

Effectiveness of Group Guidance with Overcorrection Technique in Reducing Social Media Addiction in Junior High School Students

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Abstract: Social media addiction among middle school students is a serious issue that negatively impacts their academic, social, and emotional functions. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of group counseling with the positive practice overcorrection technique in reducing the level of social media addiction. The research design uses a pre-experimental one-group pretest-posttest, with eight middle school students selected purposively based on high addiction scores. The intervention was conducted through 4–6 group counseling sessions. Data were collected using a social media addiction questionnaire and analyzed with a Paired Sample T-Test after meeting the Shapiro-Wilk normality assumption. The results showed a significant decrease in addiction levels, with the average pretest score of 73.88 (SD = 1.458) dropping to 47.88 (SD = 8.899) in the posttest, $t(7) = 8.855$, $p < .001$. Cohen's d_z effect size = 3.13 indicates a very large effect. These findings demonstrate that group counseling with the overcorrection technique is an effective and applicable intervention for reducing social media addiction among middle school students. The novelty of this study lies in the integration of the overcorrection technique into the dynamics of group counseling, which is rarely explored in the context of adolescent digital addiction. Practically, it provides school counselors with an evidence-based, structured intervention protocol. This contributes to the counseling literature by demonstrating a potent, applicable strategy for mitigating a significant contemporary behavioral issue in educational settings.

Keywords: Behavior Modification, Excessive Correction Techniques, Group Counseling, Social Media Addiction

A. Introduction

The development of digital technology has brought about a significant transformation in communication patterns and social interactions, especially among adolescents. Social media has become one of the most dominant technological products used, not only as a means of entertainment but also as a tool for communication and learning. However, its uncontrolled usage poses significant risks of addiction, which can negatively affect the psychological and social well-being of students. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2024) reports an increase in problematic social media

usage among global adolescents, from 7% in 2018 to 11% in 2022. Similarly, a study by the University of California revealed that high social media usage among children aged 9-10 years is correlated with a 35% increase in depressive symptoms (Gibson, 2025). In Indonesia, more than two-thirds of students aged 5–24 years, or 60%, access the internet, primarily for social media (Alfathi, 2025), highlighting the urgency of addressing this issue.

This situation is further reinforced by local findings in Indonesia. A study by Aprilia et al. found that all respondents at SMAS Plus Al-Falah displayed signs of social media addiction, both at low and high levels (Aprilia, R., Sriati, A., & Hendrawati, 2020). Another study by Prameswari linked this addiction to decreased concentration in learning and the quality of social relationships (Prameswari, 2025). In fact, research by (Sentri, R. S., Sutja, A., & Yusra, 2022) found that 81.94% of students at SMP Negeri 11 in Jambi City were experiencing high levels of social media addiction. Meanwhile, policies in several countries, such as South Korea, have started to restrict social media access for children and adolescents (Dong-A, 2024), and China has already implemented regulatory restrictions (Sharwood, 2025). These actions confirm that the issue has reached a global scale. Despite this, intervention approaches that are suitable for the educational context and characteristics of Indonesian students, particularly at the middle school level, remain limited.

The main issue addressed in this study is the high level of social media addiction among middle school students, which negatively impacts their academic, social, and emotional functions. Middle school age is a critical phase in the development of self-control and emotional regulation, and if not addressed with the proper interventions, it can have long-term effects. Various approaches have been used to address this addictive behavior, but most are still general and have not been specifically focused on the realm of formal education.

In the school environment, social media addiction presents a unique challenge for educators and counselors. One of the efforts that can be made to address social media addiction is through group counseling services. Guidance and counseling are systematic, directed, and professional processes aimed at helping individuals understand themselves, their potential, and adjust to their environment optimally. Guidance is defined as an effort to provide direction, advice, and support in dealing with various life choices and problems. Meanwhile, counseling is a professional interaction between a counselor and a client, based on psychological techniques, to help individuals overcome difficulties and achieve mental health. Counseling can be conducted individually or in groups, with the principle that the counselor serves as a facilitator in the process of self-understanding and problem-solving, while the final decision remains with the client (Syafaruddin, Ahmad Syarqawi, 2019).

A relevant general solution in this context is the implementation of preventive and curative guidance and counseling services, one of which is through group counseling.

