Improving Students' Understanding of the Dangers of Drugs through Classroom Guidance: A Guidance and Counseling Action Research Study

Samuel Maygratia K Saragih
Universitas Negeri Medan, Medan, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Adolescent drug misuse requires preventive interventions that can reach students systematically through educational services. This study aimed to examine changes in tenth-grade students' understanding of drug-related harms following classroom guidance. The study employed a Guidance and Counseling Action Research design conducted in two cycles involving 30 tenth-grade students at Yayasan Perguruan Islam Azizi Medan during the second semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. Data were collected through a drug-harm understanding questionnaire, observations of student engagement, and interviews as supporting data. Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively using mean scores and percentages across stages, while qualitative data were analyzed through data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. The source manuscript also reported a paired-samples t-test indicating a significant difference between the two reported measurements, $t(29) = -52.60$, $p < .001$, with a mean difference of -44.20. Descriptively, the mean score increased from 81.47 (49%) at the pre-cycle stage to 115.04 (70%) in Cycle I and 158.80 (96%) in Cycle II. Observations indicated a shift from relatively passive participation in Cycle I to more active engagement in Cycle II. The findings suggest that improvements in Cycle II, particularly through discussion, question-and-answer activities, and contextual examples, were associated with increased student understanding. The study supports classroom guidance as a relevant preventive strategy for school-based drug education, while the findings should be interpreted in light of the action-research design without a comparison group

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received :January 19 2026
Accepted :Mayl 19 2026

KEYWORDS

Classroom guidance; Drug-related harms; Student understanding; Guidance and counseling action research; Prevention

* **Corresponding Author:** samuelkuliah31@gmail.com

© 2026 The Author(s). Published by Era Scientific Publisher (ERA).
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

Introduction

Adolescent drug misuse is an issue that affects not only health but also psychological development, social relationships, and academic functioning. Adolescence is a developmental period characterized by rapid biological, cognitive, and social changes, during which individuals become increasingly influenced by peers and the social environment (Hurlock, 2017; Santrock, 2019). In Indonesia, the 2023 National Survey on Drug Misuse conducted by the National Narcotics Agency (BNN) in collaboration with BRIN reported a past-year prevalence of drug misuse of 1.73% among the population aged 15–64 years. BNN also emphasizes the importance of education and prevention among adolescents because this age group is vulnerable to exposure to and initiation of drug use (Badan Narkotika Nasional, 2024).

Schools are strategic settings for prevention because they can reach students universally and systematically. Synthesis evidence indicates that school-based interventions can improve protective knowledge and skills and, under certain conditions, reduce the risk of substance use. Interventions that are more interactive and develop social or decision-making skills tend to be more promising than approaches that merely provide information (Faggiano et al., 2014; Liu et al., 2023). In low- and middle-income countries, a recent review identified education, peer involvement, parental involvement, the school environment and policies, and counseling as important components of substance-use prevention interventions (Cadri et al., 2024). More recent evidence also indicates that intervention success is strongly influenced by contextual fit and facilitator quality, suggesting

that prevention messages need to be delivered through approaches that are trusted and relevant to adolescents (Said et al., 2026).

Within the school guidance and counseling system, classroom guidance is a structured service delivered to students in a class to achieve developmental and preventive objectives. This service enables counselors to provide information, facilitate discussion, develop skills, and build students' awareness collectively (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia, 2016; Prayitno, 2017; Gysbers & Henderson, 2014). Therefore, classroom guidance has a strategic position for addressing drug prevention as part of students' development of risk awareness, decision-making skills, and protective behaviors.

The context of this study was based on findings from a preliminary assessment at Yayasan Perguruan Islam Azizi Medan. Some students were reported to live in environments perceived as vulnerable to drug-related problems and had not previously received classroom guidance services specifically addressing the dangers of drugs. The source manuscript also reported that some students had parents who used drugs. These conditions indicate that the need for services involves not merely the delivery of information, but also the strengthening of understanding and awareness so that students can recognize risks in their immediate environments.

