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Enhancing Students' Emotion Regulation and Self-Confidence Through Solution-Focused Brief Counseling: A Quasi-Experimental Study in Senior High School

Peningkatan Regulasi Emosi dan Kepercayaan Diri Siswa Melalui Solution-Focused Brief Counseling: Studi Kuasi-Eksperimen di Sekolah Menengah Atas

[*1]Febri Al Diyanto, [2]Nanang Erma Gunawan
[1-2]Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Indonesia
*e-mail: aldiantofebri16@gmail.com

Abstract: *Adolescents face developmental changes in which emotion regulation and self-confidence are important. This study examined the effectiveness of group counseling based on Solution-Focused Brief Counseling (SFBC) in improving emotion regulation and self-confidence among Grade 10 students at SMA Negeri 1 Bumiayu. A quasi-experimental nonequivalent pretest–posttest control-group design was applied to 20 purposively selected students, divided into an experimental group (n = 10) and a control group (n = 10). The experimental group received five sessions of SFBC group counseling, whereas the control group received one psychoeducation session. Data were collected using an emotion regulation scale and a self-confidence scale and were analyzed using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test and the Mann–Whitney U test. In the experimental group, posttest scores were significantly higher than pretest scores for emotion regulation (Z = –2.803, p = 0.005) and self-confidence (Z = –2.803, p = 0.005), whereas the control group showed no significant change (emotion regulation: Z = –0.890, p = 0.373; self-confidence: Z = –0.257, p = 0.797). The experimental group also had significantly higher posttest scores than the control group (emotion regulation: U = 0.000, p < 0.001; self-confidence: U = 2.500, p < 0.001). SFBC group counseling may serve as an alternative school service, although the small sample, unequal intervention duration, baseline differences, and low reliability of the self-confidence scale limit interpretation.*
Keywords: *group counseling; solution-focused brief counseling; emotion regulation; self-confidence; senior high school students*

Abstrak: *Remaja menghadapi berbagai perubahan perkembangan yang menuntut regulasi emosi dan kepercayaan diri yang memadai. Penelitian ini menguji efektivitas konseling kelompok berbasis Solution-Focused Brief Counseling (SFBC) dalam meningkatkan regulasi emosi dan kepercayaan diri siswa kelas X SMA Negeri 1 Bumiayu. Penelitian kuantitatif kuasi-eksperimen dengan desain nonequivalent pretest–posttest control-group ini melibatkan 20 siswa yang dipilih secara purposif dan dibagi menjadi kelompok eksperimen (n = 10) dan kelompok kontrol (n = 10). Kelompok eksperimen menerima lima sesi konseling kelompok SFBC, sedangkan kelompok kontrol menerima satu sesi psikoedukasi. Data dikumpulkan dengan skala regulasi emosi dan skala kepercayaan diri, kemudian dianalisis dengan uji Wilcoxon signed-rank dan uji Mann–*

Whitney U. Pada kelompok eksperimen, skor posttest secara signifikan lebih tinggi daripada skor pretest, baik pada regulasi emosi (Z = –2,803; p = 0,005) maupun kepercayaan diri (Z = –2,803; p = 0,005), sedangkan kelompok kontrol tidak menunjukkan perubahan yang signifikan (regulasi emosi: Z = –0,890; p = 0,373; kepercayaan diri: Z = –0,257; p = 0,797). Skor posttest kelompok eksperimen juga secara signifikan lebih tinggi daripada kelompok kontrol (regulasi emosi: U = 0,000; p < 0,001; kepercayaan diri: U = 2,500; p < 0,001). Konseling kelompok SFBC dapat menjadi alternatif layanan konseling sekolah. Interpretasi hasil dibatasi oleh ukuran sampel yang kecil, perbedaan durasi intervensi, perbedaan skor awal, dan reliabilitas skala kepercayaan diri yang rendah.
Kata Kunci: *konseling kelompok; konseling singkat berfokus solusi; regulasi emosi; kepercayaan diri; siswa sekolah menengah atas*

Introduction

Adolescence is a stage of human life between childhood and adulthood and is therefore often referred to as a transitional period. During this stage, individuals experience rapid biological, cognitive, social, and emotional changes (Isroani et al., 2023). Adolescents also face developmental tasks that have significant implications for their present and future lives (Hurlock, 2011). Successful completion of these tasks is influenced by internal factors, such as heredity and individual maturation, and by external factors, such as the family environment, school, peers, and learning experiences (Atikah et al., 2023). Adolescents' success in navigating this stage also depends on their capacity to regulate their emotions and to develop a positive self-concept (Santrock, 2002).