Group interventions allow for the creation of a supportive social dynamic that fosters adaptive behavior. Stead et al. and Moghadam et al. have shown that group-based behavioral interventions are effective in addressing addictive behavior problems in various contexts (Moghadam et al., 2024). However, the specific techniques used in group counseling need to be further studied to effectively address social media addiction at the middle school level.

One technique that holds great potential but has not been widely applied in the educational context is overcorrection. This technique originates from a behavioral approach that emphasizes intensive correction of deviant behavior through two main forms: restitution and positive practice. According to Foxx and Azrin, overcorrection has been proven to reduce deviant behavior to near zero in a short period of time and to maintain this effect even without strict supervision (Elimination, 1973). The positive practice overcorrection requires individuals to repeatedly perform the correct behavior as a replacement for the deviant behavior. Peters and Thompson stated that this technique has been shown to be effective in reducing repetitive motor movement habits (motor stereotypes) and encouraging more positive behaviors, without making children feel pressured or uncomfortable (Thompson, 2013). This technique has characteristics that are highly compatible with corrective learning approaches in school environments, as it emphasizes the conscious and consistent formation of positive habits.

In the context of group counseling, the use of the overcorrection technique can be integrated into discussion sessions, behavior simulation, and reflective evaluation. In this way, students not only become aware of the negative impacts of addictive behavior but also have the opportunity to actively practice healthier alternative behaviors. However, empirical studies on the effectiveness of this technique in the context of social media addiction among middle school students are still very limited, creating a clear urgency for further research.

Several previous studies have examined various approaches to address social media addiction among adolescents, including self-management techniques (Aprilia, R., Sriati, A., & Hendrawati, 2020) and the Premack Principle (Indriati, 2024), which showed positive results. However, these approaches have not yet incorporated the intensive corrective learning principles offered by the overcorrection technique. Furthermore, a study by Mulkyan demonstrated the effectiveness of this technique in reducing truancy and verbal bullying among students in schools, but its application in the context of digital addiction has not been explored (Mulkyan, 2019).

Existing literature mainly highlights the effectiveness of the overcorrection technique in general behavior modification but has not widely integrated it into group counseling formats in middle school education settings. In fact, group dynamics have great potential to reinforce behavioral learning effects through social support, model observation, and collective reflection. Therefore, there is a significant research gap to

test the application of the overcorrection technique in group counseling for middle school students experiencing social media addiction. This study is expected to address this gap and provide empirical foundations for the development of effective and applicable student counseling.

This study examined the effectiveness of group counseling services with the overcorrection technique in reducing social media addiction levels among middle school students. The novelty of this study lies in the integration of the overcorrection technique within the group counseling format, which has not been widely researched before in the context of digital addiction among middle school students. Through a pretest-posttest design, this study not only measures the impact of the intervention but also provides theoretical contributions to the behavioral approach in school-based guidance and counseling services. The scope of the study includes a quantitative approach with a one-group experimental design, involving 8 middle school students selected purposively based on social media addiction assessment results. The intervention is conducted through 4-6 group counseling sessions, and its effectiveness is analyzed using the paired sample t-test or Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test if the data are not normally distributed. The results of this study are expected to serve as an applicable reference for guidance counselors in designing effective interventions to address digital behavior challenges in schools.

B. Methods

This study applied a quantitative approach using a pre-experimental design. Specifically, the model used is the One-Group Pretest-Posttest Design, which is a pre-experimental design where one group of participants is measured on the dependent variable before (pretest) and after (posttest) receiving an intervention (Shadish, W. R., Cook, T. D., & Campbell, 2002). This design was chosen because the aim is to assess the effectiveness of an intervention on a target group by comparing the condition before and after the treatment to observe the changes that occur (Gravetter, Frederick J.; Forzano, 2018).

This study is categorized as a pilot study because it is conducted on a small scale with a limited number of participants. The primary purpose of a pilot study is not only to test a hypothesis but also to ensure the feasibility of the design, instruments, and intervention procedures being implemented. Several recent studies emphasize that pilot studies are an important stage for assessing the feasibility and acceptability of an intervention, including the implementation procedures, instrument reliability, and participant recruitment strategies (Chan et al., 2022). Therefore, this study serves as preliminary evidence for the effectiveness of group counseling with the overcorrection technique in reducing social media addiction among middle school students.

