

Effectiveness of Positive Reinforcement Group Guidance in Reducing Academic Procrastination

Salsabila Hayatissa'idah¹, Abdul Aziz Rusman²

^{1,2}Program Studi Bimbingan Konseling Pendidikan Islam, Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Academic procrastination remains a common issue among adolescents, particularly in school settings, where students often delay completing academic tasks and struggle with time management. This study aims to determine the effectiveness of group counselling using positive reinforcement strategies in reducing academic procrastination among seventh-grade students at SMP IT Ali bin Abu Thalib Tanjung Morawa. This research employed a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test–post-test control group. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 16 students, who were assigned to an experimental group ($n = 8$) and a control group ($n = 8$). The Mann–Whitney test indicated a significant difference between the experimental and control groups, with the experimental group reporting lower levels of academic procrastination ($M = 4.50$) than the control group ($M = 12.50$). Furthermore, the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test revealed a significant reduction in academic procrastination after the intervention ($p = 0.012$). These findings demonstrate that group counselling with positive reinforcement effectively reduces students' tendencies to delay academic tasks, enhances motivation, and promotes better learning habits.

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Corresponding Author:

Salsabila Hayatissa'idah

Program Studi Bimbingan Konseling Pendidikan Islam, Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

Email: salsabila303212104@uinsu.ac.id

1. INTRODUCTION

The modern era of education requires students to develop skills in time management, academic responsibility, and discipline. One phenomenon that often occurs is "academic procrastination," the habit of delaying a task that should be done, often to avoid discomfort associated with the task [1].

According to Wahyuningtyas and Setyawati [2], postponing formal academic tasks is a form of procrastination. Academic procrastination, according to this point of view, is the practice of delaying the completion of an assignment. Academic procrastination is one of

the psychological problems that students often feel. Procrastination in the academic world is the deliberate delay of activities that should be carried out, even though students are aware that this attitude can have a negative impact [3]. The socialization process that begins at home and is then strengthened by the school environment and the community forms and develops academic procrastination. It is impossible to isolate the causes of academic procrastination from the students involved in it [4]. This behavior is characterized by delays in completing academic tasks that should have been completed earlier, without an apparent, rational reason. Although it may seem trivial at first glance, procrastination has a serious impact on academic achievement, stress levels, and students' confidence. If not addressed immediately, this habit of procrastination can develop into a pattern of maladaptive behavior that hinders the development of academic and personal potential.

Many factors contribute to the emergence of academic procrastination, including low motivation, poor time management, and a tendency to avoid difficult or boring tasks. In addition, according to Ndruru [4], internal factors contribute to academic procrastination. These components include a person's physical and emotional health, as well as variables such as a supportive environment and childcare practices. Therefore, overcoming this problem requires an educational and supportive strategy. Group counseling is an example of a strategy that can be used, in which participants gain social support and knowledge to control their behavior better.

Based on observations at Ali Bin Abu Talib IT Junior High School, many students showed clear signs of academic procrastination. Some students seem less confident when completing assignments, are often late in submitting work, and even tend to ignore the academic responsibilities given by teachers. Also, some students have just completed their homework on the day of collection, which illustrates a recurring pattern of procrastination. This incident underscores the need for psychopedagogical interventions to help students overcome these tendencies. One approach believed to be effective in reducing procrastination is group guidance combined with positive reinforcement techniques. Based on the results of research conducted by Atika Fathur Rahmi [5], it is proven that the use of group counseling services to minimize academic procrastination has succeeded in reducing students' procrastination behavior to complete the assignments given by grade VII teachers of SMP Negeri 9 Medan in the 2022–2023 school year.

Meanwhile, another study [6] found that students at SMP Negeri 6 Singaraja significantly reduced academic procrastination when they received e-counseling and positive reinforcement strategies. According to Sari's [7] research, academic procrastination and delays in starting and completing tasks can be reduced by combining self-management strategies with group support services.