The ability to manage emotional experiences reflects the concept of emotion regulation. According to Gross (2014), emotion regulation refers to the processes through which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express them. These processes include monitoring, evaluating, and modifying emotional responses so that individuals can respond appropriately to a given situation and to their goals (Putri et al., 2023). Thus, emotion regulation does not mean eliminating or suppressing emotions, but rather managing emotional experiences, expressions, and responses in an adaptive manner.

Emotion regulation comprises three main aspects. The first is the activation of a regulatory goal, which concerns a person's capacity to recognize the need to regulate emerging emotions and to direct effort toward doing so, so that negative emotions do not interfere with the ability to think and act. The second is the engagement of processes that alter the emotion trajectory, which involves the use of specific strategies to change the course of an emotional response, including ways of reducing negative emotions and calming oneself. The third is the impact of regulation, which concerns the capacity to adjust behavioral, physiological, and expressive responses after the regulation process so that they fit the demands of the situation (Gross, 2014).

Developing a positive self-concept can begin with recognizing one's strengths and weaknesses and building confidence in one's abilities. Self-confidence is an attitude or feeling of confidence in one's abilities that enables individuals to act without excessive anxiety, to engage freely in activities they consider important or enjoyable, to take responsibility for their

actions, and to interact with others in a warm and polite manner (Lauster, 2012). It helps adolescents explore their potential, express their opinions, establish healthy social relationships, make decisions, and cope with various academic and social demands (Denich & Ifdil, 2017). Five main aspects contribute to self-confidence: belief in one's abilities, optimism, objectivity, responsibility, and rationality and realism (Lauster, 2012).

Emotion regulation and self-confidence are two closely related psychological aspects that influence one another. An individual's ability to manage negative emotions, such as anxiety and sadness, can help reduce self-doubt and the tendency to avoid risks. Conversely, the effective management of positive emotions can foster optimism, enhance the ability to cooperate with others, and strengthen appreciation for one's own efforts. These conditions contribute to greater self-confidence and a stronger willingness to make decisions (Gross, 2014). In line with this, emotion regulation and self-confidence have been examined together among adolescents (Rahmawati et al., 2024). Self-confidence is also an important aspect that helps adolescents cope with pressure and accomplish their developmental tasks optimally (Apriyanto & Asni, 2024).

Adolescents who experience various changes during this developmental stage may encounter challenges, including difficulties in emotion regulation and self-confidence. One strategy for addressing these challenges is to access counseling services, including group counseling. Group counseling is a professional helping process that uses group dynamics to help members understand and address various problems (Gladding, 2018). The process is facilitated through interaction, mutual support, the sharing of experiences, and collaborative problem-solving. Previous studies have demonstrated that group counseling can be effective in addressing various problems and in developing psychological aspects, including emotion regulation and self-confidence (Asmaida & Darmayanti, 2024; Setyawati & Wati, 2024).

Difficulties in developing emotion regulation and self-confidence can be addressed through school counseling services. By applying an appropriate counseling approach, counselors help clients understand their current circumstances and identify alternative ways to address their problems. One such approach is solution-focused brief therapy (SFBT), which is commonly referred to as solution-focused brief counseling (SFBC) when adapted to educational settings. This approach belongs to the postmodern counseling tradition and emphasizes the future, goal setting, personal strengths, and solution development. Rather than focusing primarily on the exploration of problems and their underlying causes, it helps clients identify their preferred future, strengths, abilities, and available resources that can support meaningful change (Corey, 2024). Its emphasis on strengths and its time efficiency make it a suitable option for school counseling services, in which students' problems need to be addressed with practical and focused interventions.

In SFBC, clients are viewed as competent individuals who can develop solutions based on their experiences and available resources. The counseling process therefore does not position clients as entirely dependent on counselors to find solutions to their problems. Instead, counselors act as facilitators who help clients recognize their abilities, past successes, and available resources so that they can develop solutions that suit their individual circumstances. This perspective recognizes clients as the individuals who best understand their own lives and

needs and thereby fosters a collaborative counseling process. The approach has several other strengths, including time efficiency, flexible and practical intervention techniques, a focus on solutions, an orientation toward the present and future, and a positive view of clients (Corey, 2024; Habsy et al., 2024).

