

## Reducing Seniority Attitudes Among Middle School Students Through Group Guidance with Reframing Techniques

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### ABSTRACT

The attitude of seniority among students in junior high schools (SMP) is a form of dysfunctional social relations that can disrupt an inclusive and healthy learning climate. This study aims to test the effectiveness of group counselling services using reframing techniques to reduce seniority attitudes among eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Silangkitang. The approach used is quantitative with a one-group pretest-posttest design. A sample of 9 students was purposively selected based on indications of seniority behaviour. The intervention was conducted over five sessions of group counselling that integrated reframing techniques to reshape participants' mindsets regarding the meaning of social leadership in the school context. The data collection instrument is a Likert scale questionnaire that measures the dimensions of social dominance, symbolic intimidation, and recognition of class status. Data analysis uses the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test due to non-normal data distribution. The results show a significant decrease in seniority attitude scores, from a pretest average of 99.89 to 50.89 in the posttest, with a significance value ( $p$ ) = 0.004 ( $p < 0.05$ ). These findings indicate that reframing techniques are effective in helping students to reinterpret their social roles more constructively, thereby reducing dominant behaviour towards other students. This research contributes to developing educational counselling services as a preventive and curative strategy in building an equal, empathetic, and supportive school climate.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

School, as a formal educational institution, has a strategic function in shaping the character, morals, and social behaviours of students [1]. In the Junior High School (SMP), the early adolescent development phase becomes crucial for forming self-identity and social relations among students [2]. However, the social dynamics in schools do not always run smoothly. A common issue is seniority, which refers to the dominant behaviour of upperclass

students towards lowerclass students, often manifested in intimidation, coercion, and even subtle bullying [3].

Seniority is a social or organisational structure concept that grants more recognition or authority to individuals based on age, length of service, or experience [4]. In organisations, seniority is often associated with privileges such as promotions, decision-making authority, and respect from junior colleagues. Although seniority may reflect experience and loyalty, this concept can also be a source of conflict, especially if seen as stifling innovation or creating an imbalance of power [5]. In the modern era, many organisations are beginning to balance the value of seniority with actual competence and performance to create a fairer, more collaborative, and productive work culture [6]. The attitude of seniority is marked by several indicators, such as a feeling of superiority due to being in school earlier, a tendency to demand respect from juniors, unequal treatment in social interactions, and the presence of pressure or unwritten rules imposed by seniors. This attitude often creates tension and hinders the establishing healthy and inclusive school environment [7].

Bullying and seniority are two forms of social behaviour that often occur in educational settings, but they have fundamental differences. Bullying is an aggressive act that is carried out repeatedly to cause physical or psychological harm to the victim, regardless of age or year level [8]. Meanwhile, seniority refers more to the dominance behaviour exhibited by older or longer-standing students in school towards younger students, under the guise of tradition or social hierarchy. If not controlled, seniority can develop into bullying, especially when accompanied by coercion, intimidation, or hidden violence that harms the junior party [9].

Seniority creates an unhealthy school climate and hinders an education process oriented towards democratic values, empathy, and equality. At SMP Negeri 2 Silangkitang, indications of seniority are evident from the exclusive treatment of upper-class students towards new students, the use of derogatory language, and the formation of social groups that tend to be discriminatory. If this situation is left unchecked, it may result in a decline in the self-confidence of junior students, an increase in social anxiety, and a decrease in learning motivation.

In facing this issue, group counselling services with reframing techniques become one of the relevant approaches [10]. The reframing technique in counselling aims to help individuals revisit events or situations from a more positive and constructive perspective [11]. With the application of reframing, students are expected to understand that social power is not meant to oppress, but to foster and provide an example. This approach aligns with the principles of character education and the development of social empathy among adolescents.

Group guidance allows for open and reflective interactions among students, which can encourage changes in mindset and attitudes towards one another. Through discussions, role-playing simulations, and activities based on collaborative values, students are given the space to re-examine seniority behaviours that have long been considered "normal" in school culture. Thus, interventions through group guidance using reframing techniques are believed to reduce seniority practices and build a more inclusive and supportive school environment.

