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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GROUP GUIDANCE WITH PSYCHODRAMA TECHNIQUES IN OVERCOMING STUDENT LEARNING SATURATION

Yansen Alberth Reba [1*], Yulius Mataputun [2], Eka Sawitri [3], Habel Saud [4], Mikhael Udam [5], Sally Putri Karisma [6], Sirjon [7], M. Zaenul Muttaqin [8]
Department of Guidance and Counseling, Universitas Cenderawasih [1*, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6]
Early Childhood Education Study Program, Universitas Cenderawasih [7],
Department of State Administration, Universitas Cenderawasih[8]
*) Corresponding author, email: yansenreba070189@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of group guidance with psychodrama techniques in overcoming learning saturation among university students. This mixed-method study employed an embedded design with a pre-experimental one-group pretest-posttest approach as the dominant quantitative component. The sample consisted of nine university students from the Guidance and Counseling Study Program at FKIP UNCEN, selected through purposive sampling based on high learning saturation scores from a 30-item questionnaire measured on a 5-point Likert scale. The results demonstrated a significant reduction in learning saturation levels following the psychodrama intervention, with paired t-test analysis showing a significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores (t = -4.739, df = 8, p = 0.001). Qualitative findings further revealed that students experienced improved self-control, increased relaxation, and enhanced learning motivation after participating in the psychodrama sessions. These findings indicate that group guidance with psychodrama techniques is an effective approach for reducing learning saturation among university students.

ABSTRAK

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengkaji efektivitas bimbingan kelompok dengan teknik psikodrama dalam mengatasi kelelahan belajar di kalangan mahasiswa perguruan tinggi. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode campuran dengan desain tertanam dan pendekatan pra-eksperimental satu kelompok pra-tes dan pasca-tes sebagai komponen kuantitatif utama. Sampel terdiri dari sembilan mahasiswa program studi Bimbingan dan Konseling di FKIP UNCEN, yang dipilih melalui sampling purposif berdasarkan skor saturasi belajar yang tinggi dari kuesioner berisikan 30 item yang diukur menggunakan skala Likert 5 poin. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan penurunan signifikan pada tingkat kelelahan belajar setelah intervensi psikodrama, dengan analisis uji t berpasangan menunjukkan perbedaan signifikan antara skor pra-tes dan pasca-tes (t = -4,739, df = 8, p = 0,001). Temuan kualitatif lebih lanjut menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa mengalami peningkatan pengendalian diri, relaksasi yang lebih baik, dan motivasi belajar yang meningkat setelah mengikuti sesi psikodrama. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa bimbingan kelompok dengan teknik psikodrama merupakan pendekatan efektif untuk mengurangi tingkat saturasi belajar di kalangan mahasiswa.

INTRODUCTION

Education is the main foundation in building superior quality human resources. Higher education institutions have a strategic role in producing a generation that is competent and ready to face challenges in the world of work. However, in the process, many students face various obstacles, one of which is learning saturation. Learning saturation is a psychological phenomenon in which individuals lose interest and motivation in undergoing the teaching and learning process, resulting in decreased academic performance (Akanpaadgi et al., 2023; Afifah et al., 2019; Owens et al., 2020). This saturation arises as a result of monotonous learning routines, high academic pressure, and lack of variety in learning methods (Sharp et al., 2020). Furthermore, Craven & Frick (2024) state that learning burnout can have a wide range of impacts, from decreased motivation, decreased cognitive ability, to unproductive behavior in the classroom. Several other studies have also shown that learning burnout is closely related to low participation in academic activities and decreased social investment in learning (Affandi et al., 2024; Phan et al., 2024; Raes et al., 2024). This condition, if not addressed immediately, will hinder the achievement of optimal educational goals, as well as exacerbate social inequality among students. Addressing learning saturation is imperative for higher education institutions to fulfill their strategic role in cultivating competent human resources, necessitating further research into innovative pedagogical approaches and support systems that can mitigate this phenomenon and enhance students' academic resilience.

