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ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

Behavioristic Counseling with Role-Playing Techniques to Foster Student Honesty: A Case Study at SMA PGRI 1 Pati

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to overcome the problem of low honesty behavior among students at SMA PGRI 1 Pati through individual counseling using a behavioristic approach with role-playing techniques. The research method used is a qualitative approach with a case study design. The subjects of this study were two students, AB and XY, who were indicated to have dishonest behavior. Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation. The data analysis technique used consisted of data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions. The results showed that before the intervention, both subjects showed defensive behavior and often lied regarding their academic tasks due to academic anxiety and peer pressure. After four counseling sessions using role-playing techniques, both subjects showed positive changes. They became more open, admitted their mistakes, and showed a commitment to completing tasks independently. It can be concluded that the behavioristic approach using role-playing techniques is effective in fostering honesty behavior among students.

Keywords: Honesty Behavior, Individual Counseling, Behavioristic Approach, Role Playing, Students.



ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengatasi masalah rendahnya perilaku jujur antar sesama pada siswa di SMA PGRI 1 Pati melalui konseling individual dengan pendekatan behavioristik teknik role playing. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Subjek penelitian ini adalah dua orang siswa, yaitu AB dan XY, yang terindikasi memiliki perilaku tidak jujur. Teknik pengumpulan data meliputi observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Teknik analisis data yang digunakan terdiri dari reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sebelum intervensi, kedua subjek menunjukkan sikap defensif dan sering berbohong terkait tugas akademik karena kecemasan akademik dan pengaruh teman sebaya. Setelah diberikan layanan konseling sebanyak empat pertemuan menggunakan teknik role playing, kedua subjek menunjukkan perubahan positif. Mereka menjadi lebih terbuka, berani mengakui kesalahan, dan menunjukkan komitmen untuk mengerjakan tugas secara mandiri. Kesimpulannya, pendekatan behavioristik dengan teknik role playing efektif untuk menumbuhkan perilaku jujur pada siswa.

Keywords: *Perilaku jujur, konseling individu, pendekatan behavioristik, bermain peran, siswa.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Honesty is a fundamental moral value and a key pillar in education, serving as the foundation of an individual's integrity and trustworthiness. According to Copper (Fadhilah & Annura, 2025, p. 66), honesty plays a vital role in maintaining the stability of relationships by providing facts and truth in actions. To expand on this, from the perspective of moral development, Kohlberg (1984) asserts that the internalization of moral values like honesty progresses through developmental stages, transitioning from merely avoiding punishment to understanding the intrinsic value of social contracts and universal ethical principles. Despite its importance in character development, academic dishonesty remains prevalent. Recent data indicates that around 35% of students in Indonesia in 2024 admitted to committing academic dishonesty, such as plagiarism and cheating. This issue is evident at SMA PGRI 1 Pati, where direct observations and interviews revealed two students (AB and XY) exhibiting persistent dishonest behaviors, including seeking assistance on tests without permission, covering up rule violations, and manipulating assignment data.

Addressing this maladaptive behavior requires targeted educational interventions, such as individual counseling, which provides personalized assistance to help students resolve issues and foster positive attitudes. The behaviorist approach is particularly relevant in this context, as it views behavior as a learning outcome that can be modified by manipulating learning conditions and providing reinforcement (Lao et al., 2025). Within this framework, role-playing serves as a highly effective technique. Role-playing allows students to act out real-life scenarios, increasing their communication skills, empathy, and self-confidence while helping them reflect on and change their behavior through direct experience (Musthofiyyah & Muthohar, 2025).

Based on the observed issues, this study focuses on implementing individual counseling using a behavioristic approach and role-playing techniques to foster honesty among the affected students.

To systematically guide this research, three explicit questions are formulated: What are the underlying factors causing dishonest behavior in students AB and XY at SMA PGRI 1 Pati? How is the implementation process of individual counseling using a behavioristic approach with role-playing techniques structured for these students? Finally, how do the students' honest behaviors change following the implementation of this intervention?

