

## The Effectiveness of Group Guidance to Prevent Body Shaming in Elementary School Students

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### ABSTRACT

Body-shaming behavior among elementary school students can negatively impact a child's self-confidence and socioemotional development. Therefore, preventive efforts through guidance and counseling services in schools are needed. This study aims to determine the effectiveness of group guidance services in reducing body-shaming behavior tendencies among fifth-grade students at SD Gondang 6 in Sragen Regency during the 2025/2026 academic year. The quantitative research method used is a pre-experimental design with a one-group pre-test and post-test approach. The study population included all fifth grade students at SD Gondang 6 (N=13), and the sample of six students was selected using purposive sampling based on their tendency toward body-shaming behavior as identified through initial questionnaire screening. The research instruments included body-shaming questionnaires, observations, and documentation. Data analysis was performed using paired sample t-tests. The results showed a descriptive decrease in mean score from 127.83 (pre-test) to 99.67 (post-test); however, the Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.121 ( $p > 0.05$ ) indicated that the difference was not statistically significant, and the null hypothesis was not rejected. Group guidance services showed descriptive promise in reducing body-shaming behavior tendencies, although their effectiveness was not statistically confirmed in this study. Further research is recommended using a more rigorous experimental design with a control group, a larger sample, and a longer intervention period.

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### ABSTRACT

Perilaku *body shaming* pada siswa sekolah dasar dapat berdampak negatif terhadap kepercayaan diri dan perkembangan sosial-emosional anak. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan upaya preventif melalui layanan bimbingan dan konseling di sekolah. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh layanan bimbingan kelompok dalam mencegah perilaku *body shaming* pada siswa kelas V SD Gondang 6 Kabupaten Sragen tahun ajaran 2025/2026. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kuantitatif dengan desain *one group pre-test and post-test*. Populasi penelitian adalah seluruh siswa kelas V SD Gondang 6, sedangkan sampel dipilih menggunakan teknik *purposive sampling* sebanyak enam siswa yang memiliki kecenderungan perilaku *body shaming*, berdasarkan hasil pengisian kuesioner oleh tiga

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belas siswa. Instrumen penelitian meliputi kuesioner *body shaming*, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan uji-t sampel berpasangan. Hasil analisis menunjukkan nilai Sig. (2-tailed) sebesar 0,121 ( $p > 0,05$ ), yang berarti tidak terdapat perbedaan yang signifikan antara hasil pre-test dan post-test. Hasil layanan bimbingan kelompok belum menunjukkan pengaruh yang signifikan dalam mencegah perilaku *body shaming* pada siswa. Simpulan layanan bimbingan kelompok belum memberikan pengaruh yang signifikan dalam mencegah perilaku *body shaming*. Rekomendasi penelitian selanjutnya diharapkan dapat menggunakan desain penelitian dengan kelompok kontrol agar efektivitas layanan bimbingan kelompok dalam mencegah perilaku *body shaming* dapat dibandingkan secara lebih objektif.

**Kata Kunci:** bimbingan kelompok; *body shaming*; siswa sekolah dasar; perundungan verbal; pencegahan perilaku

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## INTRODUCTION

Verbal harassment that occurs in elementary school environments, especially among children aged 7–12 years, is a serious problem that requires attention from various parties, such as educators, schools and families (Kurniawan et al., 2025; Yolanda, n.d.). At this age, children are at a crucial stage in their psychosocial development and self-concept formation. Negative experiences such as verbal abuse can hinder their emotional, social, and academic development. One common form of verbal abuse is body shaming, which involves teasing or negatively commenting on someone's physical appearance. The impact of this behavior is not only temporary but can persist into adulthood if not addressed appropriately from an early age (Tarmani et al., 2025).

