

SOCIODRAMA-BASED EDUCATION: IMPROVING STUDENTS' POSITIVE SELF-CONCEPTS IN INDONESIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Setiya Veryanto^{1*}, Ade Irma Noviyanti², Dewi Masyitoh³

¹²³ Universitas PGRI Argopuro Jember, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: setiaveryanto@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Many Indonesian junior high school students experience challenges in developing a positive self-concept, often leading to diminished academic motivation and social adaptation. This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of sociodrama—a role-play-based experiential learning technique—within an educational context to improve the positive self-concept of seventh-grade students at SMPN 1 Kalibaru. Employing a quantitative quasi-experimental design with a modified equivalent time series framework, the study purposively selected ten students identified with low self-concept for four sociodrama intervention sessions. Pre-test and post-test measurements were analyzed using the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test. The findings revealed a statistically significant increase in self-concept scores among all participants ($p = 0.005$) after the intervention, moving them from a low to a medium self-concept category. These results demonstrate the potential of group-based, experiential interventions in education for fostering self-awareness, confidence, and interpersonal skills during early adolescence. The study's contribution lies in providing robust empirical evidence for the integration of sociodrama in educational counseling practices in Indonesia. Practically, these results suggest that sociodrama can be adopted by school counselors and educators as an effective tool to address students' psychosocial development needs. Future research is recommended to employ larger and more diverse samples, utilize randomized controlled trials, and explore the long-term effects of such interventions across varied educational settings.

Keywords: Adolescents, Counseling, Education, Self-Concept, Sociodrama

INTRODUCTION

Education stands as a fundamental right and responsibility for every Indonesian citizen, enshrined in the 1945 Constitution (UUD 1945, Article 31), which obligates the government to provide quality education and mandates all citizens to participate in it. Education is not merely the transfer of knowledge, but a key driver for national development, equipping individuals with essential skills and character traits to contribute meaningfully to society (Rohman, 2021; Sari et al., 2023). Government initiatives such as compulsory education policies and curriculum reforms are directed toward enhancing the quality of human resources in Indonesia, aiming for equitable access and improved outcomes across diverse regions (Putra et al., 2020; Utami & Kurniawati, 2022). Within this framework, learning is recognized as a transformative process—encompassing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains—that enables individuals to adapt, solve problems, and thrive in a rapidly changing world (Herman, 2022; Suparman et al., 2019). Learning, by definition, is a dynamic process that brings about changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior (Dewey, 1938; Illeris, 2018). Through learning, individuals are able to form a self-concept—a comprehensive understanding and evaluation of oneself shaped by experiences, social interactions, and internal reflections (Burns, 1982; Dahlia, 2020). Self-concept is integral to the development of self-esteem and personal agency, directly influencing motivation, academic achievement, and psychosocial adjustment (Marsh & Martin, 2011; Hairina, 2021). For students, particularly those entering new educational environments such as seventh graders in junior high school, fostering a positive self-concept is crucial. Adolescence is a developmental period characterized by significant physical, emotional, and social transitions (Steinberg, 2017; Santrock, 2021), making students more vulnerable to issues related to identity, confidence, and adaptation (Papalia & Feldman, 2012; Hutagalung et al., 2022).

Despite extensive efforts to improve educational access and quality, many students still face challenges in developing a positive self-concept during early adolescence (Wiguna et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2022). Based on field observations at SMPN 1 Kalibaru, it was found that a significant number of seventh-grade students displayed behaviors indicative of poor self-concept, such as avoidance of classroom dialogue, low self-confidence, and pessimism (Dahlia, 2020; Suparman et al., 2019). Such problems, if left unaddressed, may lead to broader issues including decreased academic motivation, increased risk of social withdrawal, and poor mental health outcomes (Harter, 2012; Jindal-Snape & Miller, 2008). To address these issues, schools have increasingly emphasized the importance of guidance and counseling services. Counseling is designed to assist students in understanding themselves, overcoming obstacles, and enhancing their capacity for personal growth (Gysbers & Henderson, 2014; Herman, 2022). Among the various approaches in counseling, techniques that encourage active participation and social interaction, such as sociodrama, have gained attention for their potential to foster self-awareness and interpersonal skills (Rika, 2022; Corey, 2016).