Although no studies have specifically combined group guidance with positive reinforcement to address procrastination, this combination provides an important basis for this study to test the effectiveness of group guidance with positive reinforcement in reducing students' academic procrastination behavior. One strategy to help students solve academic, social, educational, and personal problems is group tutoring. Group guidance is defined by Prayitno [8] as when group members raise issues or topics of discussion that are unrelated to or of concern to them, regardless of whether the issues arise from environmental

conditions, audio news, television, newspapers, or other sources [9]. Group tutoring services provide support in a group setting to help students make the best choice. Students can respond, provide ideas, voice their views, and more through group dynamics and interactions [10]. Students who get group counseling can also learn how to get emotional support, become more motivated, and improve their social skills. Students who receive group supervision can also encourage the growth of attitudes, emotions, perceptions, insights, and ideas that facilitate the embodiment of more effective behaviors. They can also make choices and be responsible for them [11].

Improving communication skills, improving individual social interaction skills, encouraging group collaboration, and fostering self-awareness and empathy are all goals of group guidance. The advantages of group tutoring services include teaching students how to coexist with others and encouraging collaboration between students when they face difficulties. In addition, the program improves children's communication skills with classmates and counselors and teaches them to respect and voice their point of view [9]. Thus, group tutoring is a method of tutoring that takes place within a framework of continuous group interaction, where students develop and learn from one another through open communication and understanding.

Positive reinforcement is a reaction given to individuals after they show the desired behavior, so that the behavior can continue to be displayed and even improved [12]. Positive reinforcement is a process that shapes behavior by providing pleasant consequences after the desired behavior occurs, with the hope that the behavior will be repeated. It can be concluded that positive reinforcement is an approach that focuses on positive behavior through constructive rewards, motivating students to continue improving and consistently showing a better attitude. Through a combination of group guidance and positive reinforcement, students are expected not only to understand the negative impact of procrastination but also to be encouraged to form more responsible learning habits. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of group counseling combined with positive reinforcement strategies in reducing academic procrastination among students at Ali Bin Abu Talib IT Junior High School. This will allow this research to really help develop students' self-discipline, self-confidence, and responsibility for their academic tasks.

The development of education in the modern era requires students to possess strong time management, discipline, and academic responsibility. However, a recurring problem observed among adolescents is academic procrastination, defined as the intentional delay of academic tasks despite awareness of their negative consequences [13]. Postponing tasks is characteristic of academic procrastination, which has rational reasons and negatively affects academic achievement, psychological well-being, and students' self-confidence [14]. This behavior is influenced by internal and external factors, including low motivation, emotional regulation issues, lack of time management skills, parenting patterns, and the school environment [15], [16]. If not addressed, procrastination becomes a maladaptive behavioral pattern that hinders students' academic and personal development [17].

To overcome this issue, educational institutions need intervention strategies that foster discipline and adaptive learning behavior. One promising approach is group guidance, which provides a supportive environment where students can discuss problems, share

experiences, and build commitment to positive change [18]. Group guidance promotes communication skills, self-awareness, social support, and responsible decision-making [19]. When combined with positive reinforcement, a behavioral approach that strengthens desired behavior through rewards or positive feedback [10], students are encouraged to maintain positive learning habits, take responsibility, and be consistent in completing academic tasks.

Observations at SMP IT Ali Bin Abu Thalib Tanjung Morawa indicate that many students exhibit signs of academic procrastination, including delays in submitting assignments, a lack of initiative, low confidence in completing schoolwork, and a tendency to do homework only on the day of submission. These conditions indicate the need for psychoeducational intervention to reduce procrastination and improve learning responsibility. Previous studies have shown that counselling-based interventions can reduce procrastination [20]. One study found that group counselling effectively minimized academic procrastination among seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 9 Medan. Claudia et al. [21] reported that e-counselling combined with positive reinforcement significantly reduced procrastination among students at SMP Negeri 6 Singaraja. Wulandari [22] also demonstrated that integrating self-management with group support reduced procrastination behavior.