In a group setting, SFBC principles are integrated with group dynamics, which allows members to share successful experiences, receive support, and learn from one another's experiences and solutions. The counseling process shifts from problem-focused conversations (problem talk) toward conversations that explore solutions (solution talk) through the establishment of concrete goals, the exploration of previous successes, and the identification of actionable steps toward change. The main techniques include the miracle question, exception questions, scaling questions, coping questions, pre-session change, and feedback or compliments (Corey, 2024). These techniques help clients envision their preferred future, recognize situations in which problems can be managed, identify their existing strengths and strategies, monitor their progress, and strengthen their confidence in their own abilities.

SFBC has been widely applied in guidance and counseling services to help students address various psychological, social, and academic problems. Previous studies have shown that SFBC group counseling can reduce verbal bullying among senior high school students (Saputri et al., 2026). SFBC has also been found to improve environmental mastery among junior high school students (Permataningtyas & Kesuma, 2025). It has been used to improve self-control among junior high school students (Afliana et al., 2025), resilience among students from broken-home families (Pratiwi et al., 2025), and altruistic behavior among senior high school students (Restiana et al., 2025). These diverse findings indicate that SFBC has broad potential for application in guidance and counseling services, both in addressing problematic behaviors and in developing students' psychological and social capacities across educational levels.

Several previous studies have examined more specifically the application of SFBC to support students' emotion regulation and self-confidence. A case study conducted at an elementary school in Tasikmalaya found that SFBC had a significant positive impact on students' emotion regulation skills (Nailah et al., 2026). The application of SFBC to self-confidence has been investigated in experimental research, which reported that solution-focused group counseling could enhance the self-confidence of senior high school students (Jahara & Daulay, 2023). Another experimental study demonstrated that SFBC was an effective intervention for addressing low self-confidence among students at SMA Laboratorium Undiksha (Priyandana et al., 2025).

Previous studies show that SFBC has been employed in school guidance and counseling services to address a wide range of behavioral, academic, personal, and social concerns, and several of them indicate its potential to improve students' emotion regulation and self-confidence. These findings provide an empirical foundation for considering SFBC as an alternative intervention in school guidance and counseling services.

The studies reviewed above have addressed emotion regulation and self-confidence separately, and evidence from quasi-experimental studies that involve experimental and control groups of senior high school students remains limited. The present study addresses this gap by examining the effectiveness of group counseling using SFBC in enhancing emotion regulation

and self-confidence simultaneously among Grade 10 students at SMA Negeri 1 Bumiayu. Its novelty lies in testing the two outcomes within a single quasi-experimental study that uses a nonequivalent pretest–posttest control-group design, in which an experimental group receives SFBC-based group counseling and a control group receives psychoeducation. This design allows changes in scores within each group to be analyzed and, at the same time, provides insight into differences in outcomes between the two groups. Theoretically, the study is expected to expand the literature on the application of SFBC in guidance and counseling services by providing evidence on both variables during adolescence. Practically, the findings are expected to give guidance and counseling teachers a basis for selecting appropriate services to help students regulate their emotions and develop self-confidence, and to serve as a reference for future research on SFBC among students with diverse characteristics, at different educational levels, and with a broader range of psychological concerns.

Method

This study used a quantitative quasi-experimental approach with a nonequivalent pretest–posttest control-group design, which examines outcomes following an intervention without random assignment of participants to groups (Creswell, 2014). Two outcome variables were investigated: emotion regulation and self-confidence. The experimental group received group counseling using SFBC, whereas the control group received psychoeducation. Both groups completed assessments before and after their respective interventions, which allowed changes within each group and differences in posttest outcomes between groups to be examined. Because participants were not randomly assigned, baseline scores were examined to describe the initial differences between the groups (Table 1).

The study was conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Bumiayu, Brebes, Central Java, Indonesia, during the 2026/2027 academic year. The school was selected following a preliminary assessment, conducted on July 15, 2026, which indicated a need for guidance and counseling services that address emotion regulation and self-confidence among Grade 10 students. The assessment involved school observations, interviews with school counselors, and a review of data from the student needs assessment questionnaire (Angket Kebutuhan Peserta Didik, AKPD). Research activities were carried out from July to September 2026 and covered administrative preparation, preliminary assessment, pretesting, intervention implementation, posttesting, and data analysis.