Counseling-based interventions are crucial in halting body-shaming behavior at a young age. The creation of interactive instructional resources especially for elementary school pupils is one creative strategy. To present the idea and educate kids about the harmful effects of making fun of one's physical appearance, an interactive book about body shaming was created (Nur'aini et al., 2020). In order to help primary school pupils better comprehend the repercussions of body-shaming in daily interactions, the book uses relatable social life experiences to illustrate the concerns. Through the use of age-appropriate language, storytelling, and visual components, this teaching tool assists kids in identifying verbal harassment and cultivating empathy for their classmates. This research suggests that in addition to counseling services, innovative and interactive educational materials can be used to avoid body shaming at the elementary school level. Students' comprehension of respect, diversity, and constructive social interaction can be improved by including instructional materials about body shaming into classroom activities. Therefore, to reduce children's body-shaming behavior, preventive methods should combine educational advances with psychosocial interventions, including group guidance, to develop a more holistic strategy (Kurino & Herman, 2023).

Body shaming is a form of verbal bullying that involves teasing someone's body shape or physical appearance, whether done intentionally or unintentionally (Afifah & Amirah, 2026). This behavior can make victims feel ashamed, inferior, withdraw from social circles, and experience decreased self-confidence. Body shaming is a form of social aggression that negatively impacts an individual's mental health, such as anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem (Dewi et al., 2023). Therefore, preventing body-shaming behavior in elementary school students is crucial for maintaining their psychological well-being and character development.

Various previous studies have shown that body shaming and verbal bullying still occur frequently among children and adolescents (Damayanti et al., 2025; Halim et al., 2024; Rosita et al., 2019). Data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) and reports from international organizations indicate that verbal harassment is one of the most common forms of bullying experienced by children in educational settings. Previous research also confirms that body shaming is often associated with physical factors such as body shape, skin color, and appearance that are perceived as deviating from social standards (Kurino et al., 2023).

The usefulness of systematic counseling interventions in reducing the psychological effects of body shaming on teenagers is demonstrated by empirical data. According to research, group counseling greatly improves the self-esteem of junior high school pupils who have been made fun of for their appearance (Nashwa & Zuhara, 2025). Participants are encouraged to reframe skewed self-beliefs and create healthier self-concepts through group conversations and guided contemplation in a peer-supportive environment. These results show that organized group activities can promote resilience and self-acceptance while aiding in emotional healing. Furthermore, these results imply that counseling-based interventions are proactive tactics that schools can incorporate into more comprehensive preventive frameworks that aim to lessen body-shaming behavior and foster good psychological development, going beyond remedial roles (Kurino, n.d.).

It has been demonstrated that body-shaming victims' self-confidence can be raised by group counseling that employs cognitive restructuring approaches (Junianti et al., 2025). Body-shaming behavior is frequently sparked by idealized body images and unrealistic beauty standards. After attending systematic counseling sessions, students' self-confidence significantly improves as a result of cognitive restructuring, which helps them change illogical thought patterns into more adaptive and positive views of themselves. Additionally, studies have demonstrated that boosting students' self-assurance and character is crucial in mitigating the detrimental impacts of body shaming in educational settings (Nisa & Sarmini, 2022). This study supports more general findings showing that verbal bullying and body shaming are still common among kids and teenagers. In order to effectively address and lessen body-shaming behavior in schools, these research emphasize how vital it is to provide preventive and curative interventions through guidance and counseling services.

Most research results highlight the impact of body shaming on victims, such as decreased self-esteem, increased social anxiety, psychological disorders, withdrawal from social environments and impacts on learning at school (Cahyaningsih et al., 2020; Nahdi & Yonanda, 2018). In addition, several studies have found that body shaming is often considered a joke or a prank by the perpetrator, so that the behavior continues to be repeated without realizing its negative impact on the victim (Latiff et al., 2018).

Theoretically, body shaming is understood as verbal aggressive behavior that arises due to a discrepancy between self-assessment and social assessment of the ideal body (Opesemowo & Taiwo, 2025). Victims of body shaming tend to experience shame, insecurity, anxiety, and low self-esteem. This is especially crucial for elementary school-aged children because they are at a stage of cognitive and emotional development that is still heavily influenced by their social environment, particularly their peers.

Group guidance is a guidance and counseling service that can be used as a strategy to prevent negative behavior, including in preventing self-harm behavior (Nurasiah, 2024),

online game addiction (Mahyatun et al., 2023), cheating behavior (Qoyum et al., 2022), and the body shaming (Pranowo & Kusumastiti, 2022). Through group dynamics, students can share experiences, understand the impact of negative behavior, and develop empathy and mutual respect. Group interactions also help students improve their communication, cooperation, and problem-solving skills, which are crucial for developing positive social behavior.

