The Efforts to Improve the Self-Confidence of Vocational High School Students using Classical Guidance Services with a Project-Based Learning Model

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to improve students' self-confidence through the implementation of a project-based learning model in guidance and counseling services. The research uses a Guidance and Counseling Action Research (PTBK) approach, which involves a series of systematic actions to address the issue of low student self-confidence. The study was conducted at SMK Negeri 7 Semarang, involving 36 first-year students who experienced difficulties with self-confidence as research participants. The intervention integrated the project-based learning paradigm into guidance and counseling services. The results showed an increase in students' self-confidence by 76.36% after applying the model. In conclusion, the project-based learning model is effective in enhancing the self-confidence of first-year students at SMK Negeri 7 Semarang. The implication of this study is that integrating project-based learning into guidance and counseling services can be an effective strategy to strengthen students' self-confidence, thereby supporting their academic and social development.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan rasa percaya diri siswa melalui penerapan model pembelajaran berbasis proyek dalam layanan bimbingan dan konseling. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan Penelitian Tindakan Bimbingan dan Konseling (PTBK) yang merupakan rangkaian tindakan sistematis untuk mengatasi masalah rendahnya rasa percaya diri pada siswa. Penelitian dilaksanakan di SMK Negeri 7 Semarang dengan melibatkan 36 siswa kelas satu yang mengalami kesulitan dalam hal kepercayaan diri sebagai peserta penelitian. Tindakan dilakukan dengan mengintegrasikan paradigma pembelajaran berbasis proyek ke dalam layanan bimbingan konseling. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan peningkatan rasa percaya diri siswa sebesar 76,36% setelah penerapan model tersebut. Kesimpulannya, model pembelajaran berbasis proyek efektif dalam meningkatkan rasa percaya diri siswa kelas satu SMK Negeri 7 Semarang. Implikasi dari penelitian ini adalah bahwa integrasi pembelajaran berbasis proyek dalam layanan bimbingan konseling dapat menjadi strategi yang efektif untuk memperkuat kepercayaan diri siswa, sehingga mendukung perkembangan akademik dan sosial mereka.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Self-confidence is an important psychological component that supports adolescents' academic and social success. Self-confidence is a person's belief in their ability to complete tasks, overcome challenges, and communicate effectively with others (Lauster, 1997, p. 4). It involves having faith in one's skills and is a critical asset individuals rely on to meet various demands. Confident individuals feel valued and capable of navigating life, considering possibilities, and making decisions independently. According to Adler, self-confidence is one of the most fundamental

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human needs, second only to the desire for superiority. Students with high self-confidence tend to be more active participants, willing to express their opinions, and able to complete classroom tasks without hesitation. However, many students still struggle with low self-confidence in practice.

Bandura (2018) explains that self-confidence, or self-efficacy, is a person's belief in their capability to succeed in specific tasks. In educational contexts, students with higher self-confidence are generally more engaged, willing to speak up, and persistent in completing assignments. This is supported by research from Nguyen and Zhang (2021), which shows that students with strong self-efficacy can overcome the fear of failure, leading to increased classroom participation and improved learning outcomes. Therefore, fostering self-confidence is an essential educational goal to promote optimal student engagement and achievement.

Despite its importance, many students face challenges related to self-confidence. Susanto et al. (2022) found that social anxiety and self-doubt frequently hinder students' active participation. Their study highlighted factors such as academic pressure, competitive social environments, and lack of emotional support as contributors to low self-confidence. Furthermore, Rahmawati and Kurniawan (2023) note that technological advances and social media often exacerbate insecurity and negative social comparisons among students. Consequently, interventions such as counseling and learning programs focused on strengthening students' psychological well-being are needed to address these issues.

Findings from AKPD show that among students at SMK Negeri 7 Semarang, especially class X TE 6, 19 out of 36 students (approximately 52.78%) reported lacking self-confidence. Many students are often inactive, hesitant to speak publicly, and reluctant to express their opinions, which limits their individual and group growth. Counseling instructors also observed that students frequently hesitate to participate in academic activities despite understanding the material, often refusing to present or share ideas during class discussions. This avoidance also extends to extracurricular activities, largely due to fear of making mistakes. A SMA Swasta Raksana Medan study found that 55% of 89 eleventh-grade social studies students lacked self-confidence (Rozaini and Anti, 2017), negatively affecting their learning performance. Many were reluctant to answer questions or share opinions, waiting passively for teachers' directions.