The population comprised all 360 Grade 10 students enrolled at SMA Negeri 1 Bumiayu during the 2026/2027 academic year. Participants were recruited through purposive sampling, in which individuals are selected according to predetermined characteristics relevant to the research objectives (Fraenkel et al., 2023). Twenty students met the criteria and participated in the study, with 10 students in each group. The eligibility criteria were being a Grade 10 student with low levels of emotion regulation and self-confidence, willingness to participate throughout the research procedures, provision of the consent required under school procedures, and no concurrent participation in another psychological intervention specifically targeting emotion regulation and self-confidence. In reporting the counseling sessions, students are identified by pseudonyms (Student 1 to Student 5) to protect their identities.

Data were collected using two psychological scales administered to participants in both groups before and after the interventions. The emotion regulation scale comprised 45 items rated on a five-point Likert scale. It had undergone content, empirical, and construct validity assessments, with all 45 items reported as valid, and its internal consistency reliability, measured using Cronbach's alpha, was 0.948 (Putri et al., 2023). The self-confidence scale consisted of 56 items with a four-point Likert response format. Its validity was assessed through expert judgment and corrected item–total correlation, using a minimum acceptable coefficient of 0.30. Its reported Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.60 (Nugroho, 2019), which indicates limited internal consistency and a potential limitation in the precision of the self-confidence measurement. Findings concerning self-confidence are therefore interpreted with caution.

The experimental group participated in group counseling using SFBC, guided by a group counseling manual developed and validated for the intervention. The program consisted of five sessions: two devoted to the initial stage, two to the working stage, and one to the termination stage. All sessions involved the same group members and were intended to establish a respectful, supportive, and psychologically safe environment in which students could participate actively and share their experiences. The first session focused on introducing the group counseling process and orienting members to the group. The second session remained within the beginning stage and focused on strengthening group relationships, exploring members' expectations, and identifying personal strengths and resources. The third session marked the beginning of the working stage and focused on enhancing emotion regulation through the scaling question, miracle question, exception question, and coping question techniques. The fourth session continued the working stage and focused on enhancing self-confidence through the scaling question, exception question, coping question, and miracle question techniques. The fifth session constituted the termination stage and focused on reflection, evaluation, and follow-up.

The intervention was designed to shift members' focus from problem-centered discussions toward the exploration of goals, strengths, successful experiences, available resources, and actionable steps toward change. Group dynamics served as a source of support, allowing members not only to explore their personal experiences but also to learn from the experiences and strategies of other group members. The control group received a single psychoeducation session addressing emotion regulation and self-confidence. The session combined a presentation with group discussion and consisted of an opening, delivery of the educational material, discussion, and reflection. The topics included the meaning and types of emotions, the importance of recognizing and regulating emotional responses, the definition and characteristics of self-confidence, the factors associated with both psychological constructs, and their relevance to academic and social life. Students were invited to ask questions, share their perspectives, and discuss the material, and the session concluded with a summary of the main points and a reflection on their application in everyday life. This condition provided a comparison with the five-session group counseling received by the experimental group.

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics. Within-group pretest–posttest differences were tested using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test, and posttest scores of the experimental and control groups were compared using the Mann–Whitney U test. Nonparametric procedures were

used because of the small group sizes (n = 10 per group), which limit the verification of distributional assumptions. The analyses were conducted separately for emotion regulation and self-confidence. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test assessed whether pretest and posttest scores differed within each group, and the Mann–Whitney U test evaluated whether posttest score distributions differed between the two independent groups. The effect size of the between-group comparison was calculated as $r = |Z|/\sqrt{N}$ from the reported Z values. Accordingly, the between-group analysis focused on posttest scores rather than directly comparing the magnitude of change from pretest to posttest.

Results and Discussion

Initial overview of students' emotion regulation and self-confidence

Before the intervention, pretest assessments were administered to 20 Grade 10 students at SMA Negeri 1 Bumiayu. The participants were divided into an experimental group and a control group of 10 students each. These assessments established the initial scores for emotion regulation and self-confidence against which post-intervention outcomes could be examined. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics, in which SD denotes the standard deviation.