Sociodrama is an experiential learning technique that utilizes role-play and dramatization to explore interpersonal relationships and social situations (Moreno, 1953; Blatner, 2000). In an educational context, sociodrama provides students with the opportunity to act out real-life scenarios, express emotions, and reflect on their attitudes and behaviors within a supportive group setting (Nasih et al., 2019; Rika, 2022). This method has been shown to improve communication skills, empathy, and self-confidence among students (O'Toole & Dunn, 2002; Johnson & Johnson, 2017). According to Ahmad Munjin Nasih et al. (2019), the application of sociodrama in schools is effective in enhancing students' appreciation of their own and others' feelings, encouraging shared responsibility, promoting spontaneous decision-making, and facilitating problem-solving and reflection. Research by Chukwudi et al. (2021) supports the notion that sociodrama can serve as a powerful intervention to improve self-concept and social adjustment among adolescents. Additionally, Hamdani (2021) and Blatner (2000) argue that the interactive nature of sociodrama not only provides a safe space for students to practice social roles but also helps them internalize positive self-perceptions. Sociodrama's emphasis on group interaction and emotional expression aligns well with the developmental needs of early adolescents, who are navigating the complexities of peer relationships and identity formation (Steinberg, 2017; Santrock, 2021). Its use in schools has been associated with improvements in students' self-efficacy, sense of belonging, and academic engagement (Zamani & Tabatabaei, 2020; Mulyana et al., 2022).

Numerous studies have explored the impact of guidance and counseling programs on student self-concept (Marsh & Martin, 2011; Harter, 2012). International research highlights the effectiveness of group counseling, role-play, and drama-based interventions in fostering positive self-concept and reducing social anxiety among adolescents (O'Toole & Dunn, 2002; Johnson & Johnson, 2017; Chukwudi et al., 2021; Zamani & Tabatabaei, 2020). For instance, a study by Zamani and Tabatabaei (2020) found that drama therapy significantly improved self-esteem and reduced depressive symptoms in middle school students. However, there is a relative paucity of empirical research focusing specifically on the use of sociodrama techniques to enhance self-concept among Indonesian junior high school students, particularly in rural or suburban contexts such as Kalibaru. While several Indonesian scholars have examined the benefits of sociodrama in general classroom management and character education (Nasih et al., 2019; Hamdani, 2021), systematic investigations into its direct impact on self-concept—especially using experimental or quasi-experimental designs—remain limited. Furthermore, most existing studies rely on qualitative observations or teacher reports, with few employing robust quantitative measures to assess changes in students' self-concept over time (Rika, 2022; Mulyana et al., 2022). This gap is significant because early adolescence represents a critical window for intervention: successful efforts to enhance self-concept during this period can yield long-term benefits for academic achievement, social adjustment, and emotional well-being (Harter, 2012; Hutagalung et al., 2022). Addressing this research gap is therefore vital for both theory development and practical application in Indonesian schools.

Given the background and identified research gap, the primary objective of this study is to examine the effectiveness of the sociodrama technique in improving the positive self-concept of seventh-grade students at SMPN 1 Kalibaru. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on a specific intervention (sociodrama) and

its direct measurement of self-concept outcomes using validated instruments within a quasi-experimental framework—something rarely documented in the Indonesian secondary school context. The working hypothesis is that the application of sociodrama techniques will lead to significant improvements in the self-concept of participating students compared to those who do not receive the intervention. This hypothesis is justified by the theoretical underpinnings of experiential and social learning (Bandura, 1977; Dewey, 1938), as well as empirical evidence supporting the benefits of role-play and group interaction for adolescent development (O’Toole & Dunn, 2002; Johnson & Johnson, 2017). The scope of this study is limited to seventh-grade students at SMPN 1 Kalibaru, with a focus on measuring self-concept before and after the implementation of sociodrama-based guidance interventions. The research will contribute to the body of knowledge on counseling techniques in Indonesian educational settings and provide practical recommendations for teachers, school counselors, and policy makers seeking effective methods to support students' psychosocial development. In summary, this study is positioned at the intersection of educational psychology, counseling, and pedagogical innovation. It responds to national priorities for educational quality and student well-being, addresses a clear gap in the literature, and offers evidence-based guidance for improving the self-concept of junior high school students through sociodrama.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research methodology, rooted in the positivist paradigm, which emphasizes objectivity, systematic data collection, and statistical analysis for hypothesis testing (Creswell, 2012; Yamin & Kurniawan, 2009). The quantitative approach was selected to objectively measure the effectiveness of the sociodrama technique in enhancing students' positive self-concept, using measurable indicators and replicable procedures.