This gap between the ideal confident student and the current reality reflects the need for effective interventions. According to Bandura (1997), direct experiences, supportive environments, and instruction that promote active participation help build confidence. Classical guidance services can address this need, and the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model is a promising approach for fostering students' self-esteem. Mulyadi (2015, p. 387) defines PjBL as a learning paradigm that enables instructors to guide classroom instruction through project-based activities. By engaging students in creative, collaborative, and responsible projects, PjBL facilitates confidence-building through hands-on experience. Research by Kusnadi et al. (2020, p. 19) confirms that PjBL improves academic outcomes and enhances social skills and confidence. Similarly, Ambarwati et al. (2015) found that PjBL increases student engagement by involving them in mental and physical learning activities such as applying theory, participating in discussions, and producing projects. Students are also expected to present their findings orally and in writing. However, there remains potential for innovation, as the application of PjBL in classical guidance services has not been extensively explored.

Student self-confidence strongly influences both academic engagement and achievement. While many studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of PjBL in developing competencies like critical thinking and collaboration (Thomas, 2019; Bell, 2020; Putra & Wulandari, 2022; Saputra & Kurniawan, 2021; Fitriani & Wahyuni, 2023), research specifically examining PjBL integrated into classical guidance to boost self-confidence remains limited. Most prior work has focused on academic and cognitive skills, focusing less on psychological aspects such as confidence within guidance contexts. Moreover, classical guidance services seldom systematically implement or evaluate active learning models like PjBL for character development. This study aims to fill that gap by investigating how PjBL-based classical guidance services can improve students' self-confidence.

This study aims to enhance students' self-confidence by applying the Project-Based Learning paradigm within traditional counseling services. This research is expected to contribute to developing relevant interventions aligned with student needs, offering a fresh and creative alternative to school-based counseling approaches. Theoretically, the study broadens understanding of how PjBL is commonly associated with academic instruction and can be adapted effectively for counseling to boost student confidence. Counselors and educators can use the findings to deliver more creative, engaging, and student-centered guidance services. PjBL fosters character development and active participation, making it a valuable approach to meet 21st-century educational needs

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a classroom action research (CAR) method, which differs from descriptive or experimental research. Classroom action research explores cause-and-effect relationships and captures the entire process of implementing an intervention and its outcomes (Utomo et al., 2024). In other words, this method focuses on monitoring both the process and the results of an intervention in the classroom to improve the quality of learning or services provided.

2.2 Research Subjects

This study was conducted in 2025 with first-year SMK Negeri 7 Semarang students. The research population consisted of 216 first-year students, and 36 students from class X TE 5 were selected as the sample for the study. These students were chosen as research participants because they were actively involved in implementing classical guidance services using the Project-Based Learning paradigm. The involvement of these 36 students throughout the research procedures aimed to assess the extent to which the activity could improve self-confidence.

2.3 Data Collection

The researcher used several instruments to collect the necessary data for this study. The primary instruments included a self-confidence scale, observation sheets, and interview guidelines. Students' experiences and perceptions regarding their self-confidence were gathered directly through structured interviews. In addition, the researcher used observation sheets to document student behavior during the intervention process. Direct classroom observations were conducted to track student attitudes and engagement changes over time.

The self-confidence scale, developed as a questionnaire, was used as an additional instrument. This scale measured emotional qualities expressed in declarative statements and assessed students' self-confidence. Students were required to complete this scale based on their present experiences. The scale was distributed online via Google Forms to simplify data collection and completion.

2.4 Data Analysis

This research utilized descriptive quantitative data analysis to examine changes in students' self-confidence levels before and after the intervention. The data analyzed came from the results of a psychological self-confidence scale distributed to the students in two phases: a pretest (before the intervention) and a posttest (after the intervention).

The first step in the analysis was to calculate the average pretest scores to determine the student's initial self-confidence level. After the intervention, which consisted of classical guidance services using the Project-Based Learning model, was implemented, the same self-confidence scale was administered as a posttest. The results of the two tests were then compared to determine whether there was an improvement. Descriptive quantitative analysis was used to present the numerical data to draw objective conclusions systematically. In this study, comparing pretest and posttest scores served as the basis for evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention. Additionally, the researcher used SPSS software to process the data and conducted a t-test to compare the pretest and post-test results.

2.5 Research Procedure

This research was carried out in several stages to ensure a systematic and valid process. According to Kemmis & McTaggart (2000), as cited in Juherni (2025, p. 30), classroom action research is conducted through a cycle of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The procedure used in this study included the following steps: (1) Research Preparation; (2) Initial Assessment; (3) Implementation of the Plan; (4) Administration of the Posttest; (5) Data Analysis; (6) Drawing Conclusions.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

To evaluate the effectiveness of classical guidance services using a Project-Based Learning (PBL) approach in improving students' self-confidence, the researcher conducted a paired sample t-test. However, before performing

the test, ensuring that the data collected followed a normal distribution was necessary. The results of the normality test are presented below.