Table 1. Pretest Results for Emotion Regulation and Self-Confidence

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.
Emotion regulation	Experimental	10	57.20	2.150	55	62
	Control	10	63.00	2.667	59	68
Self-confidence	Experimental	10	149.30	5.458	139	155
	Control	10	150.30	3.945	145	155

The mean pretest score for emotion regulation was 57.20 in the experimental group and 63.00 in the control group. For self-confidence, the corresponding mean scores were 149.30 and 150.30. These figures describe the initial score distributions of the two groups before the intervention was given. The experimental group started with a lower mean than the control group on both variables, although the difference was more pronounced for emotion regulation than for self-confidence. These baseline measurements provided a reference point for examining the outcomes observed after group counseling using SFBC in the experimental group and psychoeducation in the control group. However, descriptive statistics alone cannot establish baseline equivalence between the groups, and the initial difference in emotion regulation must be taken into account when the posttest comparison is interpreted.

Changes in emotion regulation following the intervention

The pretest–posttest results indicated different patterns of emotion regulation scores in the two groups. After group counseling using SFBC, the mean score of the experimental group increased from 57.20 to 96.80, a gain of 39.60 points. By comparison, the mean score of the control group rose from 63.00 to 65.30, an increase of 2.30 points following psychoeducation. These descriptive results show a substantially larger increase in the experimental group. Table 2 presents the results of the Wilcoxon signed-rank test.

Table 2. Results of the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test for Emotion Regulation

Group	N	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Experimental	10	−2.803	0.005

Group	N	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Control	10	−0.890	0.373

The Wilcoxon signed-rank test revealed a statistically significant pretest–posttest difference in emotion regulation scores in the experimental group (Z = −2.803, p = 0.005). In contrast, the control group did not show a statistically significant difference (Z = −0.890, p = 0.373). These findings indicate that a significant change occurred within the experimental group during the study period, whereas the change observed in the control group was not statistically significant. The results are consistent with the possibility that group counseling using SFBC supported the development of students' emotion regulation. Nevertheless, the within-group test results should be interpreted alongside the between-group findings rather than treated as independent proof of intervention effectiveness.

The improvement in emotion regulation in the experimental group can be understood in light of the characteristics of group counseling using SFBC, which encourages clients to focus on their preferred future, personal strengths, and experiences of successfully managing situations in more adaptive ways (Corey, 2024). During the counseling process, students were not encouraged to spend excessive time exploring the causes of their problems. Instead, they were guided to identify the changes they wished to achieve and the resources they could use to bring about those changes. This process was facilitated through several SFBC techniques, including the scaling question, exception question, coping question, and miracle question.

The scaling question was used to help students recognize and assess their existing emotion regulation abilities. During the counseling sessions, students rated their abilities between 5 and 7 on a scale ranging from 0 to 10. These ratings were accompanied by an awareness that they already had ways of managing their emotions, although they did not apply these strategies consistently across situations. For example, some students felt more capable of controlling their emotions when they had time to think before responding, whereas others acknowledged that they still struggled to calm themselves when facing multiple problems or pressures simultaneously. These responses suggest that students began to distinguish between the abilities they had already developed and the areas that still required improvement. The scaling question helps clients assess abstract or difficult-to-observe conditions by translating them into concrete ratings. The scale does not merely produce a numerical score; it also provides a means of exploring the reasons behind a rating, the factors that prevent the situation from being worse or help it improve, and the small steps that could lead to further progress (Corey, 2024). The counseling process therefore did not stop at acknowledging students' difficulties in managing emotions but shifted toward identifying existing abilities and opportunities to develop them further.

The exception question helped students identify experiences in which they had managed their emotions more effectively, even when facing situations that would typically trigger anger, anxiety, or disappointment. During the counseling sessions, Student 1 described a misunderstanding with a friend in which they chose to remain silent rather than respond immediately and, once their emotions had subsided, were able to communicate more calmly. Student 2 described dealing with disagreements during a group assignment by choosing to discuss the issue rather than immediately blaming other group members. Student 3 explained

that, when feeling overwhelmed by school assignments, they tried to complete tasks according to their deadlines instead of worrying about the entire workload at once. These responses illustrate that students had concrete experiences of delaying impulsive reactions, communicating more calmly, and organizing their actions when facing pressure. They are consistent with the theoretical explanation that the exception question explores situations in which a problem does not occur, occurs with lower intensity, or is managed more effectively, and that such exploration enables clients to recognize that they already possess experiences that can help them navigate difficult situations (Corey, 2024).