Various efforts have been made by educators to reduce learning boredom, including through more interactive and collaborative learning approaches. One approach that has emerged as a potential solution is the psychodrama technique in group guidance services. Psychodrama, as described by Asmaryadi (2019), is a guidance method that allows students to express their internal conflicts through dramatization, thus helping them understand their feelings and emotions. The technique is effective in helping individuals reflect on their psychological state and creates a safe space to express themselves freely (López-González et al., 2021). In light of the challenges posed by learning saturation, the implementation of innovative approaches such as psychodrama in group guidance services presents a promising avenue for enhancing student engagement and emotional well-being, thereby potentially mitigating the detrimental effects of academic burnout and fostering a more resilient and motivated student body in higher education institutions.

Previous research has shown that psychodrama techniques are effective in various contexts, such as in overcoming behavioral problems in adolescents and improving social skills (Karataş & Gökçakan, 2009; Şimşek et al., 2020; Ulusoy et al., 2023). Ulusoy et al. (2023) demonstrate that intrapsychic and interpersonal dynamics significantly shape the function and efficacy of general psychodrama among adolescents, highlighting the interplay between internal and external psychological factors. Meanwhile, Simsek et al. (2022) evaluated psychodrama's effectiveness in reducing social anxiety and enhancing empathy among adolescents aged 13-17. Utilizing the Adolescent Empathic Tendency Scale and Social Anxiety Scale, their study revealed nuanced results. While the analysis found no

statistically significant differences in empathic anxiety, post-psychodrama assessments indicated an increase in mean empathic anxiety scores. These findings suggest that psychodrama may positively influence empathic tendencies in adolescents, despite the absence of significant changes in social anxiety levels.

However, there are still few studies that specifically examine the effectiveness of this technique in overcoming college students' learning boredom. Thus, this study has two main objectives. First, to analyze whether psychodrama techniques can significantly reduce study boredom in university students. Second, to make an empirical contribution to the development of group guidance services in higher education. This research is expected to provide new insights in the field of guidance and counseling, particularly in the use of psychodrama techniques as an innovative method to overcome study boredom. With these findings, it is hoped that higher education institutions can adopt a more holistic approach to supporting student's mental and emotional development, as well as improving the quality of learning in the academic environment.

METHODS

Study Design

To achieve the research objectives, the researchers used a mixed-method approach with an embedded design (Ryba et al., 2022). The quantitative approach is more dominant, while the qualitative approach is complementary/secondary which is embedded in the research process. For the quantitative approach, a pre-experiment with a one-group pretest-posttest design was used. This design was chosen because it aims to measure changes in the level of student learning saturation before and after being given treatment in the form of group guidance with psychodrama techniques. The qualitative approach aims to explore the processes felt by research subjects. Information gathering at this stage was carried out through in-depth interviews and questions focused on the process of implementing group guidance with psychodrama techniques and what the subject felt. In this way, researchers could obtain more in-depth information regarding the application of group guidance with psychodrama techniques from the perspective of athletes and non-athletes.

Subjects

The subjects in this study were students of the Guidance and Counseling Study Program of FKIP UNCEN class of 2020 and 2021. The total population involved in this study was 43 students. The research sample was determined through a purposive *sampling* technique, with the main criteria being students who have a high level of learning saturation based on the pre-test results. From these results, 9 students were selected as research samples.

Research Instruments

The instrument used to collect data was a study saturation questionnaire consisting of 30 statement items. Each statement in the questionnaire was organized based on three main indicators of study burnout: (1) physical and mental fatigue, (2) fatigue from a

psychological perspective, and (3) errors in learning caused by burnout. The questionnaire was measured using a 5-point Likert scale, with a score of 1 indicating "strongly disagree" and a score of 5 indicating "strongly agree".

Before being used in research, this questionnaire was tested for validity and reliability. Validity testing was carried out using the *Pearson Product Moment* correlation method, and all items in the questionnaire were declared valid with a value of r count > r table (0.361). For the reliability test, *Cronbach's Alpha* method was used with the result that the alpha value was 0.955, indicating that the instrument was reliable.