Table 1. Results of the Normality Test

		pretest	posttest
N		36	36
Normal	Mean	69,9722	76,3611
Parameters [a,b]	Std. Deviation	7,21699	7,24333
Most Extreme	Absolute	,138	,171
Diferences	Positive	,138	,171
	Negative	-,107	-096
Kolmogorov- Smirnov Z		,827	1,025
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		,501	,244

The significance value (Sig.) for the students' self-confidence pretest data, obtained from classical guidance services using a project-based learning strategy, was 0.501. Since this value is greater than 0.05 (0.501 > 0.05), it meets the normality assumption. Similarly, the posttest data had a significance value of 0.244, greater than 0.05 (0.244 > 0.05). These values indicate that both the pre-treatment and post-treatment data meet the normality assumption, suggesting minimal deviation from a normal distribution.

With the normality condition satisfied, the researcher proceeded to the next phase, which involved conducting a paired sample t-test to test the hypothesis. This test aimed to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in students' time management (note: if you meant "self-confidence," replace this phrase) before and after receiving classical guidance services integrated with a project-based learning model. The results of the paired sample t-test analysis are presented in the following table:
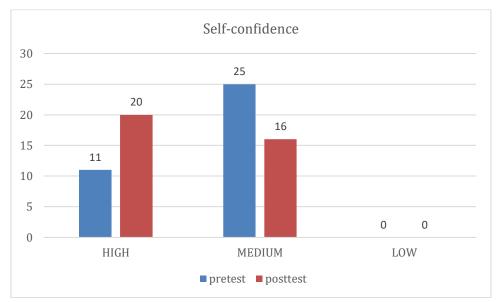
Table 2. Pretest and Posttest Results
Paired Samples Test

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 Pretest-Posttest	-6, 38889	5,07812	,84635	-8,10708	-4,67070	-7,549	35	0,000

The results of the paired sample t-test revealed a significant difference in students' self-confidence between the pretest and posttest data, as indicated by the sig. (2-tailed) the value is less than 0.05. This means that if the sig. (2-tailed) value is greater than 0.05; no statistically significant difference exists between the pretest and posttest scores. In this study, the sig. (2-tailed) value was 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that the project-based learning approach implemented through classical guidance counseling services significantly and successfully improved the self-confidence of first-year students at SMK Negeri 7 Semarang.

Table 3. Self-Confidence Frequency Distribution

Interval	Kategori	Pretest	Posttest	Presentase Pretest	Presentase Posttest
24 – 47	Tinggi	11	20	31%	56%
48 - 71	Sedang	25	16	69%	44%
72 – 96	Rendah	0	0	0%	0%

Based on the career planning ability questionnaire results, 25 respondents (69%) were in the moderate category before the intervention. After receiving the guidance service, 11 respondents (31%) were categorized as having high career planning ability, while 16 respondents (44%) remained in the moderate category, and 20 respondents (56%) were classified as high. These results indicate a noticeable improvement following the implementation of the service. The following chart illustrates the distribution of the respondents' data:

Grafik 1. Perkembangan Kepercayaan diri peserta didik

The self-confidence level of students increased after receiving Project-Based Learning (PjBL)-based guidance services, according to research conducted at SMK Negeri 7 Semarang. Before the intervention, most students, 25 individuals or 69%, were in the moderate category, while 11 students (31%) were classified as having high self-confidence. Following the implementation of the guidance service, the proportion of students in the high category rose to 20 (56%), while the remaining 16 students (44%) were in the moderate category, indicating a notable improvement. Notably, no students were categorized as having low self-confidence before or after the intervention. In addition, the average self-confidence score increased from 69.97 on the pretest to 76.36 on the posttest.

3.2. Discussion

Research findings show that students at SMK Negeri 7 Semarang have made progress in terms of self-confidence. Increases in self-confidence scores and changes in classification levels indicating improvements in self-perception support this conclusion. Therefore, most students have become more adept at recognizing their potential, adopting a positive attitude toward challenges, and gaining confidence in navigating the learning process and daily life.