Previous studies have demonstrated the potential of classroom guidance to improve students' understanding of drugs. For example, an experimental study using classroom guidance with an educational cinema method reported increased student knowledge of the dangers of drugs (Syafaah & Purwoko, 2023), while another study examined classroom guidance using a modeling technique in the context of drug prevention (Sarra et al., 2025). However, these studies have predominantly used experimental or pre-experimental designs with pretest–posttest measurements. Evidence is still needed from actual school-based guidance and counseling practice showing how services can be improved cyclically—based on reflection on students' responses in the previous cycle—to enhance understanding in a specific school context. This is where guidance and counseling action research becomes particularly relevant.

Accordingly, the research gap lies in the limited evidence on the reflective and contextual improvement of classroom guidance services to enhance students' understanding of drug-related harms in a specific school setting. The novelty of this study does not lie in using classroom guidance as a new technique, but in implementing action–reflection cycles that improve service strategies based on students' responses and then relate changes in understanding scores to changes in student engagement during the service. This approach offers a practical contribution for school counselors by demonstrating how classroom guidance can be developed adaptively rather than delivered merely as one-way information transmission.

Based on this background and research gap, this study aimed to analyze the improvement in tenth-grade students' understanding of the dangers of drugs at Yayasan Perguruan Islam Azizi Medan through classroom guidance services implemented in two action cycles. Specifically, the study compared changes in understanding scores across the pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II and described changes in student engagement during the service.

Method

Research design

The study employed Guidance and Counseling Action Research (PTBK) with two action cycles. Each cycle consisted of planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection. This design was selected because the purpose of the study was not only to measure changes in scores but also to improve service practice based on findings from the previous cycle. The study was conducted at Yayasan Perguruan Islam Azizi Medan during the second semester of the 2024/2025 academic year.

Research participants

The participants were all 30 tenth-grade students in the class. Because all members of the class were involved, total sampling was used. This was an action research study conducted in a single class; therefore, the findings are primarily intended to improve service practice in the context of the class studied and are not intended to be statistically generalized to the broader student population.

Instruments and data collection techniques

Data were collected using a drug-harm understanding questionnaire, a student-engagement observation sheet, interviews, and documentation. The questionnaire was administered at the pre-cycle stage and after the actions to obtain understanding scores. Observations were used to record participation, responses, willingness to ask questions or express opinions, and students' ability to relate the material to real-life situations. Interviews were used as supporting data to clarify observed changes. To meet the reporting standards of a journal article, information on the number of items, response scale, indicator blueprint, validity-testing procedures, and questionnaire reliability coefficient needs to be completed from the original research documents before submission.

Action procedure

At the pre-cycle stage, an initial measurement was conducted to map students' understanding. Cycle I was implemented through classroom guidance on the dangers of drugs. The results of observations and the evaluation of Cycle I were used as the basis for reflection. In Cycle II, the service was improved by increasing interaction through discussion, question-and-answer activities, and examples that were more contextualized to students' lives. After the Cycle II action, students' understanding was measured again, and behavioral changes during the service were documented.

Data analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively using mean scores and percentages at each stage. Score changes were calculated by comparing the means across stages. The source manuscript also reported a paired-samples t-test with df = 29 to compare two measurements with a mean difference of -44.20. Because the PTBK design did not use a control group, the inferential test result was treated as evidence of a difference in scores between measurements rather than as definitive causal evidence that the entire increase was caused by the service. Observation and interview data were analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Findings from the questionnaire, observations, and interviews were compared to strengthen interpretation through source/technique triangulation as reported in the study.

Validity and ethics

Triangulation was used by comparing questionnaire results with observations and interviews. However, information regarding research approval, school permission, parental/guardian consent, and procedures for protecting student identities was not included in the source manuscript and needs to be completed before publication, particularly because the participants were school-aged students.