Although numerous studies have addressed body shaming and its impacts, most have focused on adolescents and adults, with limited research examining elementary school students. Furthermore, previous research has focused more on the relationship between body shaming and psychological impacts, such as anxiety and low self-esteem, rather than on interventional prevention efforts.

This study differs from previous research because it specifically examines group guidance services as a strategy to prevent body shaming in elementary school students. The differences lie in the research subjects (elementary school students), the intervention approach through structured group guidance, and the use of an experimental design to measure behavioral changes before and after treatment. The urgency of this research lies in the importance of early prevention of body shaming to prevent its negative impacts from continuing into later developmental stages.

Based on the literature review, there is a research gap in the form of a lack of studies examining the effectiveness of group guidance as a preventative measure for body shaming in elementary school students. Previous research has focused primarily on the impact of body shaming and its relationship to specific psychological variables, without providing structured preventive solutions. Therefore, this study is expected to provide novel empirical evidence regarding the application of group guidance as a strategy for preventing body shaming from elementary school age.

Based on the background and research gaps, the purpose of this study is to determine the effect of group guidance services in preventing body-shaming behavior in fifth-grade elementary school students. This research is expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions to the development of guidance and counseling services in elementary schools.

## METHODS

### Type and Design

The type of research used in this study is pre-experimental quantitative research, with a pretest-posttest one group design (Bierer et al., 2025). This study aims to determine the effect of group guidance services on students' body-shaming behavior by comparing conditions before and after treatment. Treatment results are determined by differences in pretest and posttest scores.

**Table 1. Table of Design**

| Group              | Pretest        | Intervention | Posttest       |
|--------------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|
| Experimental Group | O <sub>1</sub> | X            | O <sub>2</sub> |

Source: (Bierer et al., 2025)

### Description:

O<sub>1</sub> = Initial score of the body-shaming behavior questionnaire (pretest)

X = Group guidance service (four sessions: formation, discussion, core activity, and skill building)

O<sub>2</sub> = Final score of the body-shaming behavior questionnaire (posttest)

This methodology measures the initial level of body-shaming behavior, including attitudes, perceptions, and dispositions toward verbal harassment connected to physical appearance, by giving a pretest to a single group of fifth-grade elementary school pupils. Prior to intervention, the pretest serves as a baseline assessment to determine the degree of body shaming behaviors. Before putting preventive measures into place, it's critical to record pupils' initial comprehension and behavioral inclinations, as body shaming is classified as verbal aggression that may be interpreted as playful conduct by peers. Following the pretest, students take part in organized group counseling sessions aimed at fostering greater self-acceptance, empathy, awareness, and respect for individual variances in physical appearance.

### **Data and Data Sources**

The data in this study were quantitative data obtained from students' body shaming questionnaire scores before (pretest) and after (posttest) the treatment. The data source was the fifth-grade students of SDN Gondang 6, Sragen Regency, in the 2025/2026 academic year, specifically six students selected as the research sample.

Students' inclinations, attitudes, and actions about body shaming in the elementary school setting are reflected in the quantitative data gathered for this study. Aspects of verbal harassment related to physical appearance, such as taunting, mocking, assigning derogatory nicknames, and making improper remarks about peers' height, skin color, body shape, or other physical attributes, were measured by the questionnaire. The theoretical framework described in the introduction, which views body shaming as a type of verbal violence that may have a detrimental impact on children's psychosocial development, self-concept construction, and emotional well-being, served as the foundation for the development of these indicators. As a result, the tool sought to evaluate students' attitudes and empathy toward classmates who might experience body shaming in addition to identifying overt behaviors.

### **Data Collection Technique**

The data collection technique in this study used a questionnaire as the primary technique, with observation and documentation as supporting techniques. The questionnaire was used to measure the level of body-shaming behavior, observation was used to observe the implementation of group guidance, and documentation was used to supplement the research data (Sholikhah, 2016).