Students with high levels of self-confidence tend to engage in the learning process actively, dare to express their ideas, and are better prepared to handle academic and social issues (Tanjung, 2017). Guidance services that apply a Project-Based Learning (PjBL) methodology allow students to actively learn, collaborate on projects, and express themselves in authentic environments, enhancing their self-esteem. Research by Jaya (2025) concluded that the PjBL model can significantly improve students' self-confidence. Similarly, Hariani et al. (2024) found that students may develop higher levels of self-confidence when using the PjBL paradigm. Based on student survey results across various self-confidence indicators, an increase in engagement was observed between cycles one and 2. In addition to improving language skills, this method fosters a learning environment that encourages constructive interaction and builds the confidence to speak in front of an audience. These findings conclude that well-structured guidance services can serve as effective interventions to enhance students' self-esteem. Students with greater self-confidence will not only be more prepared to overcome academic challenges (Utomo & Maratus, 2021). Still, they will also be more comfortable making plans and choosing the best paths for both professional and personal growth.

According to Bandura (1997), self-confidence is the belief in one's ability to plan and execute the actions necessary to achieve specific goals. Self-confidence significantly impacts vocational high school students' ability to make decisions, overcome obstacles, and demonstrate initiative in education and future planning. It is a crucial psychological attribute that enables students to engage actively in learning, take initiative, and face challenges with resilience. In vocational high school settings, where practical competencies and performance are emphasized, self-confidence plays a central role in shaping students' academic and career success. According to Kurniawati and Hakim (2021), higher-confident students tend to demonstrate better communication, decision-making, and leadership skills, essential for school performance and workplace readiness. Therefore, efforts to foster self-confi-

dence should be systematically integrated into school programs, particularly through guidance and counseling services.

Classical guidance services provide a structured, group-based approach to deliver preventive and developmental support to students. Within this framework, incorporating active learning strategies like Project-Based Learning (PjBL) can boost self-confidence through experiential engagement. PjBL emphasizes learning by doing, collaboration, and student autonomy, all closely linked to developing a positive self-concept. Research by Wulandari and Yusuf (2022) highlights that students involved in project-based activities show increased confidence as they take ownership of their learning processes, present their outcomes, and receive constructive feedback. Therefore, integrating PjBL into classical guidance can help address not only academic development but also the socio-emotional growth of students.

Recent studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of PjBL in promoting self-confidence when applied in a structured guidance setting. For example, Setyowati et al. (2023) found that applying project-based tasks in group guidance sessions significantly improved students' ability to express themselves, engage in teamwork, and make decisions. Similarly, Putri and Ananda (2020) emphasized that such models enhance motivation and reduce fear of failure, especially among vocational students who often face pressure to perform in practical domains. By fostering a supportive environment where students work collaboratively and achieve tangible results, PjBL-based classical guidance services align with the goals of 21st-century education, empowering students not only cognitively but also emotionally and socially

4. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

This study provides a theoretical contribution by enhancing the understanding of student self-confidence in the educational context, particularly through the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) approach. The findings show that classical guidance services based on PjBL effectively improve students' self-confidence, enriching self-confidence theory by emphasizing the importance of active learning in developing students' affective aspects. These results can be practically utilized by counselors and educators to implement PjBL in guidance programs. This approach can boost students' self-confidence, positively affecting their learning and personal development engagement. Thus, this method offers an effective alternative to guidance services focused on nurturing students' potential.

5. CONCLUSION

The research findings indicate that this strategy can significantly enhance the self-confidence of first-year students at SMK Negeri 7 Semarang, aligning with the goals outlined in the introduction. This is demonstrated by an increase in the average self-confidence scores and a shift in student categorization from moderate to high after the intervention. These results suggest that teaching strategies that prioritize problem-solving, active engagement, and teamwork can help students develop their affective qualities, particularly self-confidence. Furthermore, the findings support that the Project-Based Learning method helps students build their character, psychological readiness, and academic performance. This study holds potential for future growth in various areas, such as improving communication skills, learning motivation, and professional readiness. For a deeper and more comprehensive understanding, further research could be conducted using larger sample sizes, mixed quantitative-qualitative methods, or by comparing the effectiveness of this strategy with other guidance services.

Implementing classical guidance services combined with a Project-Based Learning model has proven effective in boosting the self-confidence of vocational high school students. Integrating active, hands-on learning activities within guidance sessions encourages students to fully engage, express their ideas confidently, and overcome hesitation in academic and social settings. This approach addresses students' psychological needs and fosters a supportive environment where self-confidence can flourish, enhancing their academic performance and social interactions.

It is recommended that vocational schools adopt the Project-Based Learning model within their guidance and counseling programs to build student self-confidence systematically. Educators and counselors should receive training on effectively integrating project-based activities into classical guidance sessions to maximize student engagement and participation. Additionally, further research could explore the long-term effects of this combined approach on students' academic achievements and emotional well-being and its adaptability to different school contexts and student populations.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

The authors declare that they have contributed equally and substantially to this work. Their contributions include the conception and design of the study, data collection, data analysis and interpretation, as well as the drafting, critical revision, and final approval of the manuscript.

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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