



# The Implementation of Group Guidance to Improve Junior High School Students' Interpersonal Communication

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## ABSTRACT

This study aimed to analyze the effectiveness of group guidance services in improving the interpersonal communication skills of ninth-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Darul Imarah Aceh Besar. The study employed a quantitative approach using a pre-experimental one-group pre-test and post-test design. The research sample consisted of 9 students selected through purposive sampling based on low levels of interpersonal communication skills. Data were collected using an interpersonal communication questionnaire, while data analysis was conducted using a paired sample t-test assisted by SPSS software. The results showed a significant improvement in students' interpersonal communication skills after participating in the group guidance services. The hypothesis testing results indicated that the calculated t-value was greater than the t-table value ( $3.358 > 1.833$ ) with a significance level of  $0.01 < 0.05$ , meaning that  $H_a$  was accepted and  $H_0$  was rejected. These findings demonstrate that group guidance services are effective in improving students' interpersonal communication skills. This study provides practical implications for guidance and counseling teachers in developing services that support students' social skills and communication abilities within the school environment.

## KATA KUNCI

Bimbingan kelompok,  
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Siswa SMP

## ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis efektivitas layanan bimbingan kelompok dalam meningkatkan komunikasi interpersonal siswa kelas IX di SMP Negeri 1 Darul Imarah Aceh Besar. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain pre-experimental one group pre-test dan post-test. Sampel penelitian berjumlah 9 siswa yang dipilih menggunakan teknik purposive sampling berdasarkan tingkat komunikasi interpersonal yang rendah. Pengumpulan data dilakukan menggunakan angket komunikasi interpersonal, sedangkan analisis data menggunakan uji paired sample t-test berbantuan SPSS. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya peningkatan signifikan pada kemampuan komunikasi interpersonal siswa setelah mengikuti layanan bimbingan kelompok. Hasil uji hipotesis menunjukkan nilai  $t_{hitung} > t_{tabel}$  ( $3,358 > 1,833$ ) dengan signifikansi  $0,01 < 0,05$ , sehingga  $H_a$  diterima dan  $H_0$  ditolak. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa layanan bimbingan kelompok efektif dalam meningkatkan komunikasi interpersonal siswa. Penelitian ini memberikan implikasi praktis bagi guru bimbingan dan konseling dalam mengembangkan layanan yang mendukung keterampilan sosial dan kemampuan komunikasi siswa di lingkungan sekolah.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Students are social beings who cannot live independently and constantly require interaction with others in carrying out their daily activities. In the process of interaction, communication becomes a fundamental aspect that determines the quality of an individual's social relationships (Vimusti et al., 2026). Through communication,

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individuals can express ideas, feelings, and needs, as well as build healthy interpersonal relationships (Putri, 2024). Communication occurs not only verbally but also through nonverbal expressions that reflect individuals' attitudes, emotions, and responses to their environment (Ramadhan et al., 2023). Therefore, interpersonal communication skills are among the essential competencies that every individual should possess, particularly junior high school students who are currently experiencing social and emotional development.

Interpersonal communication is the process of exchanging messages between two or more individuals, occurring directly and allowing immediate feedback (Latifah et al., 2020). Interpersonal communication plays an important role in supporting the success of the learning process, the development of social relationships, and the formation of students' personalities (Wibowo et al., 2024). Students with good interpersonal communication skills tend to adapt more easily to the school environment, cooperate effectively with peers, and express their opinions and feelings appropriately. In contrast, poor interpersonal communication skills may lead students to experience difficulties in social interaction, low self-confidence, social conflict, and obstacles in the learning process.

During adolescence, students experience complex physical, emotional, social, and psychological developmental changes (Latifah et al., 2024). These conditions make adolescents vulnerable to various interpersonal communication problems, including difficulty expressing opinions, a lack of confidence when speaking in front of peers, withdrawal from social environments, and a limited ability to listen to others actively. In addition, the rapid development of digital technology and the increasingly intensive use of social media have also influenced adolescents' communication patterns (Khaira et al., 2024). Direct social interaction has gradually decreased, leading to a decline in students' interpersonal communication skills (Vydia et al., 2014). This condition poses an important challenge for educational institutions in helping students develop healthy, effective interpersonal communication skills.