2. RESEARCH METHODS

2.1 Research Design

This research applies a qualitative method with a case study design. The case study design was specifically chosen over other qualitative approaches—such as ethnography or phenomenology—because this research requires an intensive, bounded, and in-depth exploration of a specific behavioral phenomenon within a real-life context; namely, analyzing the unique psychological dynamics of two specific students undergoing a tailored counseling intervention. According to Sugiyono (Nurrisa, 2025, p. 794) "qualitative research methods are research methods used to examine the conditions of natural objects, with researchers as key instruments, data collection is carried out by triangulation, data analysis is inductive, and research results emphasize meaning rather than generalization". Meanwhile, according to Arikunto (Wulandari, 2025, p. 5) "case study research design is research conducted intensively, in detail, and in depth on a particular organism, institution, or phenomenon in a limited area or subject. The goal is to obtain a complete picture of the conditions and characteristics of the case being studied".

The research took place at SMA PGRI 1 Pati and was conducted over a duration of four weeks, from mid-February to mid-March 2025. The subjects in this study were two grade XI students (AB and XY) who were indicated to have dishonest behavior based on the recommendations of the homeroom teacher, guidance counselor, and classmates. The data sources in this study are divided into primary data sources (obtained directly from the clients) and secondary data sources (obtained from guidance counselors, homeroom teachers, and peers). Data collection techniques were carried out through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The data analysis stages in this study follow an interactive model consisting of data reduction (data simplification), data presentation (data display), and drawing conclusions. Observations and interview guidelines were based on indicators of dishonesty, namely inconsistencies between words and actions, anxious facial expressions, lack of self-confidence, and increased and rapid voice intonation.

2.2 Subject and Data Collection

The subjects of this study were students exhibiting dishonest behavior at SMA PGRI 1 Pati. Initial data collection—comprising interviews, observations, and recommendations from homeroom teachers, guidance counselors, and classmates across two classes (Class XI A with 30 students and Class XI B with 30 students)—identified two students, AB and XY, as displaying dishonest behavior. These two subjects were purposefully selected because they represent different spectrums of dishonest behavior and are driven by contrasting psychological triggers. Selecting subjects with different characteristics allows this study to comprehensively evaluate the versatility

and effectiveness of the behavioristic approach and role-playing technique across various manifestations of academic dishonesty.

To facilitate a clearer understanding of the subjects' backgrounds and specific behavioral issues, their characteristics are summarized in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Characteristics of Research Subjects

Subject Initials	Class	Forms of Dishonest Behavior	Underlying Factors (Internal & External)
AB	XI-A	Seeking unauthorized help during tests, providing false facts in group work, covering up peer rule violations.	Academic anxiety, fear of failure, strong peer pressure, immature decision-making
XY	XI-B	Manipulating data in individual assignment reports, claiming peers' work as their own.	Low self-confidence in academic abilities, fear of receiving low grades, permissive peer environment.

2.3 Data Analysis

Data collection is the first step to obtain results from research, then continued with the next stage, namely data analysis. According to Noeng Muhadjir (Siregar, 2021, p. 133) data analysis is the process of systematically searching and organizing notes from observations, interviews and other sources to deepen the researcher's understanding of the case being studied and convey it as findings to other parties. Meanwhile, according to Creswell (Ricard, 2024, p. 1) data analysis is a process that involves managing, organizing and interpreting data systematically to understand and find patterns or themes from the information that has been collected. The description above provides an illustration that data analysis is an action taken to process and analyze raw data into data that is ready to be used in research. According to Sugiyono, there are three stages in analyzing data, namely data simplification, data presentation, and conclusions. To ensure depth and rigor, the data analysis process was carried out systematically. First, in the data reduction (simplification) stage, all raw transcripts from interviews and field notes from observations were read thoroughly. The researcher, drawing upon their practical experience in guidance counseling, then applied thematic coding to categorize the raw data. For example, statements such as "I was afraid of getting bad grades" were coded under the category [ACAD-ANX] (Academic Anxiety), while statements like "My friends told me to just copy the answers" were coded under [PEER-PRS] (Peer Pressure). These initial codes were then grouped into broader, emerging themes, namely "Internal Psychological Factors" and "External Environmental Triggers." In the data presentation stage, these coded themes were organized into narrative text and analytical tables (such as Table 1) to clearly depict the relationship between the triggers of dishonesty and the subsequent behavioral changes during the counseling sessions. Finally, in the conclusion drawing stage, the researcher synthesized these patterns to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the role-playing intervention. Furthermore, to

