument

Aspect	Indicator	Favorite Items	Unfavorable Items
<b>Interpersonal behavior</b>	Accept authority	1, 3	2, 4
	Resolve conflicts that arise	5, 6, 7	8, 9, 10
	Get attention	11, 12	13, 14
	Greet other people	15, 17, 19	16, 18, 20
	Help others	21, 22, 25	23, 24, 26
	Make conversation	27, 29	28, 30
	Play in an organized manner	31, 32	33, 34
	Be positive with others	35, 36	37, 38
	Play informally	39, 40	41, 42
	Ownership of one's own and other people's goods	43, 44	45, 46
<b>Environmental behavior</b>	Care about the environment	47, 48	49, 50
	Handle emergencies	51, 52	53, 54
	Mobility in the environment	55, 56	57, 58
<b>Self-related behavior</b>	Accept the consequences	59, 60	61, 62
	Ethical behavior	63, 65, 67	64, 66, 68
	Express feelings	69, 70	71, 72
	Positive attitude towards yourself	73, 74	75, 76
	Responsible behavior	77, 78, 81	79, 80, 82
	Take care of yourself	83, 84	85, 86
<b>Task-related behavior</b>	Ask and answer questions	87	88
	Accepting behavior	89, 90	91, 92
	Discussed in class	93, 94	95, 96
	Completing the task	97, 98	99, 100
	Follow directions	101, 102	103, 104
	Get involved in group activities	105, 106	107, 108
	Work independently	109, 110	111, 112
	Behavior towards the tasks given	113, 114	115, 116
	Quality of work	117, 118	119, 120

An initial test was performed as a pre-test to determine the initial level of students' social skills. After that, provide behavioral skills training technique treatment in group guidance using instructions, modeling, role-playing exercises, and providing feedback followed by practice outside the training session. Treatment was given only to the experimental group, while the control group was not given BST technique treatment. The trainer explained the plan and purpose of carrying out the BST technique in online group guidance to the experimental group. The trainer divided the experimental group into 5 training groups and prepared role-playing drama texts according to the video modeling the target social skills for each group. The behavioral skills training technique treatment was carried out for 3 weeks (one session, each lasting 60 minutes). A song that highlighted the individual cognitive aspects was selected for the first session (Regional Song: Suwe Ora Jamu). This song focused more on training individual children's understanding, which was assisted and accompanied by the researcher so that the subject interpreted the words in the song. Children are expected to be able to respond verbally or non-verbally. After the child

played this song using the keyboard, the child was asked to retell the song's meaning. This song did not encourage much interaction with the other subjects. For the second session, a song was selected to highlight interaction and togetherness (Game song: What Are You Doing?). The words in the song lyrics mostly guide the subject in interacting with the subject group. The researcher played a musical instrument while the three research subjects sang the song "What are you doing?" with the concept of singing while continuously asking and answering questions between subjects. For the third session, a happy atmosphere song was selected (The Sound of Music: Do Re Mi). The words in the song lyrics were no longer the focus. The subject group was accompanied to have fun together following the rhythm of the music, which was performed alternately. After treatments, the researchers conducted a post-test on the control and experimental groups to determine social skill levels. Due to not participating actively and being absent, 6 students in the experimental (n=205) and 7 in the control group (n=204) were excluded. The Wilcoxon test was used to analyze the effect of treatment on the experimental group, and the Mann-

Whitney test was used to compare the pre-test and post-test data between the experimental and control groups in SPSS 25 software.

## Findings

The students' ages ranged from 12 to 18, and there was no significant difference between the mean age of the experimental ( $13.1 \pm 0.6$  years) and the control ( $14.1 \pm 0.5$  years) groups ( $p > 0.05$ ). 94 students (22.96%) were educated in international schools, while 315 students (77.04%) were from the local community.

There was no significant difference between the pre-test social skills scores of the students in the experimental ( $326.69 \pm 27.15$ ) and control ( $329.62 \pm 32.89$ ) groups ( $p > 0.05$ ). Also, the social skills score of the experimental group ( $333.51 \pm 26.63$ ) was not significantly higher than the control group ( $332.28 \pm 34.01$ ) after the educational courses ( $p = 0.517$ ).