Participants in this study consisted of 8 middle school students. They were selected using purposive sampling from a total of 25 students who had completed an initial

assessment questionnaire. The initial group of 25 students showed an average social media addiction score of 58.36 (SD = 11.15), with the majority of students categorized as having moderate (60%) or high (36%) levels of addiction. Based on the assessment results, the 8 students with the highest scores were then invited to participate in the group counseling intervention. This selection aligns with the principle of purposive sampling, where participants are chosen because they possess specific characteristics relevant to the research objectives (reswell, J.W. and Plano Clark, 2011).

This study was conducted in three stages: (1) Pretest Stage, which involved the initial measurement of social media addiction levels; (2) Intervention Stage, where participants received group counseling services with the positive practice overcorrection technique (4-6 sessions), aimed at replacing maladaptive behaviors with correct behaviors (Nathan H. Azrin, Victoria A. Besalel, 2018); (3) Posttest Stage, which involved measuring social media addiction levels again after all intervention sessions were completed. The quantitative data obtained from the pretest and posttest scores of the 8 participants were analyzed using a Paired Sample T-Test to test the hypothesis, with the Shapiro-Wilk normality test as a prerequisite. The effect size was calculated using Cohen's d_z to assess the practical strength of the intervention (Cohen, 2013). This study uses a quantitative approach with a pre-experimental design, specifically the One-Group Pretest-Posttest Design model, which compares the conditions before and after the intervention in a single group to assess the effectiveness of the intervention (Shadish, W. R., Cook, T. D., & Campbell, 2002).

The participants in this study were 8 middle school students selected through purposive sampling from a group of 25 students who completed an initial assessment questionnaire. This group had an average social media addiction score of 58.36 (SD = 11.15), with the majority falling into the moderate (60%) and high (36%) addiction categories. Based on this assessment, the 8 students with the highest scores were chosen to participate in the group counseling intervention, in line with the purposive sampling principle, which selects participants with characteristics relevant to the research objectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Social media addiction data were collected using the Social Media Addiction Questionnaire, an adapted scale that measures addictive behaviors (Zeng et al., 2014) with internal reliability of Cronbach's Alpha = 0.875. The questionnaire consists of 25 items with a 4-point Likert scale and was used in both the pretest and posttest stages to assess changes in addiction levels.

C. Results and Discussion

Descriptive statistics of the pretest and posttest social media addiction scores are presented in Table 1. The purpose of this analysis is to summarize and describe the participants' scores before and after receiving the group counseling intervention with the overcorrection technique. The data summary includes the number of participants (N), mean, standard deviation (Std. Deviation), as well as the minimum and maximum scores.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Social Media Addiction Score

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest Score	8	72	76	73.88	1.458
Posttest Score	8	34	60	47.88	8.899
Valid N (listwise)	8				

Based on Table 1 above, the descriptive data of the 8 participants in the study can be observed. Before the intervention, the social media addiction score (Pretest Score) had a mean (M) of 73.88 with a standard deviation (SD) of 1.458. The lowest score at the pretest stage was 72, and the highest score was 76. After the participants received the group counseling intervention using the overcorrection technique, the social media addiction score (Posttest Score) showed a mean (M) of 47.88 with a standard deviation (SD) of 8.899. The lowest score at the posttest stage was 34, and the highest score was 60.

Overall, the descriptive data indicate a decrease in the average social media addiction score by 26 points, from 73.88 to 47.88, after the intervention was administered. This decrease suggests that there was a positive change in the participants' social media addiction levels after undergoing the group counseling program.

Prerequisite Test Results

Before conducting the hypothesis test, a normality test was performed to ensure that the assumptions of the parametric Paired Sample T-Test were met. The normality test aims to determine whether the score difference data (paired differences) between the pretest and posttest come from a normally distributed population. The normality test used was the Shapiro-Wilk Test because it is recommended for small sample sizes ($N < 50$) (Pallant, 2020). The results of the normality test are presented in Table 2 below.