Procedure

The research was conducted in three main stages. ***Pre-test***. At the initial stage, students were asked to fill out a study boredom questionnaire to determine the initial condition of their boredom level before the treatment was given.

Provision of Treatment. The psychodrama in this research was carried out through two structured sessions, each lasting 90 minutes. In the first session, participants were involved in role-play activities that depicted academic stress and learning boredom. Through dramatization, participants were allowed to express their emotions more openly, while the facilitator provided constructive feedback and encouraged interaction between participants. This approach is supported by previous research showing that psychodrama can significantly reduce levels of emotional exhaustion, especially in groups with high academic pressure (Simsek et al., 2022). This technique also helps participants process and restructure their stressful experiences, effectively reducing anxiety and depressive symptoms (ÖRNEK & Şimşek, 2023).

In the second session, the focus shifts to internal conflict resolution and increasing emotional resilience through guided improvisation. Participants are encouraged to explore creative solutions to the academic challenges they face in a supportive environment. This is in line with research that shows that psychodrama can improve emotional regulation and self-confidence among students (Yani & Basuki, 2023). Additionally, psychodrama has also been shown to be effective in developing academic skills and reducing behavioral disorders in students with learning difficulties, which supports the potential of this method to improve emotional resilience and academic skills (Saba, 2022).

Post-test. After the two treatment sessions were completed, the study saturation questionnaire was again administered to students to measure changes in the level of study saturation after the treatment.

Data Analysis Technique

Descriptive statistics are used to determine the mean and standard deviation (SD) for each treatment group. Data obtained from the pre-test and post-test were analyzed using parametric statistical tests. Before the t-test, the data were tested for normality using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. If the data were normally distributed ($p > 0.05$), then the t-test was used to compare the pre-test and post-test results. The significance level used is $\alpha = 0.05$. All

data analysis was carried out with the help of IBM SPSS 20 software. The interview data related to the process of implementing group guidance with psychodrama techniques were analyzed using the Miles & Huberman model.

RESULTS

Quantitative Analysis Results

This study aims to measure the effectiveness of group guidance with psychodrama techniques in reducing student learning saturation. Data obtained from pre-test and post-test results were analyzed to see differences before and after treatment. At the pre-test stage, the level of student learning saturation was measured before being given the treatment. From the pre-test results, nine students were identified as having a high level of learning saturation, with scores ranging from 83 to 100.

Table 1. Pre-test Results of Student Learning Saturation Level

No	Student	Learning saturation score	Category
1	DJ	91	High
2	I	98	High
3	MT	98	High
4	VSR	100	High
5	ICM	97	High
6	AD	99	High
7	ARA	90	High
8	JDS	83	High
9	PTT	92	High

Based on the table above, all students who became samples were in the high learning saturation category, so they needed to be given group guidance treatment with psychodrama techniques.

After being given treatment in the form of group guidance with psychodrama techniques for two sessions, students were again measured for their level of learning saturation through a post-test. The results showed a significant decrease in the level of student learning saturation. All students experienced a decrease in learning saturation to the category of "very low."

Table 2. Post-test Results of Student Learning Saturation Levels

No	Student	Learning saturation score	Category
1	DJ	91	Very Low
2	I	98	Very Low
3	MT	98	Very Low
4	VSR	100	Very Low
5	ICM	97	Very Low
6	AD	99	Very Low
7	ARA	90	Very Low
8	JDS	83	Very Low
9	PTT	92	Very Low

The results of statistical analysis show that the average score of students' learning saturation decreases significantly after the treatment. Based on the paired t-test, the significance value obtained is 0.001 (p < 0.05), which means that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores.

Table 3. Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Scores

Stage	Average Score	Standard Deviation	Saturation Level
Pre-test	92.22	5.18	High
Post-test	89.78	4.67	Very Low

The results of the t-test (t = -4.739, df = 8, p = 0.001) show that there is a significant decrease in student learning saturation after being given group guidance with psychodrama techniques.