Various previous studies have mostly focused on negative behaviours of students such as bullying, verbal violence, and aggressiveness. However, there has not been much

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explicit examination of seniority attitudes as dysfunctional behaviours that can be reduced through guidance and counselling services. This indicates a research gap in guidance service studies targeting students' social dominance attitudes as objects of intervention. Furthermore, although group guidance services have proven effective in shaping prosocial behaviours and developing students' interpersonal skills, this approach is still rarely combined with reframing techniques in a systematic way to address power relationship issues among students in the school environment.

Reframing, as a technique in cognitive-behavioural counselling, aims to change an individual's meaning or perspective on an event to make it more adaptive and positive. In this context, reframing is used to help students realise that being a senior does not mean having the right to dominate or control, but instead having the responsibility to be a good role model and guide. However, research on reframing techniques in group services to address seniority attitudes is minimal, especially in junior high school environments with socio-cultural contexts like SMP Negeri 2 Silangkitang, which reflects the social characteristics of non-urban communities.

This research has novelty in three main aspects. First, the study focuses on seniority attitudes as dysfunctional social relations that have not been explicitly addressed in counselling service studies. Second, using reframing techniques in group guidance as a new intervention model to reshape students' mindsets about their roles and social responsibilities within the group. Third, the local context of SMP Negeri 2 Silangkitang provides an important contribution to expanding the understanding of students' social dynamics in regions that have not been well represented in educational counselling research in Indonesia.

Based on the literature review and research objectives, the hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows:

- a. Null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): There is no significant difference in students' seniority attitudes before and after being given group guidance services using reframing techniques at SMP Negeri 2 Silangkitang.
- b. Alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ): There is a significant difference in the seniority attitudes of students before and after being provided with group guidance services using the reframing technique at SMP Negeri 2 Silangkitang.

This research is expected to enrich the literature on educational counselling with an innovative approach to addressing students' social issues and provide practical recommendations for guidance counsellors in fostering a healthy and collaborative school climate.

## **2. METHOD**

This study uses a quantitative approach with a one-group pretest-posttest pre-experimental design. This design involves one group of subjects who are given an initial measurement (pretest), then given treatment in the form of group guidance services using reframing techniques, and concluded with a re-measurement (posttest). The effectiveness of the intervention is measured by comparing pretest and posttest scores using a nonparametric statistical test, namely the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test, due to the small sample size and non-normally distributed data [12].

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The population in this study is all eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Silangkitang, totalling 52 individuals. The population is the subjects with certain characteristics and is the target for generalising the research results. From this number, nine students were selected as a sample using purposive sampling techniques, a sampling method based on specific criteria, namely students who show indications of seniority attitudes [13]. This technique aims to obtain the most relevant subjects for intervention.

The instrument used in this study is a Likert scale questionnaire consisting of 28 statements, developed by the researcher based on indicators of seniority behaviour, including social dominance, symbolic intimidation, and recognition of status based on cohorts. The researcher originally composed this questionnaire, referring to the social psychology framework and group dynamics. Before usage, the instrument was tested for validity and reliability through expert judgment and a small-scale trial. The testing results show that the instrument has good internal consistency and can differentiate the seniority levels among students.

The effectiveness testing of the intervention was conducted using the Wilcoxon test, which is suitable for ordinal data or interval data that is not normally distributed. The test results showed a significance value of 0.005 ( $p < 0.05$ ), indicating that there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores; thus, the group guidance service with the reframing technique is declared effective in reducing students' seniority attitudes [14].

This research was conducted by upholding the principles of educational research ethics [15]. The entire research procedure begins with official permission from the school and written consent (informed consent) from the students and their parents/guardians who are participants. Participants are provided with complete information regarding the purpose, benefits, and procedures of the research transparently, and their rights to refuse or withdraw at any time without consequences are guaranteed. The collected data is kept confidential, used only for academic purposes, and analysed collectively to maintain participant anonymity.

The intervention process in this research was carried out through five group guidance sessions using a systematically arranged reframing technique to reduce seniority attitudes in students [16]. Before the implementation of the session began, a pretest was conducted using a seniority scale to measure the initial level of seniority attitudes among the participating students. The first session started with an introduction and group contract activities. In this session, the facilitator created a comfortable atmosphere through ice breaking and built trust among group members. A light discussion about social experiences in the school environment was also held as an introduction to foster openness.