Based on Table 2, the results of the Shapiro-Wilk normality test on the score difference data show a statistic value of .982 with a significance (Sig.) value of .970. The decision rule is that if the significance value is greater than alpha ($\alpha=0.05$), the data is considered to be normally distributed (Field, 2018). Since the obtained significance value ($p = .970$) is much greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the normality assumption has been met. Therefore, data analysis to test the research hypothesis can proceed using the parametric statistical test, the Paired Sample T-Test.

Table 2. Results of the Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test on the Difference in Scores

	Shapiro-Wilk Statistic Sig. Score Difference (Posttest - Pretest) 0.982 x 0.97

Based on Table 2, the results of the Shapiro-Wilk normality test on the score difference data show a significance (Sig.) value of .970. The decision rule is that if the significance value is greater than alpha ($\alpha = 0.05$), the data is considered normally distributed

(Field, 2018). Since the obtained significance value ($p = .970$) is much greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the normality assumption for the score differences has been met. This justification is crucial because the primary assumption of the Paired Sample T-Test is normality in the difference scores, not in the individual pretest or posttest scores (Gravetter, Frederick J.; Forzano, 2018). Therefore, even though the sample size is relatively small ($N = 8$), the data empirically meet the prerequisites for analysis using the parametric statistical test, the Paired Sample T-Test. The need for a non-parametric test, such as the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test, is not required since the normality assumption has been satisfied.

Hypothesis Test Results

After the normality assumption was met, a hypothesis test was conducted using a Paired Sample T-Test to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the social media addiction scores before (pretest) and after (posttest) the intervention was given. The null hypothesis (H_0) in this study was that there was no difference in the average scores between the pretest and posttest, while the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was that there was a difference in the average scores. Decision making was based on the significance value (p-value), where H_0 was rejected if the p-value < 0.05 . The results of the Paired Sample T-Test analysis are presented in full in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Paired Sample T-Test Results

Mean		N	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1						
Pretest Score	73.88	8	1.458	8.855	7	.000
Posttest Score	47.88	8	8.899			

Based on the analysis results in Table 3, the average social media addiction score before the intervention (pretest) is $M = 73.88$ ($SD = 1.458$), and the average score after the intervention (posttest) is $M = 47.88$ ($SD = 8.899$). The hypothesis test results show a $t(7)$ value of 8.855 with a significance (p) value of .000. Since the significance value ($p < .001$) is smaller than the established significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$), the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected. In addition to the significance test, the effect size was also calculated using Cohen's d_z . The obtained value is $d_z = 3.13$, which falls into the very large effect category according to Cohen's criteria. This confirms that the group counseling intervention using the overcorrection technique is not only statistically significant but also has a very strong practical impact in reducing students' social media addiction levels. Below is the data visualization of the difference in mean pretest and posttest scores.

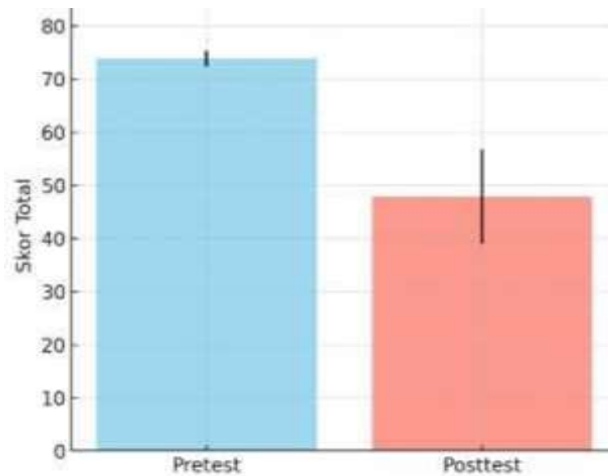


Figure 1. Average pretest and posttest scores with standard deviation

The data visualization in Figure 1 shows the difference in mean social media addiction scores between the pretest and posttest conditions. The mean pretest score is higher than the posttest score, with a sharp decline observed after the group counseling intervention using the overcorrection technique. The error bars indicate variability in the scores among participants, but overall, the pattern of change consistently shows a decrease. This visualization supports the statistical test results, which indicate a significant difference with a very large effect size (Cohen's $d_z = 3.13$). The difference in scores is not only reflected in the mean values but also in the distribution of the data. Therefore, the distribution of pretest and posttest scores is visualized through a boxplot in Figure 2.