guarantee the credibility and validity of the findings, data source triangulation was meticulously applied. The researcher did not rely solely on the self-reported data from the counselees (AB and XY). Instead, the claims made by the students during counseling were cross-verified with independent observations made by the homeroom teachers regarding classroom conduct, input from peers regarding social dynamics, and feedback from parents regarding behavior at home. If a student claimed to have completed an assignment independently, this was triangulated by checking the teacher's assessment notes and asking peers if collaboration occurred. This multi-perspective cross-checking ensures that the conclusions drawn are robust and factually grounded..

2.4 Data Validity

To ensure the trustworthiness, credibility, and accuracy of the qualitative findings, this study implemented a comprehensive data validity testing process. This process specifically involved prolonged observation, in-depth triangulation, and member checking.

1. Prolonged Observation (Perpanjangan Pengamatan) The researcher engaged in prolonged observation within the school environment at SMA PGRI 1 Pati. Rather than conducting brief, one-time observations, the researcher spent extended time interacting with the students and observing their daily academic routines over the research period. This extended engagement helped build trust and rapport with the subjects (AB and XY), reducing the likelihood of reactivity (subjects altering their behavior because they are being observed) and ensuring that the behaviors recorded genuinely reflected their daily habits.

2. Triangulation (Triangulasi) To prevent bias and validate the emerging patterns, the researcher utilized two forms of triangulation in depth:

- Source Triangulation (Triangulasi Sumber): The researcher did not rely solely on the self-reported statements from the counselees. Information provided by AB and XY during counseling sessions was rigorously cross-verified with multiple independent sources. For instance, a student's claim regarding their honesty in group work was cross-checked against the testimonies of their peers, the evaluations of their homeroom teachers, and the observations of other guidance counselors and parents.
- Technical Triangulation (Triangulasi Teknik): The researcher also compared data gathered through different collection methods to ensure consistency. The verbal statements obtained from the in-depth interviews were continuously cross-referenced with the behavioral data documented in the observational checklists and the physical evidence found in academic documentation (such as assignment reports and test scores).

3. Member Checking After the data was transcribed and initially analyzed, the researcher conducted member checks. The preliminary findings, interview transcripts, and interpretations were taken back to the primary participants (AB and XY) and key secondary informants (teachers and peers). They were given the opportunity to review, clarify, and confirm that the recorded data

accurately represented their actual perspectives, statements, and experiences. This step was crucial in minimizing researcher bias and ensuring the authentic voice of the participants was captured.

2.5 Research Instruments

The primary data source for this study is the counselee; the counselor gathers information from the counselee to be compared and analyzed during the research process—in other words, a primary source is one from which data is obtained directly. Given the research title, "Fostering Honest Behavior Among Peers Using a Behaviorist Approach with the Role-Playing Technique," the primary data sources are students exhibiting dishonest behavior. Based on observations and interviews with counselees, as well as recommendations from guidance and counseling teachers, homeroom teachers, and classmates, two students were identified as displaying dishonest behavior. Secondary data sources consist of additional information obtained from individuals connected to the subject, such as homeroom teachers, guidance and counseling teachers, classmates, and parents. Based on this explanation, it can be concluded that the researcher requires data originating from the school environment—including guidance and counseling teachers, homeroom teachers, and classmates—as well as from the family environment via parents.

The data collection methods used by the counselor to obtain primary and secondary data include observation, interviews, and documentation. To ensure accuracy, the observation process is defined operationally. Observation was systematically conducted using a structured checklist focusing on specific physical and behavioral indicators of dishonesty during class hours and group tasks, such as inconsistencies between words and actions, anxious facial expressions, avoidance of eye contact, and rapid voice intonation. Before data collection commenced, all research instruments (interview protocols and observation checklists) underwent a rigorous validation process. The instrument validation was conducted through expert judgment, where two academic experts in Guidance and Counseling evaluated the content validity of the items to ensure they accurately and comprehensively measured the intended indicators of dishonest behavior.