The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather quantifiable and impartial information about elementary school pupils' propensity for body-shaming behavior. Given that body shaming is classified as a type of verbal harassment that peers may interpret as lighthearted, the tool was designed to record both overt behaviors (like making fun of, calling someone names, or making remarks about their appearance) and covert behaviors (like showing a lack of empathy or tolerance for physical differences). To find changes in students' behavior and

attitudes, the questionnaire was given twice: once before the group guiding service was implemented (pretest) and once after the intervention (posttest). The researcher can systematically measure behavioral tendencies and statistically compare scores by using a standardized questionnaire. in keeping with the study's experimental quantitative design.

### Data Analysis

Data analysis was carried out using parametric statistical tests, namely paired sample t-tests, to determine the difference between pretest and posttest scores (Ali et al., 2022; Subhaktiyasa et al., 2023). Before the analysis was conducted, the questionnaire instrument was tested for validity using Product Moment and its reliability using Cronbach Alpha, with a significance level of 0.05.

Instrument testing was done before hypothesis testing to make sure the study's questionnaire complied with psychometric requirements. Finding out how well each item captures elements of body-shaming behavior, such as verbal teasing, negative labeling, lack of empathy, and attitudes toward physical differences, was the goal of the validity test that used the Product Moment correlation. Items were deemed legitimate and appropriate for inclusion in data collection if their correlation coefficients were greater than the essential r-value at the 0.05 significance level. This procedure guarantees that the tool accurately captures the theoretical ideas covered in the introduction, including body shaming as a type of verbal aggression that might harm kids' psychological growth.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 2. Results of the study: Comparison of Body Shaming Scores**

| No | Sample   | Pre-Test | Category | Post-Test | Category |
|----|----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|
| 1  | Sample 1 | 176      | High     | 97        | Medium   |
| 2  | Sample 2 | 169      | High     | 101       | Medium   |
| 3  | Sample 3 | 112      | Medium   | 86        | Low      |
| 4  | Sample 4 | 107      | Medium   | 102       | Medium   |
| 5  | Sample 5 | 100      | Medium   | 108       | Medium   |
| 6  | Sample 6 | 100      | Medium   | 104       | Medium   |

The comparison of body shaming scores between the pre-test and post-test for six samples showed a descriptive decrease in scores after group guidance services. In the pre-test, two samples were in the high category and four samples were in the medium category. After treatment, all samples experienced a change in category, with the majority falling into the medium category and one sample falling into the low category. This indicates that individually, there was a tendency for body shaming levels to decrease after treatment.

The decrease in pre-test to post-test scores, as indicated by the data in Table 1, indicates a favorable behavioral shift that occurred after structured group guiding services were put into place. Samples 1 and 2 both saw significant drops in their scores, going from 176 (high category) to 97 (medium category) and 169 (high category) to 101 (medium category), respectively. These modifications imply that following their involvement in the intervention, students who had previously displayed substantial propensities for body-shaming conduct showed discernible improvement. In a similar vein, the group that went from the medium

category (112) to the low category (86) shows a significant decrease in body-shaming behavior, which is indicative of better attitudes and greater awareness of peers' physical differences.

Even while some samples stayed in the medium category following treatment, their scores nevertheless demonstrated relative changes, indicating a slow change in behavior and perception. The theoretical framework covered in the introduction, which highlights how body shaming is frequently accepted as amusing peer behavior, is consistent with this pattern. Students are urged to reevaluate their verbal exchanges and comprehend the psychological effects of their words on others through group mentoring sessions that promote empathy, self-acceptance, and tolerance for diversity.

Descriptively, the general pattern of declining scores lends credence to the idea that primary school-level preventive interventions are essential. Given that peer dynamics have a significant impact on children at this developmental stage, structured group supervision offers a secure setting for introspection and behavioral modification. Therefore, before additional statistical testing is done, the descriptive results in Table 2 offer preliminary empirical evidence that group guidance services have a favorable impact on lowering body-shaming behavior among fifth-grade elementary school students.