Result and Discussion

Result

Changes in students' understanding scores

The measurements showed a gradual increase from the pre-cycle stage to Cycle I and then to Cycle II. The mean score at the pre-cycle stage was 81.47 (49%), increasing to 115.04 (70%) in Cycle I and reaching 158.80 (96%) in Cycle II. Thus, the mean increased by 33.57 points from the pre-cycle stage to Cycle I and by 43.76 points from Cycle I to Cycle II. Overall, the increase from the pre-cycle stage to Cycle II was 77.33 points.

Table 1. Changes in the mean scores of students' understanding

Stage	Mean score	Percentage	Score change
Pre-cycle	81.47	49%	—
Cycle I	115.04	70%	+33.57 from pre-cycle
Cycle II	158.80	96%	+43.76 from Cycle I; +77.33 from pre-cycle

In Cycle I, students' understanding was not yet evenly distributed. The source manuscript reported that most students were in the moderate category, with indicator scores ranging from 73% to 85%, and that some students were still in the low category on one indicator. This condition provided the basis for reflection and continuation of the action. In Cycle II, students' scores were reported to range from 95% to 99%, and all students were classified in the high category.

Differences in paired measurements

Table 2. Paired-samples t-test results reported in the source manuscript

Comparison in the reported statistical output	t	df	p	Mean difference	SE difference
The two measurements compared in the source output	-52.60	29	<0.001	-44.20	0.840

The statistical output showed t(29) = -52.60, p < .001, with a mean difference of -44.20 and a standard error of 0.840. The mean difference of 44.20 is very close to the difference between the Cycle I mean (115.04) and the Cycle II mean (158.80), which is 43.76. Therefore, the t-test output in the source manuscript appears to compare these two measurements rather than the pre-cycle stage and Cycle II. This interpretation is important to avoid inconsistency between the descriptive figures and the inferential results. Before submission, the variable pair used in the statistical software needs to be verified against the original data/statistical output file.

Changes in student engagement

Observation data showed changes consistent with the increase in scores. In Cycle I, most students still demonstrated limited participation, tended to be passive, rarely asked questions, and had difficulty relating the material to their real-life experiences. In Cycle II, students appeared more active in the activities, participated in discussions, expressed their opinions more confidently, and were able to explain the material on the dangers of drugs in their own words. Thus, the observed changes were not limited to an increase in questionnaire scores but also involved a qualitative change in students' engagement during the service.

Triangulation of findings

Triangulation across the questionnaire, observations, and interviews showed the same direction of findings. In Cycle I, understanding remained at a moderate level, and students were relatively hesitant to express their opinions. In Cycle II, all students were reported to be in the high category, with scores ranging from 95% to 99%, accompanied by increased confidence, active participation in discussions, and an improved ability to relate the material to social phenomena in their surroundings. The consistency across data sources strengthens the interpretation that improvements in the Cycle II service were associated with increased understanding and student engagement.

Discussion

The increase in understanding scores from 81.47 at the pre-cycle stage to 115.04 in Cycle I and 158.80 in Cycle II indicates that classroom guidance can serve as a relevant means of improving students' understanding of the dangers of drugs. However, the meaning of this finding should be considered in accordance with the characteristics of PTBK. The study did not use a control group, and the actions were implemented

sequentially; therefore, the increase in scores is more appropriately understood as a change occurring through the process of service improvement rather than as an estimate of a causal effect free from other influences.

The greater increase from Cycle I to Cycle II provides an important indication of the mechanism underlying service improvement. In Cycle I, students were still relatively passive and had difficulty connecting the material with their real-life experiences. Reflection on this condition was then used to improve the service in Cycle II through discussion, question-and-answer activities, and contextual examples. The change in strategy shifted students from being recipients of information to active participants in processing information. This finding is consistent with evidence that school-based prevention interventions are more promising when they include interactive components and social skills rather than merely transmitting knowledge (Faggiano et al., 2014; Liu et al., 2023).