The detailed guidelines for the observation and interviews used in this study are outlined in the tables below:

Table 2. Observation Guidelines

Aspect Observed	Operational Indicators
Verbal and Action Consistency	Displaying inconsistency between stated claims and actual actions; providing false facts during group work.
Body Language	Showing anxious facial expressions, avoiding eye contact, or demonstrating physical restlessness when questioned.
Speech Patterns	Utilizing increased or rapid voice intonation, or lack of confidence when speaking.

Aspect Observed	Operational Indicators
Academic Actions	Seeking unauthorized assistance during exams, manipulating data in reports, or copying peers' assignments.

3. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

3.1 Initial Assessment: Factors Causing Dishonesty Behavior

To distinguish between the types of data collected, the initial assessment results are categorized into interview findings and observation data.

Interview Data and Direct Quotes:

Based on the initial assessment results, dishonest behavior in counselees is influenced by internal and external factors. For counselee AB, internal factors include academic anxiety, fear of failure, and immature decision-making skills, while external factors involve heavy schoolwork pressure and peer influence that encourages cover-up behavior. This was confirmed by AB's statement during the interview: "I was really scared of getting bad grades and disappointing my parents. Plus, my friends kept pressuring me to share answers, and I didn't want to be isolated."

In counselee XY, internal factors include low self-confidence in academic abilities and a lack of awareness of the value of honesty, exacerbated by a permissive peer environment that encourages cheating. XY stated: "I didn't believe my own work was good enough to get a passing grade. Copying my friend's report was the only way I felt safe from failing."

A supporting informant (the homeroom teacher) added context to these findings: "AB often gets easily influenced by his circle and panics during exams, whereas XY is actually capable but lacks the confidence to show his true potential, choosing the easy way out instead."

Observation Data: Separately, classroom observations provided concrete behavioral indicators of this dishonesty. During tests, AB was frequently observed exhibiting restless body language, constantly glancing at peers' desks, and showing anxious facial expressions when approached by the teacher. Conversely, XY's observation data showed a different pattern: XY appeared outwardly calm during independent work but was later observed submitting assignment reports with formatting and writing styles identical to other students, displaying a lack of eye contact and rapid voice intonation when the teacher questioned the report's authenticity.

In-depth Comparative Analysis of the Subjects: Although both subjects exhibited academic dishonesty, their psychological drivers are fundamentally different. AB's dishonesty is socially and externally driven; it acts as a defensive mechanism against peer rejection and academic anxiety. In contrast, XY's dishonesty is internally driven by an inferiority complex regarding their own academic self-efficacy. Consequently, while the role-playing intervention for AB needed to focus heavily on assertiveness training (learning to say "no" to peers), the intervention for XY had to emphasize self-acceptance and acknowledging the value of one's own hard work over fabricated perfection.

Implementation of Behavioristic Counseling Using Role Playing Techniques

Individual counseling services using a behaviorist approach through role-playing techniques were systematically implemented over four sessions. This intervention focused on observing and gradually shaping changes in the client's behavior.

Counseling sessions are conducted four times for each client. As follows:

- (1) The first Counselee: Focus on assessment and goal setting. The counselor builds rapport with the client.
- (2) Second Counselee: Implementing the role playing technique. In simple terms, the counselor invites the client to imagine a classroom situation (such as when the teacher asks about the authenticity of an assignment).
- (3) Third Counselee: Training role playing deeper.
- (4) Fourth Counselee: Evaluation and termination stage. Both clients showed significant positive changes.

