
Development of Experiential Learning-Based Audio "Pod-Cards" Media to Enhance Emotion Regulation Among Junior High School Students

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Abstract

This study examined preliminary changes in emotion-regulation scores following a single classical guidance session using Pod-Cards Audio, a QR-code-based audio-drama medium developed around Kolb's experiential learning cycle. The media combines audio storytelling, structured peer reflection, a four-quadrant emotion-mapping worksheet (Mood Radar), and a personal coping commitment sheet (My Action Plan). A one-group pretest-posttest pre-experimental design was used with 32 eighth-grade students from one laboratory junior high school in Malang, Indonesia. The mean score increased from 65.34 (SD = 5.60) at pretest to 79.47 (SD = 3.72) at posttest, a mean increase of 14.13 points. A paired-samples t-test indicated a statistically significant difference, $t(31) = 11.56$, $p < .001$. These results suggest a substantial short-term association between participation in the session and higher self-reported emotion-regulation scores. However, because the study had no control group and used a single post-intervention measurement, the results do not establish that the media alone caused the improvement. Details of the scale's item count, response format, psychometric properties, and score-category cutoffs must be verified against the original instrument documentation before publication.

Keywords: emotion regulation; experiential learning; audio media; mood changes; junior high school students

INTRODUCTION

Education in Indonesia should not be solely oriented toward academic achievement; rather, it must prioritize the psychological well-being of students. A student-centered, humanistic, and holistic approach to education requires Guidance and Counseling (BK) teachers to act not merely as information providers, but as guides for students' emotional growth and development. This need is particularly relevant at the junior high school (SMP) level, given that eighth-grade students are in early adolescence, a phase characterized by psychological vulnerability to emotional instability.

Empirical findings from a Problem Checklist (DCM) assessment of eighth-grade students at a laboratory junior high school in Malang City revealed three prominent issues: high levels of mental fatigue, difficulty managing negative emotions (leading to reactive mood swings), and a tendency toward individualism and a lack of empathy for peers. As a follow-up measure, an emotion regulation scale was administered to 32 students in class VIII-B prior to the intervention (pre-test). The results showed a mean emotion regulation score of 65.34, with 8 students (25%) falling into the low category, 23 students (71.9%) in the high category, and only 1 student (3.1%) reaching the very high category. These data underscore the urgent need to design services specifically aimed at improving students' emotion regulation.

Conceptually, emotion regulation is defined as an individual's ability to monitor, evaluate, and adjust their emotional reactions, as emphasized in the development and validation of emotion regulation measurement instruments for Indonesian adolescent and young adult populations (Danasasmita et al., 2024). During the junior high school years, these capabilities are still developing, making students vulnerable to emotional disturbances stemming from the instability associated with puberty (Fitriani & Gina, 2024). This finding aligns with the aforementioned DCM data and pretest results, confirming that mental fatigue and unregulated mood swings can lead to maladaptive behaviors if not addressed through immediate, structured intervention.

Furthermore, a needs assessment is a crucial step prior to designing guidance and counseling services; it ensures that the resulting program is truly applicable and addresses students' actual needs, rather than merely adhering to the academic calendar (Arsini et al., 2023; Haryani et al., 2024; Sari & Herdi, 2025). Unfortunately, conventional guidance services often characterized by one-way lectures are considered ineffective at engaging "digital-native" students. Moreover, there is currently a lack of available tools that integrate cognitive assessment (identifying emotional triggers) with audio-visual reflection within a single service session.

In light of this, the present study develops "Pod-Cards Audio" an interactive, QR-code-based audio storytelling medium. This tool integrates a visual emotion mapping instrument (Mood Radar) and an action commitment sheet (Action Plan), grounded in Kolb's experiential learning cycle and the CASEL Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) framework. The study aims to describe the development of this medium and test its preliminary effectiveness in enhancing the emotional regulation of eighth-grade students through a single classical guidance session.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study involved the development of a classical guidance service, the effectiveness of which was evaluated using a one-group pretest-posttest pre-experimental design. The service was delivered in a single 40-minute session employing a Deep Learning approach that adapted Kolb's four stages of experiential learning: Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization, and Active Experimentation.