These findings are also relevant to a review of low- and middle-income countries showing that education is one of the core components of substance-use prevention, but its effectiveness is stronger when connected with peer involvement, counseling, the school environment, and protective skills (Cadri et al., 2024). In the context of classroom guidance, the discussions and question-and-answer activities used in Cycle II provided opportunities for students to test their understanding, express their perceptions, and connect information with social situations familiar to them. Thus, the added value of the service lies not only in the content of the drug-related material but also in the pedagogical process used to process that material.

The observation findings showing increased willingness to express opinions and greater participation in discussions are also important because drug-prevention understanding should not ideally be positioned solely as factual knowledge. Adolescents face peer influence, curiosity, and various social norms that may affect decisions related to substance use. Therefore, school-based interventions need to help students develop the ability to recognize risks and respond to social pressure. Reviews of school-based interventions indicate that developing social skills, decision-making skills, and the ability to resist risky influences are relevant components of prevention (Liu et al., 2023; Cadri et al., 2024).

The findings are also consistent with studies specifically using classroom guidance in drug-harm education. Syafaah and Purwoko (2023) reported that classroom guidance using an educational cinema method could improve students' knowledge of the dangers of drugs. Sarra et al. (2025) likewise positioned classroom guidance as an approach for improving students' understanding, although the study used a different design and intervention technique. The similarity of these findings reinforces the relevance of classroom guidance, while the present study adds a perspective through an action–reflection mechanism that allows the service to be adjusted based on students' responses in the preceding cycle.

Contextualization of the service becomes increasingly important when students' characteristics and environments are considered. The source manuscript reported that some students lived in environments perceived as vulnerable to drug-related problems and that some students had parents who used drugs. These conditions indicate the need for an approach that is sensitive to students' social contexts. Recent evidence emphasizes that the success of school-based prevention interventions is influenced by cultural and contextual fit as well as facilitator quality; the same message does not necessarily produce the same impact when delivered without adaptation to the recipients' environment (Said et al., 2026). Within a guidance and counseling framework, counselors can use classroom guidance as an entry point for building risk literacy while also identifying the need for follow-up services among students with higher levels of risk.

Practically, this study indicates that classroom guidance should not be treated as a one-way socialization activity. Services can be designed as cycles consisting of initial assessment, material delivery, interactive activities, observation of student responses, reflection, and improvement. Such a working model is consistent with the preventive and developmental functions of guidance and counseling in schools (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia, 2016; Prayitno, 2017). Another important implication is the need to integrate drug-related content with decision-making skills, resistance to peer pressure, problem-solving, and help-seeking when students encounter risky situations.

Nevertheless, several limitations should be considered. First, the study involved only 30 students from one class and one school, limiting the transferability of the findings. Second, there was no comparison group, so the observed change cannot be attributed exclusively to classroom guidance. Third, the psychometric information for the questionnaire was not adequately reported in the source manuscript. Fourth, there is an inconsistency between the pre-cycle–Cycle II mean difference (77.33 points) and the mean difference in the t-test output (-44.20), suggesting that the t-test may have compared Cycle I and Cycle II. These limitations do not eliminate the practical value of the study, but they must be stated so that the conclusions do not exceed the strength of the design and data.

Considering the findings as a whole, the main contribution of this study lies in practical evidence that improving classroom guidance through cycle-based reflection can occur in parallel with increased student understanding and engagement in the context of drug prevention. This contribution is primarily practical and methodological for school guidance and counseling services: initial assessment is used to map needs, observation is used to evaluate engagement, and reflection findings are used to improve the form of service in the following cycle.