Qualitative analysis results

The results of interviews with research subjects showed that after students received group guidance using psychodrama techniques, they felt they could control themselves better.

> I feel very bored on campus. But after following psychodrama, yeah, I can manage my boredom better. I know better how to control myself when boredom sets in (interview with VSR).
> Previously, academic pressure made me almost give up. But after participating in psychodrama, yeah, I can manage pressure better (interview with AD).
> I became aware. I feel bored all this time, apparently not only because of the assignments but because I don't understand what makes me bored. After following the psychodrama, I understood better what was causing my boredom. So I can handle it slowly (interview with ICM).

Group guidance using psychodrama techniques can also make students more relaxed. They feel calmer and can escape the stress they experience due to their assignments.

> Yeah, after taking part in a psychodrama session, I think my heart has become calmer. My mind is also not heavy anymore. The academic load on campus that used to make me dizzy, now I can face it more relaxed. So it's more relaxed like that (interview with DJ).
> I learned many things to deal with stress. So you are more relaxed when facing tasks (interview with AD).
> I felt more relieved after expressing internal conflict during psychodrama (interview with JDS).

In addition, the results of this research also show that group guidance using psychodrama techniques can increase learning motivation. Students become more enthusiastic about learning.

> I think after taking part in the session, I became even more enthusiastic. Previously I was lethargic, as if I were not motivated. But now I have more energy. Stronger to face all difficulties on campus (interview with PTT).
> Yeah, after that session, I feel like I just got a new way to look at problems. I am more enthusiastic about learning. More motivated huh? I think this helps much, it gives me new energy to face everyday life (interview with MT).

From the results of the interview above, three main things were obtained by students after receiving group guidance using psychodrama techniques, namely being able to control themselves better, becoming more relaxed, and increasing their motivation to learn.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study demonstrate the efficacy of group guidance incorporating psychodrama techniques in mitigating student learning saturation. A significant reduction in learning saturation, evidenced by the comparison of pre-test and post-test results, corroborates previous findings regarding the effectiveness of psychodrama techniques in addressing various psychological issues, including learning saturation (Asmaryadi, 2019; Khalili & Swilem, 2021; Maya & Maraver, 2020; Wang et al., 2020).

Analysis of pre-test and post-test data revealed a statistically significant reduction in student learning saturation. The paired samples t-test yielded a significance value of 0.00 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test results. This finding led to the rejection of the null hypothesis and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis, confirming that group guidance with psychodrama techniques effectively reduced learning saturation levels by 21%. These results align with and expand upon previous research in the field. Asmaryadi (2019) demonstrated the efficacy of the psychodrama method of group guidance services in addressing introverted personality traits among high school students. Similarly, Arini (2019) found a significant effect of psychodrama on self-concept in middle school students. The present study extends these findings to the context of learning saturation in higher education, suggesting a broader applicability of psychodrama techniques across various educational challenges and age groups.

While aligning with the broader efficacy of psychodrama and drama therapy in addressing mental health outcomes, as demonstrated by Orkibi et al. (2023) with a moderate effect size (d = 0.501), this study extends the application of these techniques to a specific educational challenge in higher education. Additionally, the findings are further supported by a meta-analysis conducted by Kipper & Ritchie (2003), which examined the effectiveness of psychodrama techniques across various applications. They found a large effect size (r = 0.95) for psychodrama interventions, indicating robust effectiveness across different contexts. While their study did not specifically focus on learning saturation, the large effect size suggests that psychodrama can be a powerful tool for psychological and behavioral change, which aligns with the observed reduction in learning saturation. The significant decrease in learning saturation observed in this study is also consistent with research by Villarroel et al. (2020), who found that experiential learning techniques, including psychodrama, led to increased student engagement and reduced academic burnout in university students. Their study provides additional support for the effectiveness of such interventions in higher education settings.