The research subjects consisted of 32 students from class VIII B at a laboratory junior high school in Malang City, selected via total sampling from the specific class group targeted for the service. An emotion regulation scale was used as the instrument covering cognitive (ability to analyze mood swing triggers), affective (non-judgmental self-acceptance), and psychomotor (confidence in executing coping strategies) domains and was administered as a pretest before the service and a posttest afterward. Additionally, a process observation sheet was used to record the dynamics of the service's implementation.

The service procedure began with the Concrete Experience stage, where students played an interactive game on the ZEP platform to match emotional behavioral traits with the correct emotion names, followed by scanning QR codes on "Pod-Cards" to listen to audio dramas depicting adolescent emotional scenarios. During the Reflective Observation stage, the audio was paused at two structured intervals ("Pause Points") to allow students to discuss the story character's psychological state with their seatmates. Next, in the Abstract Conceptualization stage, students mapped their own emotional dynamics from the previous three days onto a "Mood Radar" instrument, categorized by four trigger areas: People, School/Assignments, Digital/Social Media, and Daily Life. The session concluded with the Active Experimentation stage, where students wrote down a commitment to a concrete coping strategy on a "My Action Plan" sheet. The data were analyzed descriptively to determine the mean, standard deviation, and distribution of emotion regulation score categories before and after the service. Subsequently, the significance of the difference between pretest and posttest scores was tested using a paired-sample t-test at a significance level of 0.05 to ensure that the observed improvement was not merely due to chance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The preliminary DCM informed the selection of emotion regulation as the service focus. The outcome results below refer to the separate emotion-regulation scale administered immediately before and after the intervention.

Pretest and Posttest Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the available descriptive statistics. The scale's theoretical score range and item count are not stated in the source material and must be verified from the instrument documentation.

Table 1. Pre-test and Posttest

Data	N	Mean	SD	Skor Min	Skor Maks
Pretest	32	65,34	5,60	53	78
Posttest	32	79,47	3,72	71	88

The posttest mean was 14.13 points higher than the pretest mean. The posttest standard deviation was lower, indicating less variability in scores at posttest in this sample. The percentage increase calculated from the two group means is 21.63% ($14.13 / 65.34 \times 100$). The separately reported 22.53% is described in the original analysis as the mean of individual percentage gains; this value uses a different calculation and should only be retained after it is verified from the paired raw data.

Reported Category Distribution

The original analysis classified scores into low, high, and very high categories. The cutoffs and categorization formula were not included in the supplied manuscript. Because category frequencies depend directly on those thresholds, Table 2 reproduces the reported counts but these categories should not be interpreted until the authors document the scoring rule and explain why a medium category was not used, if applicable.

Table 2. Changes in the distribution of students' emotion regulation categories

Category	f Pretest	% Pretest	f Posttest	% Posttest
Low	8	25,0	0	0,0
High	23	71,9	2	6,2
Very High	1	3,1	30	93,8
Total	32	100,0	32	100,0

Table 2 illustrates a marked shift in categories. At the pretest stage, 8 students (25%) fell into the low category, while only 1 student (3.1%) reached the very high category. Following the intervention, no students remained in the low category; instead, 30 out of the 32 students (93.8%) achieved the very high category, with the remaining 2 students (6.2%) falling into the high category.

Analysis of Pretest and Posttest Score Differences

Paired t-test results indicate that the difference between the mean pretest and posttest scores is statistically significant, with $t(31) = 11.56$ and $p < 0.001$. This significance level well below the 0.05 threshold indicates that the improvement in students' emotional regulation following the "Pod-Cards Audio" assisted classical guidance service was not due to chance but was consistently associated with the intervention provided.