**Table 3. Table of Treatment**

| <b>Stage</b>               | <b>Objectives</b>                        | <b>Main Activities</b>                                                 | <b>Expected Outcome</b>                            |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Pretest                    | To measure initial body-shaming behavior | Distribution of body-shaming questionnaire                             | Baseline score obtained                            |
| Session 1 (Formation)      | Build trust and group rules              | Introduction, ice breaking, group agreement                            | Students feel comfortable and engaged              |
| Session 2 (Discussion)     | Identify forms of body shaming           | Sharing experiences, discussion about teasing and physical differences | Students recognize body-shaming behavior           |
| Session 3 (Core Activity)  | Increase empathy and awareness           | Case discussion, role play, reflection on impacts                      | Students understand negative psychological effects |
| Session 4 (Skill Building) | Develop respectful communication         | Practice positive communication and peer interaction                   | Reduced tendency toward verbal teasing             |
| Posttest                   | Measure behavioral changes               | Re-administration of questionnaire                                     | Comparison of pretest–posttest scores              |

Six fifth-grade elementary school students participated in this study's pre-experimental design, which used a one-group pretest–posttest approach. Structured group guidance sessions, lasting roughly 60 to 90 minutes each, were used to carry out the intervention. The intervention's main goal was to stop body-shaming behavior by using group dynamics to promote respect, empathy, and constructive peer relationships. The phases of each session were organized as follows: formation, transition, activity, and termination. To gauge their

initial amount of body-shaming behavior, students were first administered a pretest. Students used the same tool to complete a posttest following guided discussions, role plays, and reflective exercises. A paired sample t-test was used to compare pretest and posttest scores in order to assess the intervention's efficacy and identify any notable behavioral changes.

**Table 4. Table Paired Sample t test output**

| Pre-Test | Std dv | Post Test | Std dv | t     | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | p      |
|----------|--------|-----------|--------|-------|----|-----------------|--------|
| 127.83   | 34.90  | 99.6667   | 7.60   | 1,864 | 5  | 0.121           | > 0.05 |

The average body shaming score in the pre-test was 127.83 with a standard deviation of 34.90, while the average post-test score was 99.67 with a standard deviation of 7.60. The results of the paired sample t-test showed a t value = 1.864 with a degree of freedom (df) of 5 and a significance value of Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.121. This significance value is greater than the significance level of 0.05 ( $p > 0.05$ ), so there is no statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores. Students' body shaming scores decreased after being given group guidance services. However, descriptively, group guidance services showed effectiveness in reducing body shaming behavior scores in students, which was seen from the decrease in the average score and changes in the behavior category in most samples. However, the results of the statistical test showed that the decrease was not statistically significant. This condition indicates that group guidance services have the potential to be an effort to prevent body shaming behavior, but its implementation still requires strengthening, both in terms of service duration, meeting intensity, and involvement of the school and family environment so that behavioral changes can take place more optimally and sustainably.

The issue of body shaming among elementary school students is gaining increasing attention due to its significant impact on their psychological and social development. At this age, students are in the process of forming their self-concept and are highly sensitive to judgment from their environment, particularly from peers. Ridicule about physical appearance, whether intentional or perceived as a joke, can lead to feelings of insecurity, shame, and low self-esteem, ultimately impacting students' social interactions and learning at school (Novotný et al., 2025; Resa & Soetjiningsih, 2022).

The findings of this study indicate a positive change in body-shaming behavior after receiving group counseling services, although this change is not yet statistically robust. These results align with the theoretical perspective that body-shaming is a form of social aggression that can impact mental health, such as anxiety, decreased self-esteem, and social withdrawal (Deviantony et al., 2024a).

When compared with previous research, this study's results support the finding that verbal bullying, including body shaming, is closely linked to victims' psychological well-being, such as anxiety and low self-esteem. However, most of this research focuses on adolescents and emphasizes the impact, rather than prevention efforts (Chasanah, 2020; Thenu et al., 2022). In this context, this study contributes by examining group guidance services as a preventive approach for elementary school students, which has rarely been studied in previous research.