The second session focuses on exploring seniority attitudes. Participants are invited to identify various seniority behaviours they have experienced or enacted. Students are asked to share stories and engage in self-reflection about these experiences, to cultivate an initial awareness of the attitudes that need to be changed. In the third session, social mindset reframing is carried out. Participants are trained to reinterpret their role as seniors, not as those who dominate, but as individuals who set an example. This activity is conducted through group discussions, case studies, and simulations that instill equality and mutual respect values.

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The fourth session is the stage for practising positive behaviour, where participants engage in role play about non-oppressive, supportive leadership. Participants also formulate a joint commitment to take real actions that reflect healthy and inclusive leadership in the school environment. Next, the fifth session is filled with reflection and self-evaluation. In this session, each student writes down a personal change plan they will implement and creates a moral contract for the group as a form of collective commitment. The facilitator also provides positive feedback and closes the session with motivational reinforcement. After all sessions are completed, a posttest is conducted using the same instrument as the pretest, namely a seniority scale, to assess changes in students' attitudes post-intervention.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION (12 PT)

#### 3.1. Results

This research was conducted in June at SMP Negeri 2 Silangkitang. The researcher distributed a pretest questionnaire to eighth-grade students to determine the level of seniority attitudes before treatment through group counselling services using reframing techniques. In the group counselling session, the guidance teacher gradually guided students to change their perspective on seniority attitudes. Starting with the awareness that old thinking is incorrect, students were invited to evaluate themselves objectively. Next, they identified automatic thoughts and emotions when interacting with younger classmates, realising that seniority attitudes arise from emotional habits, not logical considerations. The teacher then helps the students identify the dominant perceptions influencing those attitudes and explores alternative, more positive perspectives. This process ends with replacing the old perceptions with new ones and applying them in real behaviour. Of the population of 52 students who participated in the pretest, nine students showed a seniority attitude. The results of the pretest are presented in the table below.

Table 1. Comparison of Pretest and Posttest Results on Seniority Attitudes

	No	Pretest Score	Category	Posttest Score	Category
1	103	High	64	Moderate	
2	98	High	45	Low	
3	102	High	40	Low	
4	97	High	39	Low	
5	102	High	63	Moderate	
6	101	High	52	Low	
7	99	High	42	Low	
8	95	High	50	Low	
9	102	High	63	Moderate	

The results presented in Table 1 show a significant decrease in seniority attitude scores, with posttest scores ranging from 39 to 64. This decrease reflects the effectiveness of the reframing-based group counselling intervention. Each student exhibited different levels of comprehension, interest, and mental readiness toward the material delivered during the sessions. As a result, the degree of improvement varied among participants. Six of the nine students showed a marked decrease in seniority attitudes and fell into the low category

after the intervention. This suggests that these students were more receptive to and understood the reframing techniques effectively, allowing them to internalise and apply the insights gained during the sessions.

On the other hand, three students remained in the moderate category, indicating they had not fully grasped or accepted the reframing approach. Consequently, the behavioural changes observed in this subgroup were less optimal. These findings highlight that most participants experienced a positive shift in attitude after undergoing the group counselling program. To support this conclusion, the direct comparison of pretest and posttest scores presented in Table 1 demonstrates the measurable impact of the reframing technique on reducing seniority attitudes.

This finding indicates that most students have experienced a shift in attitude towards a more positive direction after participating in group counselling services using reframing techniques. A direct comparison between the pretest and posttest results was conducted to strengthen this finding, as shown in Figure 1 below.