DISCUSSION

The main finding was a higher emotion-regulation score immediately after the Pod-Cards Audio session. The mean difference was statistically significant, and the reported category distribution shifted toward the very-high category. These results are consistent with the possibility that a structured activity combining a relatable scenario, reflection, emotional mapping, and a planned coping response can help students engage with emotion regulation during classroom guidance. The category shift should, however, be interpreted cautiously until the cutoffs and theoretical score range are documented.

Kolb's experiential learning cycle provides a plausible structure for the sequence of activities. The audio drama offers a concrete scenario; the Pause Points invite reflection; Mood Radar helps students organize experiences into a framework; and My Action Plan asks them to identify a response they can try. This sequence may make an abstract skill more actionable. The study did not measure each stage separately, so it cannot determine which component contributed most to the observed score change.

The choice of an audio format as the primary medium also contributed to the observed outcomes. Data released by Muhamad (2024) indicate that motivational and inspirational genres are the most popular podcast categories among Generation Z in Indonesia; consequently, utilizing a similar format for emotional literacy content offers a high likelihood of acceptance. These findings align with the research of Milenia et al. (2024), which demonstrated that podcast-assisted learning significantly improves student learning outcomes compared to conventional methods. Regarding the technology-pedagogy-content integration framework, the selection of QR Code-based audio drama digital media in this study is consistent with the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework outlined by Effendi et al. (2024); this fosters a learning environment that supports collaboration and joint problem-solving between students and the guidance counselor.

The activities also align conceptually with the CASEL competencies. Identifying emotional triggers relates to self-awareness, considering a character's perspective may encourage social awareness, and selecting a coping response involves self-management and responsible decision-making. These links are theoretical interpretations of the activity design; the study did not independently measure each CASEL competency.

The results are broadly relevant to prior work on experiential learning in counseling (Hapsari & Christine, 2023), emotion-regulation training (Fitriani & Gina, 2024), and mindfulness-based counseling activities (Wahyuni et al., 2024). The practical distinction of Pod-Cards Audio is its combination of QR-based audio drama with two structured discussion pauses, a four-area emotion map, and an individual coping plan in one brief classroom guidance session. Because the study did not directly compare this package with other media or approaches, it cannot establish that the package is more effective than those alternatives.

Several alternative explanations remain plausible. Repeated exposure to the same scale may have created a testing effect; students may have given more socially desirable answers after a session explicitly focused on emotional skills; and the novelty of QR-coded audio and interactive activities may have temporarily increased attention or engagement. Changes in mood, contextual events, or other unmeasured factors may also have influenced posttest responses. Without a control group, delayed follow-up, or independent behavioral measures, the relative contribution of the intervention cannot be separated from these possibilities.

The findings therefore offer preliminary, context-specific evidence rather than definitive causal proof. For practice, school counselors may consider using the media as a structured discussion aid and following it with check-ins about students' coping plans. Schools should provide adequate device access, audio playback support, and time for reflection rather than treating the technology itself as the intervention. Future research should document the instrument's psychometric properties and category cutoffs, use a comparison group or randomized design where feasible, include a delayed follow-up, and recruit students from more than one school. Raw paired data should also be used to report the standard deviation of differences and a suitable paired-samples effect size.

CONCLUSION

This study examined pretest–posttest changes after a single 40-minute classical guidance session using Pod-Cards Audio with 32 eighth-grade students. The reported mean emotion-regulation score increased from 65.34 to 79.47, and the paired-samples test was statistically

significant, $t(31) = 11.56$, $p < .001$. Accordingly, the hypothesis of a pretest–posttest difference was supported in this sample. The one-group design does not demonstrate that the media alone caused the change, and the durability of the reported improvement is unknown.

For guidance counselors, Pod-Cards Audio may be used as a supplementary activity that links emotional scenarios to reflection and concrete coping plans. For schools, implementation should be supported by suitable audio/QR access and time for guided discussion. For researchers, the next steps are to verify and report the scale's item count, response format, theoretical range, validity and reliability evidence, and categorization formula; analyze raw paired scores for complete test statistics and effect size; and evaluate the intervention using a comparison group, a larger and more diverse sample, and follow-up measurement.

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