## Discussion

Based on data analysis, it can be seen that behavioral skills training techniques in group guidance are not effective in improving school students' social skills intermediate above. This is caused by various factors that influence experimental research. This experimental research uses a field setting so that some factors or conditions can influence the research results. Experimental research has various things that can threaten internal validity [11, 15, 20]. This experimental research found that there was a history, namely certain events that were not part of the experimental treatment experienced directly by the subjects during the experiment from the beginning of the intervention to the post-test measurements, that could influence the effectiveness of the treatment given. The experiment lasted for three weeks with 5 treatments. This makes it possible for historical effects to emerge because the experiments were carried out relatively long and with a large time lag. This research examines the effects of maturation, namely natural changes that subjects experience naturally without intervention, such as becoming more mature, better, hungry, experienced, and wise [21-23]. Students' social skills material can be studied autodidactically so that students can be more active in learning independently of their environment as they grow older. Individuals who can recognize themselves and their social environment can control their attitudes and behavior and understand the characteristics of other people so they can adapt and have healthy social relationships [24-26]. The student social skills material provided is students' daily behavior in social activities, which can be influenced by maturity.

Apart from that, cooperation and student motivation in participating in treatment helped researchers

achieve the objectives of each social skills material trained through Music activities and BST techniques in group guidance. Motivation is the most important factor a subject has to determine the success of a treatment [27-29]. Experimental group students participating in each BST technique session in group guidance on students' social skills have varying motivations.

The next factor that can influence the provision of BST treatment in group guidance on students' social skills is the involvement of the environment, especially friends, teachers, and parents. The involvement of friends, teachers, and parents for students taking part in BST training is to help students apply the social skills strategies that have been given in the treatment session to real everyday situations. The involvement of other people in the student environment is very important, especially in assessing behavior, evaluating the social skills behavior that appears, and providing constructive feedback on appropriate and inappropriate behavior [30-32]. Social behavior skills outside of training can be practiced at school while directly supervised by a teacher who can provide direct feedback. The factor that influences students' social skills is education or the school environment because students are helped to develop social skills to build good relationships with friends, teachers, and school employees through subjects, extracurriculars, guidance services, and counseling [5, 33-35]. Teacher involvement can influence the effectiveness of the treatment given because it helps students generalize the social skills that have been trained in the school environment [36, 37]. The involvement of teachers after providing treatment by helping train students to generalize behavior or practice in real terms outside of training sessions in the school environment has not been fully implemented.

The next factor that influences students' social skills and impacts the treatment's effectiveness is strengthening students' social skills and behavior inside and outside the training session. Researchers in each treatment include reinforcement in each procedure, such as giving praise to students who pay attention and repeat instructions correctly, paying attention to modeling videos and summarising them correctly, practicing role-playing correctly, and providing feedback to each other among students who are training members. Training students also receive reinforcement and praise from other friends during BST training. The generalization of social skills behavior, after going through the stages of instruction, modeling, practice, and feedback, is necessary to invite friends, parents, and teachers to provide reinforcement when students demonstrate correct social skills at home and school [38, 39]. However, outside of the training session, students do not fully receive reinforcement and praise for their social skills and behavior from teachers and friends because they still have limited interaction.



Based on the explanation above, the BST technique in group guidance is not effective on the social skills of experimental group students when compared with the control group due to historical factors, maturity, mortality, testing, technological obstacles in providing treatment, seriousness, and motivation of students in participating in group guidance. Furthermore, students are limited in applying social skills practice strategies in real environments, so not all receive feedback and reinforcement outside training sessions. However, guidance and counseling teachers should continue using music activities and BST techniques as an alternative group guidance treatment.

## Conclusion

Music activity approaches do not improve high school students' social skills.

**Acknowledgments:** None declared by the authors.

**Ethical Permissions:** The Universitas PGRI Semarang Research Ethics Committee has accepted all research methodologies (120/EC/UPGRIS/2021).

**Conflicts of Interests:** The authors declared no conflict of interest.

**Authors' Contribution:** Widyaningrum A (First Author), Methodologist/Main Researcher/Discussion Writer/Statistical Analyst (33%); Rohmansyah NR (Second Author), Introduction Writer/Assistant Researcher/Discussion Writer/Statistical Analyst (34%); Hiruntrakul A (Third Author), Introduction Writer/Assistant Researcher/Discussion Writer/Statistical Analyst (33%)

**Funding/Support:** This research received a specific grant from the Universitas PGRI Semarang funding.

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