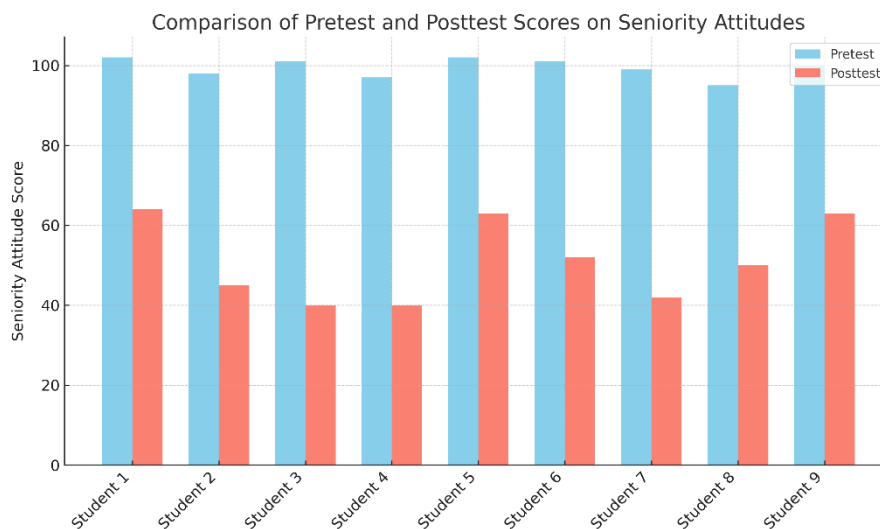


Figure 1. Comparison of Pretest and Posttest Scores on Seniority Attitudes After Group Counselling with Reframing Technique

This finding shows that most students experienced a shift in attitude towards a more positive direction after participating in group counselling services using reframing techniques. This shift reflects the success of the intervention in reducing the students' previously high seniority attitudes. To strengthen these findings, a direct comparison was made between the pretest and posttest results, as presented in Figure 1.

The table presents changes in individual scores in more detail and shows that all research subjects consistently experienced a decline in seniority attitude scores. After the students participated in five group counselling sessions based on reframing techniques, there was a significant decline in seniority attitude scores, with an average decrease of 49.00%. This decrease indicates that the reframing technique can facilitate students in reflecting and reinterpreting their social roles more constructively, thereby reducing behaviours that excessively reflect seniority.

These results strengthen the argument that group guidance services with reframing techniques are effective preventive and curative strategies in addressing unbalanced social relationship dynamics in school environments, particularly among students exhibiting seniority tendencies. Furthermore, a descriptive statistical analysis was presented in the table to see an overview of the obtained data.

### 3.1.1. Descriptive Statistical Test

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Pretest and Posttest Seniority Attitude Scores

	Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
PreTest	9	8.00	95.00	103.00	99.8889	2.75882
PostTest	9	25.00	39.00	64.00	50.8889	10.25237
Valid N (listwise)	9					

Based on the descriptive statistical data in Table 2, the number of respondents (N) is nine. The PreTest score shows a range of 8, with a minimum value of 95 and a maximum of 103. The average (Mean) PreTest score is 99.89 with a standard deviation of 2.76, indicating that the initial scores of the participants are quite high and the data distribution is relatively small. Meanwhile, the PostTest results show a much larger range, which is 25, with a minimum value of 39 and a maximum of 64. The average (Mean) PostTest score is 50.89 with a standard deviation of 10.25. This indicates a significant decrease in scores from PreTest to PostTest. This difference is an initial indication of a significant impact or difference between the PreTest and PostTest results. However, to ensure this change is statistically significant, a normality test was conducted using the Shapiro-Wilk test, presented in Table 2.

### 3.1.2. Normality Test

Normality testing is a statistical procedure used to determine whether the data in a sample comes from a normally distributed population. Normal distribution is one of the important assumptions in many parametric statistical analyses, such as t-tests, ANOVA, and linear regression. Therefore, ensuring that the data is normally distributed is important before conducting such analyses.

This research uses the Shapiro-Wilk test. The Shapiro-Wilk test is used to test the normality of data, where the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) states that the data is normally distributed. If this test's significance value (p-value) exceeds 0.05, the data is normally distributed. Conversely, the data is not normally distributed if the p-value is less than 0.05.