However, no research has specifically examined the integration of group guidance with positive reinforcement as a combined intervention strategy to reduce academic procrastination among junior high school students. This *research gap* provides a rationale for conducting the present study. Therefore, this study aims to examine the effectiveness of group guidance combined with positive reinforcement strategies in reducing academic procrastination among students of SMP IT Ali Bin Abu Thalib. It is expected that the findings will contribute to the development of students' self-discipline, motivation, and responsibility for academic tasks, and will also provide practical implications for school counsellors in designing future guidance programs.

2. METHOD

This research was conducted at Ali Bin Abu Talib IT Junior High School in Bandar Labuhan Village, Tanjung Morawa District, Deli Serdang Regency in the even semester of the 2024/2025 school year. This research activity took place on Monday, June 2, 2025. Seventh-grade students of IT Junior High School Ali bin Abu Talib were the subject of the research. The purpose of this study is to find out how effective group counseling combined with positive reinforcement strategies is in reducing students' academic procrastination. This quantitative research used a Nonequivalent Control Group Design and quasi-experimental methodologies, according to Cook [23] treatment. Although this design includes control variables, they are not used to their full extent to control external factors that affect the experiment's execution.

When researchers can control several influencing factors but not enough to carry out the right experiments, they use this design [24]. Purposive sampling was used to select 16 seventh-grade students of Ali bin Abu Talib IT Junior High School as research participants. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique in which researchers select participants based on predetermined criteria or characteristics relevant to the research objectives [25]. The

study respondents were college students who showed a significant level of procrastination during the pre-test data collection. Of all respondents, 16 students did much procrastinating, 22 did a lot, and 17 did a little. Table 1 shows the following conditions of academic procrastination behavior.

Table 1. Academic Procrastination Category

| Category | Value Range | Sum | Percentage |
|----------|--------------------|-----|------------|
| High | $X \geq 76\%$ | 16 | 29% |
| Medium | $51 \leq X < 76\%$ | 22 | 40% |
| Low | $X \leq 50\%$ | 17 | 31% |
| Total | | 55 | 100% |

In this study, the tool used is an academic procrastination questionnaire developed by Ana Mawar Riska [26]. The questionnaire is then adopted in accordance with the researcher's problem, which has been tested for validity and realism. The research instrument was developed based on four aspects of academic procrastination, comprising 42 statements: 22 favorable and 26 unfavorable. Scores were given using a scale of 4–1 for favorable items and 1–4 for unfavorable items. The results of the validity test showed that all 42 items had r values $>$ the r table value (0.265) and p values $<$ 0.05. Thus, all items are declared valid. This study uses four alternative Likert-scale instruments, namely: 1. Strongly Agree (SS), 2. Agree (S), 3. Disagree (TS) 4. Strongly disagree (STS).

Questions related to an issue or field of study. Several questions related to the issue or field of study are included in the questionnaire. Seventh-grade students at Ali bin Abu Talib Junior High School in Tanjung Morawa were given a questionnaire to collect data on academic procrastination. In research, questionnaires are used as data-collection instruments. The questionnaire contains a series of questions that are relevant to the problem or field of research. Respondents selected as samples were asked to answer these questions. Data analysis was carried out through the Mann-Whitney and Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test with a significance level of $<$ 0.05. Data analysis is carried out through SPSS version 31.0

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

Based on the results of the student identification for tendencies toward academic procrastination, the initial measurement (pre-test) was conducted by distributing questionnaires to all 55 students in grade VII. Based on the measurement results, 16 students were divided into two groups: a control group and an experimental group, both in the high-level academic procrastination category.