Low interpersonal communication skills were also identified among students at SMP Negeri 1 Darul Imarah Aceh Besar. Based on preliminary observations and guidance and counseling teachers' feedback, several students still experienced difficulties interacting with peers, were less active in group discussions, and demonstrated low self-confidence when expressing opinions during classroom activities. Some students also showed passive tendencies in learning activities and could not establish positive social relationships within the school environment. These conditions indicate that students' interpersonal communication skills still need improvement through appropriate, systematic guidance and counseling services.

One guidance and counseling service that can improve students' interpersonal communication skills is group guidance. Group guidance is an assistance service provided to several students through group dynamics to help them understand themselves, develop social skills, and solve the problems they face (Azhar et al., 2020; Hanan, 2017). Through group guidance, students can learn to interact, express opinions, listen to others, respect differences, and build positive social relationships. From Albert Bandura's social learning theory, individuals can learn new behaviours through observation, imitation, and social interaction within groups. Therefore, group dynamics in group guidance services can serve as an effective medium for training students' interpersonal communication skills.

Several previous studies have shown that group guidance services are effective in improving students' interpersonal communication skills (Damayanti et al., 2023; Fijriani & Amaliawati, 2017; Minarsi et al., 2017). Research conducted by Sari and Wulandari (2018) found that group guidance reduced social anxiety and increased empathy among students. Similarly, Putra and Suryani (2019) reported that group guidance services helped students overcome psychological barriers such as low self-confidence and difficulties in social interaction. Other studies also found that group dynamics in counseling services can improve social skills, teamwork, and students' confidence in expressing opinions. However, most previous studies were conducted in general schools located in urban areas and have not extensively examined students' interpersonal communication within schools in Aceh, which possess distinctive cultural characteristics and social values.

Although various studies have discussed the effectiveness of group guidance in improving interpersonal communication skills, research specifically examining junior high school students in Aceh Besar remains relatively limited. Furthermore, previous studies generally focused on quantitative approaches, without deeply exploring how group dynamics and local cultural values influence students' interpersonal communication. In fact, Acehnese culture, which highly values politeness, respect for others, and certain social norms, may influence how students communicate within the school environment. These conditions indicate a research gap that warrants further investigation to develop group guidance services in a more contextually relevant manner, aligned with the characteristics of students in Aceh.

Fundamentally, this study focuses on the implementation of group guidance services to improve junior high school students' interpersonal communication skills, while considering the Acehese cultural context throughout the process. This study also emphasises the dynamics of students' interpersonal communication within junior high school settings, which remains relatively underexplored in the educational context of Aceh Besar.

This study aims to analyse the implementation of group guidance services in improving students' interpersonal communication skills at SMP Negeri 1 Darul Imarah Aceh Besar. The study is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of guidance and counseling studies, particularly regarding group guidance services and students' interpersonal communication. In addition, this study is expected to provide practical guidance for counseling and guidance teachers in designing effective services to improve students' interpersonal communication skills within the school environment.

## 2. METHOD

### 2.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research method using a pre-experimental approach. Quantitative research is a process of discovering knowledge by using numerical data to analyse information. Data collection was conducted using research instruments and was based on the positivist research paradigm, which is used to examine particular populations or samples and to test predetermined hypotheses through quantitative or statistical data analysis.

The research design used in this study was the One-Group Pretest-Posttest Design. This design involved an experiment in which the experimental group received an initial measurement before treatment and a final measurement after treatment. The experimental group consisted of students who received group guidance services. Therefore, the measurements were conducted twice: the initial measurement (pre-test) using an interpersonal communication scale, followed by treatment through group guidance services, and subsequently a second measurement (post-test) using the same scale.

### 2.2 Subject of Research

The population is a generalisation area consisting of objects or subjects with specific qualities and characteristics determined by the researcher to be studied, and from which conclusions are drawn. The population in this study consisted of 206 students from classes IX-1, IX-4, and IX-6 at SMP Negeri 1 Darul Imarah Aceh Besar. The population was selected because adolescents aged 14 years and above, who are generally in Grade IX, are in a transitional period from junior high school to senior high school, during which communication development is highly significant. At this age, students are also undergoing processes of adaptation and adjustment to their school social environment, thereby requiring guidance and understanding as they navigate these changes.