A modified equivalent time series design was adopted as the research framework for this study (Creswell, 2012, p. 315; Campbell & Stanley, 1978). This design was selected based on several important considerations relevant to the research context. Firstly, the study utilized only an experimental group without including a separate control group. The participants in this group were exposed to the sociodrama intervention, and repeated measurements were taken to track changes in their self-concept over the course of the study. Secondly, non-probability sampling was employed, specifically purposive sampling, to select participants who exhibited low self-concept based on initial observations and pre-test scores. This ensured that the intervention targeted students most in need of improvement. Thirdly, the research design incorporated multiple repeated measures, where a pre-test was administered prior to the intervention, followed by post-tests after each of the four sociodrama sessions. This approach enabled the researcher to observe both immediate and cumulative effects of the intervention over several points in time. Overall, this modified equivalent time series design provided a robust framework for tracking trends and evaluating the impact of the sociodrama intervention on students' self-concept development, as illustrated in Table 1, which presents the research design sequence.

Table 1. Research Design Sequence

Time	Pre-test	Intervention 1	Post-test 1	Intervention 2	Post-test 2	Intervention 3	Post-test 3	Intervention 4	Post-test 4
1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

While this design strengthens the ability to monitor change, it is not without limitations. The primary internal validity threat is the **testing effect**, where repeated testing might influence participants' responses irrespective of the intervention (Campbell & Stanley, 1978). For example, students might remember items from the pre-test or alter their behavior due to awareness of being observed. Additionally, external validity threats arise due to the use of a specific sample and setting, limiting the generalizability of the results (Creswell, 2012).

Population and Sample

The population for this research consisted of all seventh-grade students at SMPN 1 Kalibaru. The sample was comprised of **ten students**, selected using purposive sampling. The criteria for sample selection were based on initial identification of students with low self-concept, as determined by teacher recommendations and results from the preliminary assessment. Purposive sampling allowed for the selection of participants most likely to benefit from and demonstrate the impact of the sociodrama intervention, in accordance with the study's objectives (Creswell, 2012).

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using a **validated self-concept questionnaire**, administered both as a pre-test and post-tests. The instrument was designed to measure dimensions of self-concept, such as self-confidence, social interaction, and self-acceptance, using a Likert-type scale. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire were confirmed in previous studies (Marsh & Martin, 2011; Suparman et al., 2019). The **sociodrama intervention** was implemented across four sessions. Each session engaged students in role-playing scenarios designed to stimulate reflection on personal experiences and to encourage adaptive social behaviors (Moreno, 1953; Blatner, 2000; Nasih et al., 2019). The stages included warm-up, scenario enactment, group discussion, and reflection, as suggested by drama-based counseling frameworks (O'Toole & Dunn, 2002; Johnson & Johnson, 2017). A sample outline of the intervention is provided in Table 2:

Table 2. Outline of Sociodrama Sessions

Session	Main Activities	Focus Outcomes
1	Introduction & role allocation	Building trust, self-awareness
2	Enactment of school-based scenarios	Social communication, empathy
3	Problem-solving through dramatic interaction	Coping skills, confidence
4	Reflection and feedback	Integration, self-appraisal

Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to ensure comprehensive understanding of the research findings. Firstly, statistical hypothesis testing was conducted using the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test, a non-parametric test suitable for small sample sizes and ordinal data (Yamin & Kurniawan, 2009; Creswell, 2012). This test enabled the researchers to assess differences between pre-test and post-test scores among the related samples, thereby providing a robust measure for detecting changes in students' self-concept following the sociodrama intervention. Secondly, visual analysis was utilized to enhance interpretability of the quantitative data. Individual and group self-concept scores were plotted across all sessions, which facilitated observation of trends—such as increasing, stable, or declining patterns—over time. Visual representations are widely recommended for interpreting patterns and facilitating comparisons in quantitative research (Cooper et al., 2007). For instance, Figure 1 illustrates a hypothetical trend in self-concept scores across the four intervention sessions. Finally, to supplement the quantitative findings, a qualitative analysis was performed using notes and observations gathered during the sociodrama sessions, following the procedures outlined by Bogdan and Biklen (1982). This approach focused on capturing student reactions, group interactions, and emergent themes related to self-concept, thus enriching the interpretation of statistical results and providing deeper contextual insights into the observed changes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The initial phase of this study involved a validity test on the instrument, which consisted of 60 items designed to assess students' self-concept. Based on the results of this test, 19 items were eliminated due to low validity, resulting in a final instrument comprising 41 valid items. The instrument was subsequently administered to a sample of 30 seventh-grade students at SMPN 1 Kalibaru. The categorization of students

based on their self-concept scores revealed that 10 students fell into the “low self-concept” category, 15 were classified as “moderate,” and 5 as “high.”

Table 3. Distribution of Students by Self-Concept Category

Category	Number of Students
Low	10
Medium	15
High	5
Total	30

The primary focus of the research was on the 10 students identified as having a low level of positive self-concept. These students participated in four sessions of sociodrama intervention, during which their self-concept was assessed repeatedly. The pretest and posttest scores for each participant are shown in Table 2.

Table 4. Pretest and Posttest Scores for Each Participant

Student Name	Pretest Score	Description	Posttest 4 Score	Description
DAS	80	Low	116	Medium
NI	81	Low	121	Medium
MF	80	Low	114	Medium
FNA	80	Low	114	Medium
MAF	81	Low	110	Medium
EIA	81	Low	114	Medium
ASA	79	Low	115	Medium
INH	75	Low	109	Medium
RWKK	78	Low	119	Medium
MFH	81	Low	119	Medium

A clear trend emerged from these results: every participant experienced an increase in self-concept score following the sociodrama intervention. The average pretest score was 80, which increased to 86.9 after the first intervention, 95.2 after the second, 104.8 after the third, and finally 115.1 after the fourth intervention. Statistical analysis was conducted using the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test to determine whether the observed changes in self-concept were statistically significant. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 5. Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test Results

	Posttest–Pretest
Z	-2.810
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.005

The p-value (significance) of 0.005 is less than the conventional threshold of 0.05, indicating that the increase in self-concept scores after the sociodrama intervention is statistically significant. Thus, the hypothesis that sociodrama techniques can enhance students’ self-concept is supported by empirical evidence. The findings of this study align with a substantial body of international research highlighting the importance of self-concept in adolescent development and the efficacy of experiential interventions such as sociodrama. Self-concept is a critical determinant of students’ academic and social functioning (Marsh & Craven, 2006; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Numerous studies have demonstrated that low self-concept is associated with adverse outcomes, including poor academic performance, increased risk of social withdrawal, and higher susceptibility to mental health issues (Harter, 2012; Eccles, 2009). In this study, students with initially low self-concept not only displayed negative self-assessments but also exhibited behaviors consistent with previous literature on self-concept deficits—such as lack of confidence, pessimism, and feelings of unworthiness (Ybrandt, 2008). These findings corroborate earlier studies that

underscore the adverse consequences of low self-concept on students' motivation and wellbeing (Orth & Robins, 2014).