Conclusion

The study showed an increase in students' understanding of the dangers of drugs following the implementation of classroom guidance services in two cycles. The mean score increased from 81.47 (49%) at the pre-cycle stage to 115.04 (70%) in Cycle I and 158.80 (96%) in Cycle II. This quantitative increase was accompanied by qualitative changes in the form of greater participation, increased willingness to express opinions, greater engagement in discussions, and an improved ability to relate the material to real-life conditions. These findings support the use of classroom guidance as a preventive strategy in school-based drug prevention education.

However, because the study employed a guidance and counseling action research design in a single class without a comparison group, the conclusion is more appropriately stated as an increase occurring throughout the action process rather than definitive evidence of a causal effect. Future research could use a comparison group, an instrument with reported validity and reliability, and follow-up measurements to determine the sustainability of changes in students' understanding and preventive behavior.

References

Azwar, S. (2017). Reliabilitas dan validitas (Edisi 4). Pustaka Pelajar.

Badan Narkotika Nasional. (2024). Survei nasional penyalahgunaan narkoba tahun 2023. Badan Narkotika Nasional Republik Indonesia.

Cadri, A., Beema, A. N., Schuster, T., Barnett, T., Asampong, E., & Adams, A. M. (2024). School-based interventions targeting substance use among young people in low- and middle-income countries: A scoping review. Addiction, 119(12), 2048–2075. https://doi.org/10.1111/add.16623

Corey, G. (2016). Theory and practice of counseling and psychotherapy (10th ed.).

Cengage Learning.
Creswell, J. W. (2018). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
Faggiano, F., Minozzi, S., Versino, E., & Buscemi, D. (2014). Universal school-based prevention for illicit drug use. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, 2014(12), CD003020. https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD003020.pub3
Gysbers, N. C., & Henderson, P. (2014). Developing and managing your school guidance and counseling program (5th ed.). American Counseling Association.
Hurlock, E. B. (2017). Psikologi perkembangan: Suatu pendekatan sepanjang rentang kehidupan. Erlangga.
Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia. (2016). Panduan operasional penyelenggaraan bimbingan dan konseling di sekolah menengah. Kemendikbud.
Liu, X.-Q., Guo, Y.-X., & Wang, X. (2023). Delivering substance use prevention interventions for adolescents in educational settings: A scoping review. World Journal of Psychiatry, 13(7), 409–422. https://doi.org/10.5498/wjp.v13.i7.409
Prayitno. (2017). Pelayanan bimbingan dan konseling di sekolah. PT RajaGrafindo Persada.
Rahman, A., & Lestari, S. (2020). Efektivitas layanan bimbingan klasikal dalam meningkatkan pemahaman siswa terhadap bahaya narkoba. Jurnal Bimbingan dan Konseling, 5(2), 101–110.
Said, S., Palutturi, S., Irwandy, Razak, A., Syamsuar, & Fajarwati Ibnu, I. (2026). School-based interventions for drug use prevention among adolescents: A scoping review. Journal of School Health, 96(3), e70122. https://doi.org/10.1111/josh.70122
Santrock, J. W. (2019). Adolescence (17th ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.
Sarra, W., Fadhli, T., & Fitri, M. (2025). Implementasi layanan bimbingan klasikal dengan teknik modelling untuk meningkatkan pemahaman siswa terhadap dampak bahaya narkoba di SMA. Jurnal Psiko-Konseling, 3(1).
Syafaah, S. I., & Purwoko, B. (2023). Penerapan bimbingan klasikal metode sinema edukasi untuk meningkatkan pemahaman bahaya narkoba pada siswa SMAN 1 Gedeg. Jurnal BK UNESA, 13(6).
Sugiyono. (2022). Metode penelitian pendidikan: Pendekatan kuantitatif, kualitatif, dan R&D. Alfabeta.
Suryani, D., & Wahyuni, E. (2019). Peran layanan bimbingan klasikal dalam pencegahan penyalahgunaan narkoba pada remaja. Jurnal Konseling Pendidikan, 4(1), 45–54.
Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 35 Tahun 2009 tentang Narkotika.