Determining the statistical hypothesis in this normality test is:

$H_0$ : Data is Normally Distributed (if  $\text{sig } \alpha > 0.05$ )

$H_a$ : Data is Not Normally Distributed (if  $\text{sig } \alpha < 0.05$ )

Table 3. Results of Normality Test Using Shapiro-Wilk for Pretest and Posttest Scores

Tests of Normality					
Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
.222	9	.200*	.901	9	.261
.215	9	.200*	.867	9	.114

The research used the Shapiro-Wilk test to determine whether the data were normally distributed. The results of the normality test are presented in Table 3 and explained as follows:

Statistical hypothesis:

H<sub>0</sub>: Data is normally distributed (accepted if the significance value > 0.05)

H<sub>1</sub>: Data is not normally distributed (accepted if the significance value < 0.05)

Shapiro-Wilk test results:

For the pretest data: significance value (Sig.) = 0.261

For the posttest data: significance value (Sig.) = 0.114

Because both significance values are > 0.05, it can be concluded that the pretest and posttest data are normally distributed. Therefore, the data meet the normality assumption and can be analysed using parametric statistical tests such as the Paired Sample t-Test, which has also been conducted in this study. Then, a Paired T-Test was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores. The results are shown in Table 3.

The following are the results of the statistical test using the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test, as a substitute for the Paired Sample T-Test, along with its scientific description and table name:

Table 4. Wilcoxon Test Results on Pretest and Posttest Scores of Seniority Attitude

Test	Z-Value	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test	0.000	0.004	9

This study used the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test to determine whether there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores because the data had been tested and proven to be non-normally distributed. This test is a nonparametric alternative to the Paired Sample T-Test, which is used when the assumption of normality is not met. Based on the results shown in Table 4, a Z value of 0.000 was obtained with a significance value (p) of 0.004. Since the p-value is less than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ), it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores. This means that the changes in seniority attitude were not a coincidence, but rather the result of intervention through group guidance using reframing techniques. Thus, group guidance services employing reframing techniques have been statistically proven effective in reducing students' seniority attitudes. This finding further reinforces that the intervention contributes significantly to forming healthier and more equal social attitudes among students.

Based on the research conducted in June at SMP Negeri 2 Silangkitang, it can be concluded that group guidance services using reframing techniques effectively reduce the seniority attitudes of eighth-grade students. Out of 52 students who participated in the pretest, nine students were identified as displaying high seniority attitudes. After being given a treatment consisting of five sessions of group guidance, there was a significant decrease in seniority attitude scores, with an average reduction of 49 points, equivalent to 49.00%.

Descriptive statistical data showed a striking difference between the pretest and posttest scores, where the average score decreased from 99.89 to 50.89. This result is also strengthened by the Shapiro-Wilk normality test, which states that the data is normally distributed (Sig. pretest = 0.261; posttest = 0.114). However, to maintain the accuracy of the analysis, the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test was used due to the small sample size and the posttest distribution, which tends to spread more widely.

The Wilcoxon test results show a Z value of 0.000 and a significance value (p) of 0.004, indicating a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores ( $p < 0.05$ ). These findings suggest that changes in students' seniority attitudes did not occur by chance, but are a direct result of the interventions provided. A total of 6 out of 9 students experienced a decrease in seniority attitudes to the low category. The other three students fell into the moderate category, indicating that most participants responded positively to the reframing-based group guidance services. This indicates that the reframing approach helps students reinterpret the meaning of 'seniority' more constructively and fosters a mindset and behaviour that promotes equality in social relations at school. Thus, the preliminary conclusion from this study is that group guidance with reframing techniques is statistically and practically effective in reducing seniority attitudes among junior high school students and positively contributes to strengthening values of equality, empathy, and a healthy social climate in the school environment.

### **3.2. Discussion**

The results of this study show that group guidance services using reframing techniques effectively reduce seniority attitudes among students of SMP Negeri 2 Silangkitang. A significant decrease in posttest scores compared to pretest scores indicates that most students experienced a positive change in attitude after participating in five sessions of group guidance. Statistically, the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test results show a significance value of 0.004 ( $p < 0.05$ ), which means that the observed difference is not a coincidence but the result of the intervention provided.

This finding aligns with the research conducted by Angouri & Mesinioti, which states that reframing techniques in group counselling can help students change their negative outlook into a more positive perspective towards the social experiences they encounter [17]. In this context, the attitude of seniority that was previously perceived as a form of social power can be transformed into an awareness of the importance of equitable relationships and mutual respect.