The following table presents the results of the academic procrastination pre-test questionnaire for grade VII students. Pre-test and post-test data are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Pre-Test Results Reduce Students' Academic Procrastination Behavior

| No. | Name | Academic Procrastination | |
|-----|------------|--------------------------|----------|
| | | Total | Category |
| 1 | T | 189 | High |
| 2 | SHE | 188 | High |
| 3 | MTRJ | 178 | High |
| 4 | AAJ | 178 | High |
| 5 | AFA | 176 | High |
| 6 | DAA | 176 | High |
| 7 | ALREADY | 172 | High |
| 8 | LAS | 171 | High |
| 9 | STAMP | 169 | High |
| 10 | MFF | 167 | High |
| 11 | QFL | 165 | High |
| 12 | PHA | 157 | High |
| 13 | OLD | 155 | High |
| 14 | LEGITIMATE | 153 | High |
| 15 | STAMP | 150 | High |
| 16 | IM | 150 | High |

Based on the data in the table above, 16 students exhibit academic procrastination behavior in the high category ($\geq 76\%$), of which 16 are included in the aforementioned category. Meanwhile, in the medium category (51-75%) or the low category ($\leq 50\%$), there are no students.

These results indicate that most students show a fairly high level of academic procrastination. Therefore, implementing group guidance services with positive reinforcement techniques is needed to help students manage procrastination on tasks and the extent of their procrastination. The pre-test analysis showed that 16 students were in the high procrastination category, with scores ranging from 146 to 192, indicating a strong tendency toward academic procrastination. In general, these students tend to delay completing assignments that are quite high in daily academic activities in the school environment.

These findings serve as a reference for selecting subjects for the application of group guidance interventions using positive reinforcement techniques, aimed at helping students reduce the academic procrastination behavior they experience. The data reinforce the importance of implementing a well-planned guidance program that aligns with students' psychological needs. After the intervention, 16 students were asked to complete the same questionnaire. This procedure is intended to assess behavioral changes in the subject following the intervention. Based on the analysis of the data obtained from the findings, namely.

Table 3. Post-test Results Reduce Academic Procrastination Behavior

| No. | Name | Academic Procrastination | |
|-----|------------|--------------------------|----------|
| | | Control Group | |
| | | Total | Category |
| 1 | MRTJ | 178 | High |
| 2 | ALREADY | 172 | High |
| 3 | MFF | 167 | High |
| 4 | QFL | 165 | High |
| 5 | PHA | 157 | High |
| 6 | OLD | 155 | High |
| 7 | FRS | 150 | High |
| 8 | IM | 150 | High |
| No. | Name | Academic Procrastination | |
| | | Experimental Group | |
| | | Total | Category |
| 1 | IM | 144 | Medium |
| 2 | SHE | 140 | Medium |
| 3 | AFA | 137 | Medium |
| 4 | DAA | 131 | Medium |
| 5 | AAJ | 127 | Medium |
| 6 | LAS | 94 | Low |
| 7 | STAMP | 92 | Low |
| 8 | LEGITIMATE | 90 | Low |

The post-test results following the group guidance intervention with the application of positive reinforcement techniques showed a decrease in academic procrastination among grade VII students at Ali Bin Abu Thalib IT Junior High School, Tanjung Morawa. Sixteen students were previously identified as having academic procrastination behavior in the high category; now, eight students in the experimental group have decreased symptoms and are in the medium and low categories. Meanwhile, eight students in the control group who did not receive the intervention did not experience a decrease in academic procrastination. The post-test score range for students in the experimental group was 97-145 in the medium category and 48-96 in the low category. The post-test results for the control group ranged from 150 to 170, and the pre-test results ranged from 149 to 176. The post-test scores showed that students ranged from 97 to 145, with a consistent decline in SAH students from 153 to 90, and similar declines were observed in T, IA, and AFA. These findings show that group guidance interventions based on positive reinforcement techniques have been effective in helping students reduce academic procrastination, increase productivity, and take on greater academic responsibility. The achievement of declining students falls in the medium and low categories, indicating that this approach is not only effective individually but also positively influences dynamics [27].