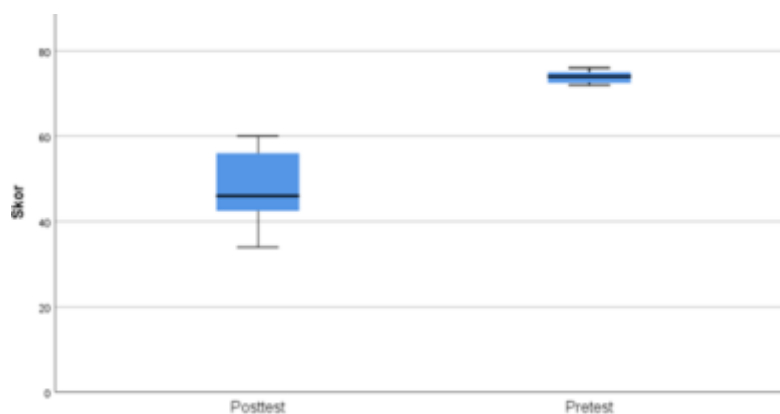


Figure 2. Distribution of pretest and posttest scores

Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of students' social media addiction scores in both the pretest and posttest conditions. The boxplot shows that the median posttest score is lower than the median pretest score, with a wider interquartile range in the posttest. This indicates that although there is greater score variation after the intervention, the general trend shows a decrease in scores. This visualization supports the results of the paired sample t-test and the Cohen's d_z effect size previously obtained, concluding

that the group counseling intervention using the overcorrection technique had a significant impact on reducing students' social media addiction. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant difference in students' social media addiction levels before and after participating in group counseling with the overcorrection technique. The decrease in scores from pretest to posttest suggests that the intervention was effective in reducing social media addiction among the research participants. This finding is further reinforced by the effect size value (Cohen's $d_z = 3.13$), which falls into the very large category, providing strong evidence that the observed change is not merely a statistical coincidence, but rather a substantial demonstration of the intervention's effectiveness in a practical context. These results provide a solid foundation for understanding the effectiveness of the overcorrection technique, which will be discussed in more detail in the discussion section.

Interpretation of Research Results

The results of this study confirm that group counseling services using the overcorrection technique are effective in reducing social media addiction levels among junior high school students. As hypothesized, the intervention led to a sharp and statistically significant decrease in scores. This difference indicates that the observed positive changes are not coincidental but are a direct result of the intervention (Jannatifard et al., 2021); (Shechtman, 2017). Therefore, these findings go beyond mere numbers and reflect a tangible behavioral change among the participants.

The success of this intervention can be explained through the mechanism of positive practice overcorrection, which fundamentally reshapes students' habits. When analyzed using the habit loop framework (Duhigg, 2012), this intervention systematically interrupts the maladaptive routine (checking social media), which is triggered by specific cues (boredom or notifications). The technique forces students to consciously and repeatedly practice a new, healthier routine, such as reading books or interacting directly with friends (Cooper et al., 2020). This structured approach is particularly well-suited for junior high school students, whose self-regulation and impulse control capacities are still developing. As such, they benefit from external guidance provided through counseling activities, which help foster flexible and adaptive behaviors (Yudo Dwiyono, Zaenab Hanim, Febry Putri Arbianti, 2022).

The effectiveness of the overcorrection technique is further strengthened by the group counseling context as a platform for intervention. The group dynamics provide crucial social support through several therapeutic recovery factors (Irvin D. Yalom, 2020). The factor of universality, or the awareness that they are not alone in facing this issue, can reduce resistance and increase motivation. Additionally, the factor of imparting information allows students to share successful strategies for practicing (Fahmi, M. Y., Lubis, L., & Rusman, 2023). Thus, the group functions not only as a place for

implementing the technique but also as a supportive ecosystem that accelerates and sustains behavioral change.

These findings align with previous research that demonstrates the success of behavioral interventions in addressing digital addiction (Ismail et al., 2024). However, what sets this study apart is its emphasis on intensive corrective practice. Unlike self-management approaches that focus on self-monitoring, overcorrection actively builds new habits through forced repetition, a mechanism that may more rapidly break the cycle of compulsive behavior. This uniqueness reaffirms the relevance of classical behavioral theory in addressing contemporary psychological challenges in the digital age, while also filling a gap in the literature regarding its specific application to social media addiction among adolescents (Mulkyan, 2019). Overall, this study demonstrates that the effectiveness of the overcorrection technique lies not only in its ability to directly correct behavior but also in its synergy with supportive group dynamics and its alignment with the habit-forming mechanisms in adolescents. The combination of structured behavioral intervention with a positive social context result in a strong and applicable intervention model.