The miracle question was used to help students envision a future in which they had achieved their desired level of emotion regulation. Students imagined being able to remain calm when hearing unpleasant remarks, think before responding when angry, complete assignments on time despite pressure, accept disappointment without dwelling on it, and resolve conflicts with friends through calmer communication. These responses suggest that students began to translate the concept of emotion regulation into observable behaviors in their daily lives. Theoretically, this technique helps clients envision what life would look like if their problems were resolved and identify the changes that would become apparent in their everyday experiences, and this preferred future can then be translated into concrete steps toward change (Corey, 2024).

The improvement in emotion regulation observed in the experimental group is also in line with previous research. Nailah et al. (2026) reported that SFBC had a significant positive impact on the emotion regulation skills of elementary school students, and group counseling using another approach, rational emotive behavior therapy with journaling, has likewise been associated with improved emotion regulation among senior high school students (Setyawati & Wati, 2024). The present findings differ from the former study in educational level, participants, and design, since a case study with younger students was replaced by a quasi-experimental study with a control group of adolescents. Even so, the similar direction of results suggests that the emphasis of SFBC on strengths, exceptions, and preferred futures may be useful across educational levels. A possible contextual explanation is that, in this study, the group format allowed students to draw on peers' examples when identifying alternative ways of responding to emotional situations, although the study did not test this mechanism.

The quantitative results and the accounts from the counseling sessions suggest that students in the experimental group experienced more favorable changes in emotion regulation during the intervention period than were observed descriptively in the control group. The intervention provided structured opportunities to identify successful experiences, recognize coping resources, and establish practical goals. However, the quantitative findings demonstrate a statistically significant pretest–posttest difference within the experimental group and are not, by themselves, evidence of a causal effect attributable exclusively to SFBC. The experimental group received five sessions, whereas the control group received one, so additional contact time and counselor attention, rather than SFBC techniques alone, may have contributed to the observed differences. The quasi-experimental design and the unequal intervention durations must therefore be considered when the findings are interpreted.

Changes in self-confidence following the intervention

The pretest–posttest results showed an increase in self-confidence scores among students who participated in group counseling using SFBC. The mean score of the experimental group rose from 149.30 before the intervention to 171.90 afterward, an increase of 22.60 points. In comparison, the mean score of the control group increased from 150.30 to 151.20, a difference of only 0.90 points following psychoeducation. Although the control group showed a small change in its mean score, individual score patterns varied, with some students recording increases, decreases, or no change. Table 3 presents the results of the Wilcoxon signed-rank test.

Table 3. Results of the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test for Self-Confidence

Group	N	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Experimental	10	−2.803	0.005
Control	10	−0.257	0.797

The Wilcoxon signed-rank test identified a statistically significant pretest–posttest difference in self-confidence scores in the experimental group ($Z = -2.803$, $p = 0.005$). By contrast, the control group did not show a statistically significant difference ($Z = -0.257$, $p = 0.797$). These findings indicate that self-confidence scores changed significantly within the experimental group during the study period, whereas the observed change in the control group was not statistically significant. The results are consistent with the possibility that group counseling using SFBC supported the development of students' self-confidence. Nevertheless, within-group statistical significance alone does not establish that the intervention caused the observed change, and the limited reliability of the self-confidence scale ($\alpha = 0.60$) calls for caution in interpreting these results.

As with emotion regulation, the changes in self-confidence can be understood in light of the characteristics of SFBC, which emphasizes strengths, competencies, resources, goals, and possibilities for change. This approach views clients as individuals capable of developing their own solutions, while counselors facilitate the identification and use of competencies that clients already possess (Corey, 2024). This process gives students opportunities not only to discuss their difficulties but also to discover evidence of their ability to cope with particular situations.

The process was evident during the counseling sessions, when students were guided to assess their current levels of self-confidence, recognize successful experiences, identify available resources, and develop a picture of their desired circumstances through various SFBC techniques. The scaling question helped students evaluate their current condition and identify factors that could enable them to reach a higher level of self-confidence (Corey, 2024). Some students felt reasonably confident in their abilities but continued to experience doubts in certain situations. For example, Student 1 rated their self-confidence at 5 because they still felt hesitant when expressing opinions in front of a large group. Student 4 also gave a rating of 5, explaining that fear of making mistakes or failing sometimes led them to avoid trying. Student 5 reported feeling inferior when comparing themselves with peers whom they perceived as more capable. In contrast, Student 2 gave a rating of 8 because they felt reasonably confident in their abilities when they understood the tasks they needed to perform.