Theoretically, group guidance utilizes group dynamics to help individuals understand themselves, increase empathy, and develop mutual respect (Cerolini et al., 2024a; Nurjanah, 2021). The findings of this study indicate that through group interactions, discussions, and

collective reflection, students began to realize the negative impacts of body-shaming behavior and the importance of respecting physical differences between individuals (Cherian & Mukherjee, 2022). This is in line with the opinion that group guidance can help students change negative mindsets into more positive ones through the process of sharing experiences and opinions.

This study also shows that changes in body shaming behavior in elementary school students cannot be achieved instantly (Cerolini et al., 2024b; Deviantony et al., 2024). This challenges the assumption that a single short-term intervention is sufficient to produce significant behavioral change. Factors such as the student's early age, daily interaction habits, and the perception that teasing is a form of joking can influence the effectiveness of group guidance services.

In terms of research impact, these results provide practical implications for elementary school teachers and counselors, suggesting that group guidance services can be used as a strategy to prevent body shaming, although this needs to be combined with other approaches such as fostering empathy, strengthening character education, and parental involvement. This research also contributes to expanding the study of body shaming at the elementary school level, which has so far been relatively limited.

In school settings, weight-based victimization has been linked to negative emotional reactions and maladaptive coping behaviors. Additionally, bullying experiences are strongly linked to lower body esteem and higher body dissatisfaction among adolescents. These findings highlight the importance of preventive interventions in educational environments to reduce the harmful psychological consequences of appearance-based teasing. Research on body shaming and weight-based victimization shows significant psychological impacts on students and adolescents. Youth who experience weight-based bullying report emotional distress, reduced well-being, and negative coping responses (Puhl & Peterson, 2013).

Since weight stigma has been linked to more serious psychosocial issues, intervention and preventative initiatives are crucial. Research shows that stigma around weight contributes to poor behavioral patterns and long-term health concerns in addition to having an impact on psychological well-being (Tomiya et al., 2018). According to a systematic analysis, stigma around obesity has major negative effects on public health. Adolescent participation in cyberbullying has also been linked to body image dissatisfaction in digital environments. These results imply that in order to address both offline and online forms of body shaming, established school-based interventions, such as counseling and group guidance services, are required.

Recent studies show how teens use social media to discuss their bodies and engage in shaming behaviors, which can increase stigma and peer pressure. Body shaming is a multifaceted problem that necessitates preventive measures, as evidenced by the persistence of weight stigma in settings such as schools, healthcare facilities, and online forums (Tomiya et al., 2018). Because weight-based victimization, emotional distress, and body dissatisfaction are strongly linked (Puhl & Peterson, 2013), structured group counseling services are a pertinent preventive strategy to promote empathy, respect, and constructive peer interaction in elementary school settings.

The limitations of this study lie in the small sample size and the design without a control group, thus limiting the generalizability of the results. Furthermore, the relatively short

duration of group guidance services may not have been sufficient to produce statistically significant behavioral changes. Therefore, future research is recommended to use a more robust experimental design, involve a larger number of participants, and implement group guidance services more intensively and sustainably.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that group guidance services for fifth grade students at SDN Gondang 6, Sragen Regency showed a decrease in body shaming behavior descriptively, but did not provide a statistically significant effect based on the results of the paired sample t-test, so the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is accepted. Nevertheless, group guidance services have the potential as a preventive measure in helping students understand the negative impacts of body shaming and fostering mutual respect. Therefore, it is recommended that group guidance services be implemented more intensively and sustainably, involving collaboration between teachers, schools, and parents, and supported by further research with a stronger experimental design, a larger sample size, and a longer intervention duration so that their effectiveness can be more optimally tested.

Group guidance services showed promise as a preventive measure in primary schools, despite the fact that they did not result in a statistically significant decrease in body-shaming conduct. The programs promoted the growth of empathy and respect for differences in physical appearance while assisting kids in beginning to comprehend the psychological effects of body shaming. It is advised that schools integrate group guidance programs with character education initiatives, execute them more thoroughly and sustainably, and encourage cooperation between educators, counselors, and parents. To gather more solid empirical data about the efficacy of group advice in avoiding body-shaming behavior among primary school pupils, future study should use a more rigorous experimental design, include a larger sample size, and prolong the length of intervention.

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