The researchers conducted normality tests on pre-test and post-test data on students' academic procrastination behavior to ensure the data's validity. The purpose of the normality test is to determine whether the data distribution is normal, which is a requirement for applying parametric statistical tests[28]. Two approaches, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and

Shapiro-Wilk tests, were used to test the data. The results of the evaluation determine whether parametric or non-parametric tests can be used to analyze the data distribution. Based on this interpretation, the data is considered evenly distributed if the significance value (sig.) is greater than 0.05. However, the data are not distributed regularly when the significance value (sig.) is < 0.05 . This testing is an important part of determining the advanced statistical analysis approach to significantly test the effectiveness of the intervention. Overall, these findings reinforce the suspicion that positive reinforcement techniques in the context of group guidance are effective, simple, and applicable interventions for reducing academic procrastination behavior among students in the school environment.

Table 4. Tests of Normality

| Value | Class | Kolmogorov-Smirnova | | | Shapiro-Wilk | | |
|-------|-----------------|---------------------|----|-------|--------------|----|------|
| | | Statistics | Df | Sig. | Statistics | Df | Sig. |
| | Post Control | .177 | 8 | .200* | .931 | 8 | .527 |
| | Post Experiment | .253 | 8 | .139 | .816 | 8 | .042 |

The test results were obtained using SPSS, which showed that the post-test control test data had a significance value of 0.527 (> 0.05); the conclusion was that the post-test academic procrastination variable met the assumption of normal distribution. Moreover, the results of the experimental post-test had a significance value of $0.042 < 0.05$, indicating that the post-test did not meet the assumption of normality. The results of this study have significant implications for selecting the appropriate statistical analysis method. Since post-test data are not normally distributed, parametric tests such as t-tests are not feasible. Therefore, the researcher applied the non-parametric statistical tests, Mann-Whitney and the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test, which are more appropriate for analyzing data on differences between groups and pairs under abnormal distribution conditions. The analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics version 31 to test the intervention's effectiveness in reducing academic procrastination among students.

Table 5. Differences in Post-Test Scores for Control and Experimental Groups

| Variable | Post-Test Control | | Post-Test Experiment | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------|
| | Mean | Sum of Rank | Mean | Sum of Rank |
| Academic Procrastination | 12,5 | 100 | 4,5 | 36 |

The mean value of $M = 12.50$ in the control group was greater than $M = 4.50$ in the experimental group, indicating that the post-test value in the control group was higher than that in the experimental group, according to the descriptive statistics in the Mann-Whitney table. These findings clarify that, after treatment, there was a substantial change in academic procrastination behavior in both student groups at SMP IT Ali bin Abu Talib Tanjung Morawa.

Table 6. Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test

| Test Statistics ^a | |
|------------------------------|---------|
| Posttest - Pre-test | |
| Z | -2.527b |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) | .012 |

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of guidance and counseling services that use positive reinforcement strategies in reducing students' academic procrastination. The Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test, a non-parametric technique for comparing paired datasets when the data distribution is abnormal, is used to analyze the data. According to the statistical test table, the analytical findings show that (Asymp.sig) < alpha at 0.012, which is below the significance threshold of 0.05. These results supported an alternative hypothesis (H_a), which showed a statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores. Thus, academic procrastination among seventh-grade students at Ali bin Abu Talib Tanjung Morawa IT Junior High School can be reduced with group guidance using positive reinforcement strategies. According to the study's findings, seventh-graders at SMPI IT Ali bin Abu Talib Tanjung Morawa dramatically reduced their academic procrastination when group tutoring interventions using positive reinforcement strategies were used.

The results of the initial measurement, a pre-test questionnaire administered to 55 students, showed that 16 students (29%) experienced academic procrastination. This condition confirms the urgency of providing group guidance services for students. The intervention was implemented through group guidance services with positive reinforcement techniques, and post-test re-measurement was carried out using the same instrument. The measurement results showed a consistent, very significant decrease, with lower academic procrastination scores in the medium and low categories. The post-test score range is 127 to 144, significantly lower than the pre-test score range of 153 to 189. Descriptively, these findings indicate that positive reinforcement techniques help students reduce academic procrastination, increase productivity, and reduce stress and anxiety. The Shapiro-Wilk normality test indicated that the pre-test data were normally distributed (sig. = 0.447), whereas the post-test data were not (sig. = 0.042). Therefore, a non-parametric Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test is used to conduct efficacy studies. The test results showed a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test, with a p-value of 0.012 (<0.05).