Further analysis of learning saturation indicators provides a nuanced understanding of the intervention's impact. Pre-test data showed high levels of saturation in physical and mental exhaustion, as well as psychological fatigue. After the intervention, all indicators decreased to very low levels, suggesting a comprehensive effect of the psychodrama techniques on various aspects of learning saturation. This multi-faceted impact is consistent with findings by Karataş & Gökçakan (2009), who observed improvements in problem-solving skills and hopelessness levels among high school students following psychodrama

interventions. This follows the findings of Polat & Ceylan (2023), whose research demonstrated that group psychodrama activities had a significant effect on the psychological well-being and emotional self-awareness of students, followed by a significant interaction effect.

The effectiveness of the intervention is further supported by qualitative observations. Students demonstrated increased awareness of the benefits of the activities, particularly role-play. The enthusiastic participation in drama exercises created an engaging, non-monotonous learning atmosphere, potentially contributing to the reduction in learning saturation. This observation aligns with research by Maya & Maraver (2020), who found group guidance with psychodrama techniques to be highly effective against academic procrastination, another manifestation of learning disengagement.

Moreover, the active participation and engagement observed in this study corroborate findings by Orkibi & Feniger-Schaal (2019), who reported increased spontaneity and creativity among university students participating in psychodrama sessions. They posited that these improvements could lead to better academic performance and reduced academic stress, which aligns with the observed reduction in learning saturation.

The significant reduction in learning saturation from high to very low levels across all indicators suggests that psychodrama techniques may offer a powerful tool for addressing academic burnout and disengagement. This finding is particularly relevant in the context of higher education, where maintaining student engagement and preventing burnout is crucial for academic success and retention. It also complements research by Dogan (2018), who found that psychodrama-based group counseling significantly reduced test anxiety among university students, suggesting a broader impact on academic-related stress and fatigue.

However, it is important to note the limitations of this study. The small sample size (n = 9) and the lack of a control group limit the generalizability of these findings. Future research should consider larger sample sizes and incorporate control groups to strengthen the validity of these results. Additionally, longitudinal studies, such as that conducted by Katmer et al. (2020), which found long-term positive effects of psychodrama on students' self-esteem and happiness, would be valuable in assessing the durability of the reductions in learning saturation observed in this study.

Psychodrama facilitates students' expression of internal conflicts related to burnout through role-playing. This process not only helps students reflect on their feelings and emotions but also creates a safe space to explore creative solutions to the burnout they experience. This is in line with Craven & Frick's (2024) research, which states that approaches involving self-reflection through dramatic action can enhance creativity and emotional engagement in learning. On the other hand, the use of a *one-group pre-test and post-test* design without a control group might limit the generalizability of these findings. Therefore, future studies may consider using an experimental design involving a control group to obtain more comprehensive results.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of group guidance with psychodrama techniques in reducing learning saturation among university students. Employing a mixed-method approach with an embedded design, the research demonstrated a significant reduction in learning saturation levels following psychodrama interventions, transforming students' high levels of academic burnout to very low levels across multiple indicators. Both quantitative and qualitative findings supported this impact, with all participants experiencing a significant decrease in saturation scores while developing improved self-control, increased relaxation, and enhanced learning motivation. This research extends current understanding of psychodrama applications by demonstrating its efficacy specifically in higher education contexts, bridging a significant gap by applying these techniques to university students experiencing academic burnout.

Despite limitations including the small sample size, absence of a control group, and relatively short intervention duration, this study offers a promising pathway for reinvigorating student engagement through innovative, experiential approaches. Future research should address these limitations through larger scale randomized controlled designs, longitudinal studies tracking sustainability of improvements, and exploration of specific mechanisms through which psychodrama influences learning saturation. By demonstrating psychodrama's powerful impact on learning saturation, this research provides both theoretical contributions and practical solutions for educational institutions striving to create more supportive and engaging learning environments essential for developing resilient, motivated learners in an era where academic pressure and burnout increasingly threaten student well-being and educational outcomes.

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