The exception question was then used to help students identify experiences in which their problems had diminished or they had managed difficult situations more effectively (Corey, 2024). Student 1 described an occasion on which they had the courage to express an opinion during a class discussion after preparing the material thoroughly, and when peers accepted the opinion, they realized that they were capable of expressing their ideas effectively. Student 2 recalled completing a group assignment and receiving appreciation, which helped them recognize that they possessed dependable abilities. Student 4 described successfully taking part in a sporting activity that they had previously considered difficult, despite initially fearing failure. Student 3 recalled a presentation that had made them nervous at first but ultimately went smoothly. These experiences helped students identify concrete evidence that their doubts did not necessarily reflect their actual abilities.

The next stage involved the coping question, which helped students recognize the resources they had already used to persevere or deal with difficulties. Rather than determining solutions on behalf of the students, the counselor facilitated their exploration of strategies suited to their experiences and needs (Corey, 2024). During the counseling process, students identified several supporting factors, including preparing thoroughly, receiving support from people around them, recalling successful experiences, understanding the steps they needed to take, considering decisions rationally, recognizing their personal strengths, and trying gradually. These strategies suggest that students were not entirely dependent on external encouragement but were beginning to recognize actions they could take to manage self-doubt and develop greater courage.

The miracle question helped students formulate a concrete picture of their desired level of self-confidence. Student 1 imagined becoming more courageous in expressing opinions without being overly afraid of other people's judgments. Student 2 hoped to make decisions without always waiting for others to reassure them. Student 4 wanted to be more willing to try new things despite uncertainty about the outcomes, while Student 3 imagined being able to speak in front of a large audience more calmly and with greater confidence in their preparation. Other students expressed a desire to become more independent, compare themselves less with others, accept failure as part of the learning process, and have the courage to try new things. This technique helps clients envision what life might look like if their problems were resolved and identify signs of change that could be observed in everyday situations, and these descriptions can then serve as a basis for identifying small, actionable steps toward their desired circumstances (Corey, 2024).

The group format also contributed opportunities for reflection and interpersonal learning. By sharing experiences and listening to other members' accounts, students could encounter alternative ways of approaching challenges and recognize strengths that might otherwise have been overlooked. Support from fellow members may also have helped create an environment in which students could discuss uncertainty while considering possible ways forward. The group process thus complemented the solution-focused techniques by allowing students to explore their own experiences alongside the perspectives and experiences of others.

The improvement in self-confidence is consistent with previous experimental studies. Priyandana et al. (2025) found SFBC to be an effective intervention for low self-confidence

among Grade 10 students, and Jahara and Daulay (2023) reported that solution-focused group counseling could enhance the self-confidence of senior high school students. The present study adds that a similar direction of change was observed when self-confidence was examined together with emotion regulation and compared against a psychoeducation control condition. Possible reasons for the consistency across school contexts include the shared emphasis of these interventions on identifying existing strengths and successful experiences, which is the core of solution-focused work.

The quantitative results and counseling experiences suggest that the experimental group experienced more favorable changes in self-confidence during the intervention period than were observed descriptively in the control group. The counseling process encouraged students to recognize their competencies, draw on successful experiences, identify available resources, and define realistic goals for change. These findings are consistent with the potential value of a solution-focused approach in supporting students' self-confidence. However, the results should be interpreted in light of the quasi-experimental design, the small sample drawn from a single school, the difference in intervention duration between the experimental and control groups, and the low reliability of the self-confidence scale.

Comparison of outcomes between the experimental and control groups

Posttest scores were compared to examine differences in emotion regulation and self-confidence between students who received group counseling using SFBC and those who participated in psychoeducation. Because the two groups consisted of independent participants, the Mann–Whitney U test was used for the between-group comparisons. Descriptively, differences were observed in the posttest scores for both variables. For emotion regulation, the experimental group obtained a mean posttest score of 96.80, compared with 65.30 in the control group. For self-confidence, the mean posttest score was 171.90 in the experimental group and 151.20 in the control group. The experimental group therefore had higher mean scores on both variables than the control group following the interventions. Table 4 summarizes the pretest and posttest mean scores of both groups.

Table 4. Pretest and Posttest Mean Scores by Group

Variable	Group	Pretest mean	Posttest mean	Mean change
Emotion regulation	Experimental	57.20	96.80	39.60
	Control	63.00	65.30	2.30
Self-confidence	Experimental	149.30	171.90	22.60
	Control	150.30	151.20	0.90

The Mann–Whitney U test results are presented in Table 5. The mean ranks in this table are produced by the test and describe the ordering of scores across the two groups, whereas the means in Table 4 are descriptive score averages. The two should not be interpreted as the same quantity.