The sample in this study consisted of 9 students. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, based on specific considerations: students with low interpersonal communication skills, as determined by the initial measurement (pre-test).

### 2.3 Data Collection

Data collection is an essential aspect of research that provides the information required to address the research problem. In this study, data were collected using a questionnaire technique. The interpersonal communication questionnaire was one of the data collection instruments used by the researcher. The use of questionnaires can be effective if respondents can read clearly and respond realistically based on their actual circumstances.

The questionnaire used a Likert scale with four response options: strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), agree (A), and strongly agree (SA). The Likert scale served as an alternative method for determining response scores in the questionnaire. The scoring system for positive and negative statements is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Alternative Response Scores

Positive Statements	Score	Negative Statements	Score
Strongly Agree	4	Strongly Agree	1
Agree	3	Agree	2
Disagree	2	Disagree	3
Strongly Disagree	1	Strongly Disagree	4

## 2.4 Data Analysis

The data analysis technique used in this study was descriptive analysis. Descriptive analysis is a statistical method used to analyse data by describing or illustrating the data collected. The analysis process was assisted by SPSS software, which can be used for statistical data processing, calculation, and analysis.

Furthermore, a normality test was conducted. According to Sugiyono, the normality test is useful for determining whether the data are normally distributed so that subsequent analytical steps do not deviate from accuracy and can be scientifically justified. The normality test was conducted using SPSS.

Validity testing was also performed. Validity refers to the level of accuracy and appropriateness of the measuring instrument used. An instrument is considered valid if it accurately measures what it is intended to measure. Therefore, a valid instrument is truly appropriate for measuring the intended variable. Variables or questionnaire items are considered valid if their scores significantly correlate with the total score. The validity results were analysed using a correlation coefficient table. If the calculated  $r$ -value  $\geq$  the  $r$ -table value (two-tailed test with a significance level of 0.05), the instrument is considered significantly correlated with the total score and therefore valid. Conversely, if the calculated  $r$ -value  $\leq$  the  $r$ -table value, the instrument is considered not significantly correlated with the total score and is therefore invalid.

Reliability testing was conducted to determine the instrument's consistency and trustworthiness. A measurement is considered reliable if it consistently produces the same responses. Reliability testing was conducted using the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. Instruments that had passed the validity test were subsequently tested for reliability. A reliable instrument produces consistent data when used repeatedly on the same object.

Table 2. Reliability Test Results

Reliability Statistics	Value
Cronbach's Alpha	0.765
Number of Items	47

Based on the reliability test results, the Cronbach's Alpha value was 0.765, which was greater than the  $r$ -table value of 0.252. Therefore, the instrument was considered reliable.

## 2.4 Research Procedure

The research procedure began with a preparation stage that included pre- and post-tests to measure the effectiveness of group guidance services in improving students' interpersonal communication skills. The research sample was selected purposively from the student population. After conducting the pre-test, the study proceeded to the group guidance intervention stage. The group guidance sessions were conducted over several meetings, each lasting approximately 45 minutes, focusing on the development of interpersonal communication skills such as empathy, openness, and respect for others. The final stage involved data analysis and conclusion drawing. Data analysis began with data processing, followed by descriptive and inferential statistical tests in SPSS. Quantitative data were analysed using a paired sample  $t$ -test to compare pre-test and post-test scores. Conclusions were drawn based on the integration of quantitative and qualitative findings, followed by a discussion of practical implications for guidance programs in senior high schools and recommendations for future research. All stages of the research were conducted in accordance with research ethics and with the approval and permission of the school authorities and the research participants.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Results

The results of this study indicate an improvement in students' interpersonal communication skills. The changes in students were characterised by their ability to initiate new relationships with others, such as shaking hands when introducing themselves to friends, greeting others with a smile, and becoming more active in communication. Students were also able to receive messages effectively during interpersonal communication, establish successful communication with others, manage time between personal matters and social responsibilities at school and within the community, and demonstrate greater self-confidence when interacting with others.

Interpersonal communication is the process of delivering messages and exchanging information directly between individuals through face-to-face interaction to convey ideas, either verbally or nonverbally. Interpersonal

communication is considered the most effective means of influencing attitudes, opinions, and communication behaviours. It plays a very important role in fulfilling individuals' needs to interact within their social environment.