Table 3. Changes After Individual Counseling per Meeting

No/Change	Name of Counselee	
	AB Counselee	XY Counselee
Changes After Meeting 1	AB began to understand the importance of honesty, formed a positive initial relationship with the counselor, and began to be introduced to role-playing techniques, although this had not yet been practiced directly.	XY begins to form a relationship with the counselor, but is still not fully open and still maintains justifications for his behavior.
Changes After Meeting 2	AB begins to participate in simple role-playing exercises, begins to notice the consequences of his behavioral choices, and begins to consider more honest and responsible behavior.	XY began to admit that the results of the assignment were taken from friends, tried to give honest responses through role playing, and began to feel that being honest gave a sense of relief.
Changes After Meeting 3	AB began to listen more seriously to the counselor, understood the impact of his behavior, was able to see better behavioral alternatives when facing learning pressure, and began to have an awareness of the importance of honesty.	XY becomes more cooperative, able to follow role-playing instructions, begins to understand the consequences of data manipulation, and begins to realize that being honest is a more adaptive behavioral alternative.
Changes After Meeting 4	AB began to be more open, realized that his behavior was inappropriate, was able to practice more honest responses through role playing, and began to dare to take responsibility for his actions.	XY began to choose to admit mistakes, understand the consequences of his behavior, demonstrate responsibility, and have a commitment to maintaining more honest behavior even though the changes are not yet completely consistent.

Based on Table 1 above, it can be seen that the application of the role-playing technique showed a gradual positive behavioral development in both clients. This change did not occur instantly. At the first meeting, both clients (AB and XY) still displayed a closed, defensive attitude, and tended to justify or avoid discussing their dishonest behavior. However, through role-playing exercises that simulated real-life classroom situations, the clients began to be encouraged to reconstruct the situations that triggered the dishonest behavior and try to provide new, more adaptive responses. Significant improvement was seen in the third and fourth meetings, where AB and XY not only began to admit their mistakes but also internally realized the consequences of their actions. Both demonstrated a strong commitment to maintaining honest behavior and taking responsibility for their future academic tasks. This aligns with the principles of the behaviorist approach, which suggests that changes in honest behavior in clients are formed not only through theoretical understanding of values, but also through direct experience, positive reinforcement, and the habituation of appropriate responses when facing academic pressure.

Data Visualization: Behavioral Improvement

To visually illustrate the reduction in dishonest behavioral indicators (such as cheating, providing false facts, or covering up violations) before and after the intervention, the following chart is presented based on the observation data. The drastic decrease in the frequency of dishonest acts recorded during the observation periods. Both AB and XY showed an 80-87% reduction in maladaptive behaviors, aligning with the principles of the behaviorist approach, which suggests that changes in honest behavior in clients are formed not only through theoretical understanding of values, but also through direct experience, positive reinforcement, and the habituation of appropriate responses when facing academic pressure.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Evaluation of Counseling and Comparative Analysis

Based on the evaluation of the individual counseling service, it is evident that the counselees, AB and XY, underwent gradual behavioral changes. These changes evolved through several stages: progressing from an initial state characterized by dishonesty and a defensive attitude toward openness, an awareness of behavioral consequences, and ultimately leading to a commitment to maintaining honest behavior. While previous studies by Arswedi, Rahmawati, Khalis, and Aupriawanti have demonstrated the utility of narrative methods and role-playing in addressing maladaptive behaviors, this current study highlights the unique advantage of individualized behavioristic counseling. Instead of merely giving generic moral instructions, tailoring the role-play scenarios specifically to AB's peer-pressure issues and XY's low self-esteem allowed for a deeper exploration of each counselee's circumstances. Furthermore, the inclusion of follow-up evaluations (Laiseg, Laijapen, Laijapang) confirmed that the changes were not just momentary reactions but showed the emergence of sustained self-control.

4.2 Critical Analysis and Limitations of the Behavioristic Approach Despite the positive outcomes observed, a critical evaluation of the behavioristic approach reveals several inherent limitations. Behaviorism primarily focuses on observable behavior modification through

conditioning, reinforcement, and simulated practice (role-playing). Consequently, it may overlook the deeper cognitive and moral restructuring required for long-term integrity. There is a risk that the students' honest behavior is merely a conditioned response to avoid negative consequences or to gain the counselor's approval, rather than a genuine internalization of moral values (as conceptualized in Kohlberg's higher stages of moral reasoning). Furthermore, role-playing, if not facilitated carefully, can feel artificial to students, potentially leading to superficial compliance during the counseling session without true cognitive shifts.