Furthermore, according to Kor & Simpson, group counselling services are effective in addressing various social-emotional issues in adolescents, especially when the counselling techniques used encourage self-reflection and re-interpretation of problematic behaviours [18]. In this study, reframing provides space for students to reassess their perceptions of the meaning of 'senior' in the school environment, and brings about new awareness regarding the importance of building healthy and constructive relationships among students.

In another literature review, Suto & Ireland stated that cognitive-based group guidance, such as reframing techniques, can enhance empathy and reduce adolescent dominant behaviour [19]. This supports the findings in this research, where 6 out of 9

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students showed a significant decrease in seniority attitude scores and fell into the low category.

This research also supports the idea of Easterbrook & Hadden, who explain that in cognitive-behavioural approaches, reframing is used to change the meaning structure that individuals build regarding an event [20]. This approach becomes more effective in a group setting due to discussion, sharing experiences, and receiving feedback from other group members.

Furthermore, the success of this intervention shows that group guidance practices in schools need to be further optimised as a preventive strategy against unhealthy behaviours in the social dynamics of students. Uncontrolled seniority affects social relations and can be a breeding ground for bullying, social inequality, and even psychological disturbances in junior students [21]. Thus, group guidance services using reframing techniques serve as a corrective intervention and a preventive effort in creating a healthy and harmonious school climate. In the future, it is important to consider the systematic integration of these services into school guidance and counselling programs.

Although the main focus of this research is on reducing seniority attitudes through group counselling services with reframing techniques, several literatures from different fields, but with conceptual relevance, can help expand the understanding of the findings of this research. For example, a study by Khaira highlighting adolescent social development mentions that adolescence is a transitional period where the search for identity and social recognition is dominant [22]. Although it does not explicitly discuss seniority, this context is relevant because the attitude of seniority often becomes a form of expressing dominance or seeking status among adolescents.

In addition, a study by Lohy & Pribadi on the effectiveness of relaxation techniques in reducing academic stress among students, although not directly addressing changes in social attitudes, still provides an insight that psychologically-based techniques such as relaxation and reframing can have a significant impact on the psychological aspects of participants [23]. Thus, the reframing technique's success in changing students' seniority mindset in SMP Negeri 2 Silangkitang aligns with the assumption that cognitive approaches can change perceptions and behaviours.

Furthermore, a study by Khairunisya examining the use of group guidance to enhance the emotional intelligence of high school students, although it does not address the issue of seniority, still supports the argument that structured and directed group interactions can be an effective medium for developing social skills and empathetic attitudes [24]. This is in line with the results of this study, which show that group mentoring sessions provide a safe space for students to reflect on the meaning of "seniority" more healthily and equitably.

Research from the field of organisational management by Huda, Wibowo, & Murtadho also provides an interesting perspective. In organisations, the attitude of senior dominance or rigid hierarchy often hinders collaboration and innovation [25]. When this principle is related to the school context, it is clear that an excessive seniority attitude among students can also create an unhealthy learning climate. These findings align with research results at SMP Negeri 2 Silangkitang, which show that students became more open to equal social relationships after participating in the reframing group guidance.

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Finally, the article by Ramli about the importance of emotional intelligence in shaping healthy leadership, although aimed at the corporate environment, can be contextualised in education [26]. The seniority attitude emphasised in this research can be seen as a first step towards developing students' emotional intelligence, particularly empathy, self-control, and social awareness, which are the core of healthy leadership in the future.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This research shows that group counselling services using reframing techniques effectively reduce the seniority attitudes of eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Silangkitang. There was a significant decrease in scores from an average pretest of 99.89 to 50.89 on the posttest ( $p = 0.004$ ). Reframing helps students reinterpret social roles positively, thereby reducing dominant behaviour towards other students. These findings emphasise that reframing can be a relevant counselling strategy in shaping more equal and empathetic social attitudes. School counsellors can adapt this technique as a preventive and curative intervention in addressing dysfunctional social relations in schools. This study has limitations concerning the small sample size, lack of a control group, and narrow coverage of locations, so the results cannot be generalized broadly. Future research should use an experimental design with a control group, expand the number and variety of participants, extend the duration of the intervention, and incorporate a qualitative approach to explore behavioural changes more deeply.

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