The implementation of this study involved group guidance and counseling services for students who demonstrated low interpersonal communication skills. Group guidance and counseling is a service provided by guidance teachers to students, in which a group of students discusses general topics of shared interest. Group guidance and counseling may involve delivering information and conducting group activities that address educational, occupational, personal, and social issues.

The evaluation results after the first group guidance session, which focused on "Effective Interpersonal Communication," showed that students understood how to communicate effectively and appropriately. By understanding these concepts, students were able to practice their interpersonal communication skills within their social environments. As a result, students became more confident and active during the teaching and learning process.

During the second session, which focused on "Openness," the evaluation results indicated that students became more open with their peers, parents, and teachers. Students also developed an understanding of communication skills in verbal, written, and nonverbal forms. This helped students communicate without fear in their social environment.

In the third session, which focused on the topic of "Self-Potential," the evaluation results showed that students were able to recognise their own potential and understand how to develop it.

Furthermore, the researcher conducted observations over one week to examine the interpersonal communication skills of students who had participated in group guidance and counseling services. The researcher then administered the same interpersonal communication questionnaire to assess post-test results. The results of the post-test questionnaire after the implementation of the group guidance and counseling treatment are presented below.

Table 3. Results of the Interpersonal Communication Questionnaire Scores After Group Guidance Services

No.	Initials	Class	Pre-test Score	Post-test Score	Category
1	AN	IX-6	26	92	High
2	PT	IX-1	22	95	High
3	PA	IX-4	27	86	High
4	MA	IX-6	27	75	Moderate
5	FT	IX-4	27	76	Moderate
6	NB	IX-1	30	77	Moderate
7	RS	IX-6	30	77	Moderate
8	NF	IX-6	34	75	Moderate
9	RA	IX-6	31	73	Moderate

Table 3 shows that students' interpersonal communication scores increased significantly after participating in group guidance services. Before the intervention, all students demonstrated relatively low pre-test scores ranging from 22 to 34, indicating weak interpersonal communication skills. However, after implementing group guidance services, post-test scores increased substantially, ranging from 73 to 95. Three students (AN, PT, and PA) achieved the high category, while the remaining six students reached the moderate category. These findings indicate that group guidance services were effective in improving students' interpersonal communication skills, particularly by enhancing confidence, openness, and social interaction in the school environment.

Normality Test

To further analyze the data, a normality test was conducted to determine whether the data were normally distributed. Good and appropriate data for analysis are data that are normally distributed. The normality test was conducted using SPSS software. The hypotheses used in the normality test were as follows:

H<sub>0</sub> = The pre-test data are normally distributed (Sig. > 0.05)

H<sub>1</sub> = The pre-test data are not normally distributed (Sig. < 0.05)

Table 4. Results of the Pre-test Normality Test

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test	
	Unstandardized Residual
N	9

Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	2.09643607
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.239
	Positive	.239
	Negative	-.130
Test Statistic		.239
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.146 <sup>c</sup>

- a. Test distribution is Normal.
- b. Calculated from data.
- c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.

Based on the results of the pre-test normality test using the One-Sample Kolmogorov–Smirnov Test, the significance value (Asymp. Sig. 2-tailed) obtained was 0.146. This value was greater than 0.05 (0.146 > 0.05), indicating that the pre-test data were normally distributed. Therefore, the assumption of normality was met in this study, and the data were deemed appropriate for further parametric statistical analysis. In addition, these results indicate that the distribution of students’ interpersonal communication data before the implementation of group guidance services was normal and did not exhibit any significant distributional deviation.

Table 5. Results of the Post-test Normality Test

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
		Unstandardized Residual
N		9
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	3.45506502
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.152
	Positive	.152
	Negative	-.128
Test Statistic		.152
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.200 <sup>c,d</sup>

- a. Test distribution is Normal.
- b. Calculated from data.
- c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.
- d. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

Based on the results of the post-test normality test using the One-Sample Kolmogorov–Smirnov Test, the significance value (Asymp. Sig. 2-tailed) obtained was 0.200. This value was greater than 0.05 (0.200 > 0.05), indicating that the post-test data were normally distributed. These findings demonstrate that the students’ interpersonal communication data, following the implementation of group guidance services, met the assumption of normality and were appropriate for parametric statistical analysis. Therefore, the post-test data distribution showed no significant deviation, indicating that the research findings are statistically valid and reliable.