Table 5. Mann–Whitney U Test Results for Posttest Scores Between Groups

Variable	Mean rank (Exp.)	Mean rank (Control)	U	Z	Sig.	r
Emotion regulation	15.50	5.50	0.000	−3.780	<0.001	0.85
Self-confidence	15.25	5.75	2.500	−3.593	<0.001	0.80

For emotion regulation, the Mann–Whitney U test indicated a statistically significant difference in posttest scores between the experimental and control groups ($U = 0.000$, $Z = -3.780$, $p < 0.001$, $r = 0.85$). The experimental group had a higher mean rank (15.50) than the control group (5.50). A similar pattern was observed for self-confidence, for which the test also identified a statistically significant difference ($U = 2.500$, $Z = -3.593$, $p < 0.001$, $r = 0.80$). The mean rank of the experimental group was 15.25, compared with 5.75 in the control group. For both variables, the higher mean ranks indicate that students in the experimental group tended to have higher posttest scores than those in the control group, and the effect sizes were large.

These differences may be understood in terms of the characteristics of the interventions provided to each group. Psychoeducation in the control group focused on developing understanding through material presentation and discussion. In contrast, group counseling using SFBC actively engaged students in exploring personal experiences, identifying successful experiences, recognizing strengths and resources, and formulating desired outcomes. This process involved the use of the miracle question, exception question, scaling question, and coping question to help students identify their existing abilities and positive experiences (Corey, 2024). For emotion regulation, the process gave students opportunities to identify situations in which they had successfully managed emotional responses, recognize strategies that could be used again, and determine realistic steps toward change. For self-confidence, students were guided to identify successful experiences and personal resources that could serve as evidence of their ability to cope with various situations. Group dynamics also gave students opportunities to learn from other members' experiences and receive support throughout the counseling process.

The findings revealed statistically significant differences in posttest scores between the experimental and control groups for both emotion regulation and self-confidence. The group that received group counseling using SFBC had higher posttest scores on both variables than the group that received psychoeducation alone. These findings suggest that, in this study, group counseling using SFBC was associated with more favorable post-intervention outcomes in students' emotion regulation and self-confidence than the intervention provided to the control group. The comparison with the studies discussed above indicates a similar direction of results, although those studies differ in participants, settings, and designs. Several features of the present design limit the strength of this conclusion. The experimental group received five sessions and the control group only one, so the differences cannot be attributed specifically to SFBC without considering contact time and counselor attention. The groups also differed at baseline, particularly in emotion regulation, and because the between-group analysis used posttest scores, the findings are more appropriately interpreted as differences in outcomes following the interventions than as a direct test of differences in the magnitude of score improvement.

Conclusion

This study found that students who received group counseling using Solution-Focused Brief Counseling (SFBC) showed statistically significant pretest–posttest improvements in emotion regulation (mean score from 57.20 to 96.80) and self-confidence (mean score from

149.30 to 171.90), with Wilcoxon signed-rank results of Z = −2.803 and p = 0.005 for both outcomes, whereas the control group showed no significant change (emotion regulation: Z = −0.890, p = 0.373; self-confidence: Z = −0.257, p = 0.797). The experimental group also obtained significantly higher posttest scores than the control group for emotion regulation (U = 0.000, Z = −3.780, p < 0.001) and self-confidence (U = 2.500, Z = −3.593, p < 0.001), with higher mean ranks indicating that its participants tended to score higher than students who received psychoeducation. Within this quasi-experimental design, SFBC group counseling was therefore associated with more favorable outcomes than psychoeducation.

Practically, SFBC group counseling may be a useful alternative within school guidance and counseling services to support emotion regulation and self-confidence, because it emphasizes solutions, personal strengths, successful experiences, available resources, and attainable goals. The findings should be interpreted with caution and do not support stronger causal claims. The study involved only 20 students from one school, the experimental and control groups received interventions of different durations (five sessions and one session), the groups differed at baseline, the between-group analysis compared posttest scores rather than gain scores, and the self-confidence scale had low reliability (α = 0.60). Future research should involve larger and more diverse samples, use comparison conditions of equivalent duration, apply analyses that account for baseline differences, such as gain-score analysis or ANCOVA when assumptions permit, and include follow-up assessments to examine whether changes in emotion regulation and self-confidence are maintained over time.

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