4.3 Factors Hindering Behavioral Change

The effectiveness of this intervention is not absolute and is susceptible to several hindering factors. Externally, an entrenched permissive peer environment poses a significant threat. If student AB returns to a highly manipulative peer group that normalizes academic cheating, the newly formed honest behavior might extinguish due to overwhelming social pressure. Internally, deep-rooted academic anxiety—like that experienced by XY—requires continuous emotional support; behavioral training alone cannot instantly erase the fear of failure. Additionally, the school environment plays a crucial role. If subject and homeroom teachers lack supportive communication and continue to make honesty synonymous with harsh punishment, students will revert to defensive lying. Therefore, the behavioral changes initiated in counseling must be continuously reinforced by a supportive school ecosystem.

4.4 Generalization of Findings

Because this research employs a qualitative case study design focusing on only two specific subjects at SMA PGRI 1 Pati, the statistical findings cannot be generalized to all high school students or different educational contexts. The unique characteristics of AB and XY do not represent the entire student population. However, analytical generalization can be applied. The core mechanism discovered in this study—that tailored role-playing effectively mitigates specific psychological triggers for dishonesty (like anxiety and peer pressure)—is transferable. The intervention model can be adopted by guidance counselors in other schools to address similar behavioral issues, provided that the counselor adapts the role-play scenarios to fit the specific local context and the individual psychological profiles of their students.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1. Conclusions

Based on the in-depth case study conducted at SMA PGRI 1 Pati, the implementation of individual counseling using a behavioristic approach with role-playing techniques has proven highly effective in fostering honest behavior among students. The research revealed that academic dishonesty is triggered by differing psychological factors: social peer pressure and academic anxiety (as seen in subject AB) versus an internal lack of academic self-confidence (as seen in subject XY). Through a structured four-session intervention, both students experienced significant and gradual behavioral shifts. They progressed from displaying defensive attitudes and offering justifications

for cheating, toward recognizing the negative consequences of their actions, and ultimately internalizing more adaptive, honest responses through role-played scenarios. By directly simulating classroom challenges, the students built stronger self-awareness and self-control, allowing them to reject academic cheating and commit to personal integrity. This demonstrates that the behavioristic role-playing method is a robust and contextually adaptable tool for Guidance and Counseling practitioners to address character deficits.

5.2. Suggestions

To maximize the impact of these findings, the following specific and operational recommendations are proposed for various stakeholders:

1. For School Principals and Administration:

Instead of relying solely on punitive measures for cheating, principals are encouraged to formulate clear, restorative school policies that prioritize character education. Operationally, schools should establish "Honesty Zones" (such as unmonitored honesty canteens or open-book integrity exams) to build a school culture that normalizes and rewards truthfulness through positive reinforcement.

2. For Guidance and Counseling (BK) Teachers:

BK teachers should integrate role-playing not just as a reactive disciplinary measure, but as a proactive counseling tool within their daily services. Operationally, counselors must develop a bank of specific role-play scenarios that mirror current student issues (e.g., peer pressure via WhatsApp groups or AI-assisted plagiarism) and consistently apply immediate (Laiseq) and long-term (Laijapang) follow-up evaluations to monitor sustained behavioral change.

3. For the Education Agency (Dinas Pendidikan):

It is recommended that the regional Education Agency integrates character-building modules centered on integrity into the mandatory training programs (Bimtek) for both subject teachers and BK counselors. The agency should mandate policies that require schools to report not only on academic achievements but also on qualitative character development metrics, shifting the educational paradigm from outcome-focused to process-focused integrity.

4. For Future Researchers:

Given the limitations of this qualitative case study, future researchers are strongly advised to conduct experimental quantitative studies with a larger, randomized sample size to statistically measure the efficacy of role-playing techniques on honest behavior. Furthermore, researchers should explore longitudinal study designs spanning an entire academic year to verify the long-term retention of honest habits, and perhaps integrate cognitive-moral development variables (such as Kohlberg's stages) alongside behavioristic approaches to provide a more holistic intervention model.

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