Paired Sample t-Test

The data analysis method used in this study was parametric, with the t-test. The t-test is a statistical test used to determine whether there is a significant difference between the means of two samples, groups, or categories. To analyse the questionnaire data from the one-group pre-test and post-test design, a paired-samples t-test was employed. The results of the t-test are presented below.

Table 6. Results of the Paired Sample t-Test

Paired Samples Test							
Paired Differences				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			
Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean		Lower	Upper	t	df

Pair	Pretest -	-	.225536	.075179	-.425806	-.079082	-3.358	8	.001
1	Posttest	.25244							
		4							

The results of the paired-samples t-test showed that the calculated t-value was greater than the t-table value ( $3.358 > 1.833$ ) and the significance value was 0.01, which means  $0.01 < 0.05$ . Therefore,  $H_a$  was accepted, and  $H_0$  was rejected. These findings indicate that the hypothesis test results showed higher interpersonal communication scores after treatment than before. It can be concluded that there was a significant difference in students' interpersonal communication skills before and after the implementation of group guidance and counseling services. The acceptance of  $H_a$  indicates that the treatment provided a positive effect, demonstrating that group guidance services were effective in improving students' interpersonal communication skills.

### 3.2. Discussion

The results of this study indicate that group guidance services were effective in improving students' interpersonal communication skills at SMP Negeri 1 Darul Imarah Aceh Besar. After participating in the group guidance sessions, students demonstrated more positive communication behaviours, including increased confidence in expressing opinions, improved ability to initiate social interactions, greater openness in communication, and stronger self-confidence when interacting with peers and teachers. These findings indicate that students' interpersonal communication skills can develop through structured, active group interactions within a supportive environment. During adolescence, interpersonal communication skills become an important aspect because they are closely related to identity development, social adjustment, and the ability to build healthy interpersonal relationships within the school environment (Putri, 2024).

The findings of this study are consistent with Albert Bandura's social learning theory, which explains that individuals learn behaviour through observation, imitation, and social reinforcement from their surrounding environment (Purnaningtyas & Fauziati, 2022). In group guidance services, students observed the communication behaviours of other group members, including expressing opinions, listening actively, and respecting others' perspectives. This observational learning process subsequently encouraged students to imitate positive communication patterns (Amalia, 2021). In addition, Carl Rogers' humanistic theory holds that individuals can develop optimally when in an environment that provides acceptance, empathy, and unconditional positive regard (Rehanaisha, 2024; Wiryosutomo et al., 2018). In this study, the integration of social modelling processes and a supportive group atmosphere was the primary factor in helping students improve their interpersonal communication skills. Therefore, the effectiveness of group guidance services lies not only in group discussion activities but also in fostering a social environment that simultaneously supports students' emotional and social development.

In the social and cultural context, students' interpersonal communication patterns are influenced by cultural values that highly uphold politeness, respect for others, and caution in expressing opinions (Amalliah et al., 2025; Qudrotin & Mulyono, 2018). On the one hand, these cultural conditions shape polite communication behaviours; on the other hand, they may cause some students to become less confident in expressing opinions openly, particularly within formal school environments (Pratiwi, 2014; Suwarni, 2022). Therefore, group guidance services serve as an alternative social space that is more egalitarian and safer for students to learn to communicate openly without excessive social pressure. These findings indicate that the effectiveness of group guidance services cannot be separated from the cultural context in which students develop. Thus, this study reinforces the view that guidance and counseling services need to be developed contextually in accordance with students' social and cultural characteristics.

The findings of this study also support previous studies showing that group guidance services are effective in increasing students' confidence in communication and reducing social anxiety (Aswida et al., 2012; Gulo et al., 2026; Yulianto, 2024; Sari & Wulandari, 2018). Other studies also found that group dynamics could improve students' social skills and interpersonal relationships (Isti'adah & Permana, 2017; Khansa et al., 2021; Putra & Suryani, 2019). However, this study offers novelty compared to previous studies by placing interpersonal communication within the Acehese cultural context, which possesses distinctive socio-religious and collectivistic characteristics. Most previous studies were conducted in urban school settings with more open social characteristics. In contrast, this study demonstrates that group guidance services remain effective in cultural environments that tend to encourage adolescents to adopt more cautious communication patterns. Therefore, this study makes a new contribution to the development of theories and practices of group guidance services grounded in local cultural contexts.