Although this study was conducted with a relatively small number of participants ($N = 8$), this is understandable as the study is positioned as a pilot study. In the context of educational intervention research, a pilot study plays a crucial role in providing preliminary evidence of the intervention's effectiveness while helping refine the research design and instruments before being tested on a larger scale (Muasya & Mulwa, 2023). The finding of a very large effect size (Cohen's $d_z = 3.13$) provides significant practical value, affirming that the observed changes are not merely statistical flukes, but rather demonstrate the substantial effectiveness of the intervention. Therefore, the results obtained in this study are not only statistically significant but also hold important value as a foundation for further research development with a stronger experimental design (e.g., involving a control group) and a larger sample size.

The findings of this study have several important implications, both practically for professionals in the field and theoretically for the development of knowledge. For practitioners such as school counselors or guidance and counseling teachers, this research offers a concrete, structured, and empirically tested intervention model. Amid the growing complexity of students' digital behaviors, group counseling services with the overcorrection technique can be adopted as an efficient and effective program to address social media addiction. Its structured nature and focus on practicing positive behaviors make it easy to implement and evaluate.

On the theoretical front, this study makes a valuable contribution by demonstrating the relevance of classical behavioral theory in addressing contemporary psychological issues. This study fills a knowledge gap by providing the first empirical evidence on the effectiveness of integrating the overcorrection technique in a group counseling

format for addressing digital addiction among adolescents. Thus, these findings reaffirm that the principles of behavior modification remain a strong foundation for developing interventions, even in the digital age.

Although this study produced significant findings, it is important to acknowledge several limitations. First, the research design used was a pre-experimental one-group pretest-posttest without a control group. The absence of a control group means that the researcher cannot fully rule out the possibility that the observed changes were influenced by external factors beyond the intervention, such as the attention the students received during the study or other events in their environment (Shadish et al., 2002). Second, the sample size used in this study was very small ($N = 8$). This limitation affects the generalizability of the research findings (Sugiyono, 2013). In other words, the significant findings from this small group should be interpreted with caution and cannot automatically be considered representative of the broader population of junior high school students. Third, the measurement of the social media addiction variable relied entirely on a self-report instrument (questionnaire). This method is susceptible to biases, such as social desirability bias (Azwar, 2013), where students may be inclined to provide answers, they believe are socially acceptable or expected by the researcher, rather than those that accurately reflect their actual condition. This limitation also opens opportunities for future research with broader designs and scope.

D. Conclusions

In conclusion, this study provides robust empirical evidence that group counseling incorporating the overcorrection technique is a highly effective intervention for mitigating social media addiction among junior high school students. The key finding is a statistically significant reduction in addiction scores ($p < .001$), supported by a very large effect size (Cohen's $d_z = 3.13$). This indicates that the intervention's impact is not merely a statistical artifact but represents a substantial and practical change in student behavior. The novelty and success of this approach lie in its strategic integration of a behavioral correction method within a supportive group dynamic, addressing both the habitual and social dimensions of digital addiction. The primary practical implication is straightforward: school counselors should adopt and integrate this overcorrection-based protocol into their service offerings. It provides a structured, evidence-based strategy to address a pervasive modern issue. Counselor education and professional development programs can include training on this technique, empowering practitioners with a concrete tool for behavioral intervention. Furthermore, the group format makes it a resource-efficient method, potentially benefiting multiple students simultaneously while leveraging peer support. For future research, several avenues are recommended. First, longitudinal studies are needed to assess the durability of these positive effects over time and to identify potential need for booster sessions. Second, research should explore the efficacy of this technique with different demographics, such as high school students or young adults, and across

varied cultural contexts. Third, investigating the specific mechanisms of change such as which components of the overcorrection procedure or group process are most active would refine the intervention. Finally, comparative studies pitting this approach against other therapeutic modalities (e.g., CBT-based groups) would help situate it within a broader toolkit of evidence-based practices for behavioral addiction.

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