3.2. Discussion

The Effectiveness of Positive Reinforcement *Engineering Group Guidance Services* in Reducing Students' Academic Procrastination Behavior at Ali Bin Abu Talib Tanjung Morawa IT Junior High School

Academic procrastination is a problem that students often experience. Many students delay completing assignments and preparing for exams because they feel overwhelmed by the high academic load [28]. The results of the study are relevant to Ferrari's theory of academic procrastination, which explains that academic procrastination is the habit of students to delay completing tasks even though they intend to do so, by preferring activities they consider more fun than studying [29].

Furthermore, these results are also consistent with B.F. Skinner's theory. According to Skinner [18], to properly understand behavioral changes, we must understand that the provision of stimuli (motivation) to one another produces new responses or new concepts. Positive reinforcement is given to improve the desired behavior, leading to its repetition. From the perspective of group guidance services, these results support Prayitno's view, offering affirmation and a cautionary note for practitioners conducting guidance and counseling in a group setting. Through group guidance, students can understand the impact of academic procrastination, gain social support, and be motivated to adopt more disciplined, productive learning behaviors [30]. The study's findings showed that group counseling services using positive reinforcement strategies significantly reduced students' academic procrastination. The variation in the average academic procrastination rating among the eight study participants made this clear, from a control post-test score of 12.50 (high category) to 4.50 in the experimental post-test (medium category).

The 8-point decrease in score shows a significant improvement after students participated in all group guidance sessions using positive reinforcement techniques. The Mann-Whitney test showed a significant difference between the control and experimental groups in academic procrastination. The mean value of the post-test in the control group ($M = 12.50$) was higher than that of the experimental group ($M = 4.50$). These findings indicate that group guidance services using positive reinforcement techniques are effective in reducing academic procrastination. Statistically, the 2-tailed Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test showed a significance value (Asymp. Sig.) of 0.012, which confirms the effectiveness of this service. This number proves a significant difference in pre- and post-treatment conditions because the value is less than the established significance threshold ($\alpha = < 0.05$). As a result, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is supported, suggesting that students at SMP IT Ali bin Abu Talib can effectively reduce academic procrastination through group tutoring services that employ positive reinforcement.

The findings of this study also support a number of other studies that show the benefits of group counseling services in lowering students' academic procrastination. The use of group counseling services has succeeded in reducing academic procrastination among MTs students [13]. This similarity stems from the goal of interventions to reduce students' academic procrastination behaviors, although no previous research has explicitly combined group supervision with positive reinforcement strategies to minimize academic procrastination. Thus, although the methods used differ, the results of this study strengthen the evidence that group-guidance-based interventions combined with positive reinforcement strategies can be an effective approach for reducing academic procrastination among students at Ali bin Abu Thalib Tanjung Morawa IT Junior High School [31].

4. CONCLUSION

This study confirms that group guidance using positive reinforcement strategies is effective in reducing academic procrastination among seventh-grade students. The intervention helped students develop greater responsibility toward academic tasks, improve motivation, and build more adaptive learning habits. The findings imply that counsellors and schools can integrate positive reinforcement into group guidance programs as a preventive

and curative approach to support students' self-regulation and academic discipline. This strategy can also strengthen students' positive mindset, enhance engagement in learning activities, and shape constructive behavior patterns within the school environment. However, this research was limited by its small sample size, short intervention duration, and focus on only one school, which may affect the generalizability of the results. Future studies are encouraged to involve larger, more diverse student populations, extend the intervention period, and compare different counseling approaches to determine which techniques are most effective for different student characteristics. Overall, this study contributes to educational guidance practices by providing empirical evidence that combining group guidance with positive reinforcement can help reduce tendencies toward procrastination and foster students' personal and academic development. It serves as a reference for schools, counselors, and educational practitioners in designing more effective student-support programs.

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