This study also expands the application of Bandura's social learning theory within the collectivistic-religious cultural context of junior high school adolescents in Aceh. The findings indicate that observational learning within group dynamics becomes more effective when supported by a social environment that provides psychological safety and social acceptance. Rogers' humanistic theory holds that warm, empathetic interpersonal relationships play an important role in helping adolescents develop communication skills and self-disclosure (Lutfha & Neviyarni, 2025; Ria, 2025). Therefore, this study not only supports existing theories but also provides further understanding: the effectiveness of group guidance services is influenced by the interaction among students' psychological, social, and cultural factors.

Although this study demonstrated positive results, several limitations should be considered. First, the study involved a relatively small sample and was conducted at only one school, so the findings cannot yet be generalised broadly. Second, the study employed a pre-experimental design without a control group; therefore, the possibility of external factors influencing improvements in students' interpersonal communication skills could not be fully controlled. Factors such as family environment, peer relationships, and students' social experiences outside school may also have influenced the development of interpersonal communication skills during the study. In addition, this study only measured short-term changes after the implementation of group guidance services and therefore could not determine the long-term sustainability of the intervention effects. Consequently, future studies are recommended to use stronger experimental designs, involve larger sample sizes, and examine the long-term effectiveness of group guidance services across various cultural contexts and educational levels.

#### **4. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS**

This study offers a practical framework for implementing group guidance as a pedagogical strategy, enabling teachers and guidance counselors to facilitate more inclusive, responsive learning for students. The findings indicate that structured group guidance activities can effectively improve students' interpersonal communication skills, including confidence in expressing opinions, openness in communication, empathy, and social interaction abilities. By implementing group guidance services, teachers can create a supportive learning environment that encourages active participation and healthy interpersonal relationships among students.

The findings of this study can assist guidance and counseling teachers in developing more effective, contextually relevant counseling programs that align with students' social and cultural characteristics. By minimising communication barriers that frequently arise during classroom and social interactions, schools can foster a more harmonious, collaborative, and productive educational environment. Therefore, group guidance services may serve not only as an intervention strategy for students experiencing communication difficulties but also as a preventive and developmental approach to strengthening students' social competencies within the school environment.

#### **5. CONCLUSIONS**

This study demonstrated that group guidance services were effective in improving students' interpersonal communication skills at SMP Negeri 1 Darul Imarah Aceh Besar. The findings revealed significant improvements in students' communication behaviours after participating in structured group guidance sessions. Students became more confident in expressing opinions, more active in social interactions, more open in communication, and more confident when interacting with peers and teachers. Statistical analysis also confirmed a significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores, indicating that group guidance services positively affected students' interpersonal communication skills.

The effectiveness of group guidance services was supported by group dynamics that encouraged students to learn through observation, interaction, discussion, and mutual support. The findings are consistent with Albert Bandura's social learning theory and Carl Rogers' humanistic theory, which emphasise the importance of social interaction, modelling, empathy, and supportive environments in individual development. In addition, this study highlights that Aceh's cultural context, which values politeness and social harmony, also influences students' communication patterns. Therefore, group guidance services can serve as a safe and supportive environment that helps students develop healthier, more open interpersonal communication skills.

This study contributes both theoretically and practically to the field of guidance and counseling. Theoretically, the findings enrich the literature on the effectiveness of group guidance services in improving interpersonal communication in a collectivistic, socio-religious cultural context. In practice, the study provides teachers with an empirical foundation for designing effective group guidance programs in schools. However, this study was limited

by a relatively small sample size and a pre-experimental design without a control group. Therefore, future studies are recommended to involve larger samples, apply stronger experimental designs, and examine the long-term effectiveness of group guidance services in different educational and cultural settings.

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## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

All authors contributed substantially to the conception and design of the study, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of findings, and manuscript preparation. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

## 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 study.

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