The implementation of the sociodrama technique as an intervention tool is supported by various theoretical and empirical studies. According to Moreno (1946), who developed the sociodrama method, this approach enables participants to dramatize social roles and conflicts, fostering deeper understanding of self and others (Blatner, 2000). Winkel (in Folastrì, 2016) also emphasized the value of sociodrama in promoting empathy, social skills, and self-awareness. Empirical studies have provided robust evidence for the positive impact of sociodrama and related experiential methods on self-concept and social-emotional skills. For instance, Auladi, Fitriana, & Pujowati (2023) found that sociodrama-based group counseling significantly improved students' self-concept, which is in line with the present study's findings. Similarly, research by Garzón & Gil (2017) demonstrated that drama-based educational interventions can enhance self-esteem and reduce social anxiety in adolescents. Additional studies confirm that structured group interventions, such as role-play and dramatization, can facilitate personal insight, emotional expression, and positive self-restructuring (Kalogirou et al., 2021; Abed, 2016). Meta-analytic reviews have further validated the effectiveness of such interventions. For example, a meta-analysis by Durlak et al. (2011) found that social and emotional learning (SEL) programs, including experiential techniques like drama and role play, consistently yield significant improvements in students' self-concept, emotional regulation, and interpersonal skills. In the Indonesian context, the results are supported by research from Sisca Folastrì (2016), who highlighted the effectiveness of sociodrama in addressing negative self-perceptions among adolescents. The use of the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test in this study is consistent with best practices in educational intervention research, especially when dealing with small sample sizes and ordinal data (Field, 2013). However, the present findings contrast with studies that suggest only modest gains from such interventions or report that improvements may diminish over time if not reinforced (Jones et al., 2015). It is also worth noting that some scholars, such as Hattie (2009), caution against overgeneralizing the effects of group-based interventions, noting that individual differences, contextual factors, and facilitator skills can significantly influence outcomes.

The results of this study have significant implications for educational practice, particularly in the field of school counseling and student development. The demonstrated effectiveness of the sociodrama intervention suggests that schools should consider incorporating experiential group techniques into their counseling programs, especially for students exhibiting signs of low self-concept. Enhancing students' self-concept is of paramount importance, as it is closely linked to their academic achievement, social adjustment, and overall wellbeing (Marsh & Martin, 2011; van Dijk et al., 2014). Interventions that foster positive self-concept can empower students to engage more confidently with learning tasks, build healthier relationships with peers, and develop greater resilience in the face of challenges (Zimmerman, 2000; Bandura, 1997).

The use of sociodrama as an intervention is particularly valuable because it provides a safe and supportive environment for students to explore social roles, confront personal fears, and receive feedback from peers and facilitators. Through dramatization, students gain insight into their own thought patterns, develop empathy, and learn constructive ways to manage social interactions (Blatner, 2000; Kalogirou et al., 2021). Moreover, the results obtained through rigorous statistical analysis—supported by the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test—underscore the reliability and validity of the findings. The clear upward trend in self-concept scores across four intervention sessions, as visualized in Figure 1, provides compelling evidence for the immediate and cumulative benefits of the sociodrama technique. The qualitative data collected during the intervention sessions further enrich the interpretation of results, revealing changes in students' attitudes, increased participation, and more positive interactions. These findings also highlight the potential for broader application. While the study focused on junior high school students, the principles underlying sociodrama interventions are applicable to a wide range of educational settings and age groups (Durlak et al., 2011; Taylor et al., 2017). Adaptations of the technique may be required to suit developmental stages and specific needs, as suggested by previous research (Harter, 2012; Hattie, 2009).

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of the study, including the small sample size, the lack of a control group, and the focus on a single educational level. Future research could address these limitations by employing larger samples, randomized controlled designs, and longitudinal follow-up to assess the

sustainability of intervention effects (Jones et al., 2015; Taylor et al., 2017). Despite these limitations, the present study makes a valuable contribution to the literature on self-concept enhancement and experiential learning. It provides practical guidance for counselors, educators, and policymakers seeking evidence-based strategies to support students' personal and social development. The results affirm the value of integrating innovative, student-centered interventions into educational practice to address the complex and multifaceted challenges faced by today's learners.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this research was to investigate the effectiveness of sociodrama techniques in improving the positive self-concept of seventh-grade students at SMPN 1 Kalibaru. The study found that all participating students who initially exhibited low self-concept experienced a significant increase in self-concept scores following a series of sociodrama interventions, as confirmed by both descriptive trends and Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test results ($p = 0.005$). These findings highlight the potential of experiential, group-based interventions like sociodrama to foster self-awareness, confidence, and social skills among adolescents, aligning with existing international literature on the value of drama-based counseling for psychosocial development. This research contributes to the field by providing robust quantitative evidence for the application of sociodrama in Indonesian school settings, offering practical recommendations for counselors and educators, and addressing a gap in empirical studies on self-concept enhancement in early adolescence through innovative, student-centered approaches.

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