

Development of Blind Walk Game Media to Train Students' Interpersonal Communication Skills

Nuri Maulida¹, Ahmad Syarqawi¹

¹Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia

Corresponding author e-mail: nuri303221001@uinsu.ac.id

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Abstract: Junior high school students often experience interpersonal communication difficulties, including expressing opinions, building trust, listening actively, and cooperating with peers. This study aimed to develop and assess a Blind Walk game-based medium for group guidance services designed to train students' interpersonal communication skills. The study employed a Research and Development (R&D) approach using the 4D model: Define, Design, Develop, and Disseminate. However, the development process was limited to the Develop stage. The participants were eight eighth-grade students from SMP Swasta Cerdas Murni. Data were collected through interviews and questionnaires using media and material expert validation sheets, a guidance counselor response questionnaire, and a student response questionnaire. The media expert awarded a score of 80%, categorized as valid, while the material expert awarded 90%, categorized as very valid. Practicality scores reached 94% from the guidance counselor and 96.5% from the students, both categorized as very practical. The product was designed to facilitate cooperation, trust-building, clear instruction delivery, and active listening during group guidance activities. These findings indicate that the developed medium is valid and practical for limited use. Further experimental research is required to determine its effectiveness in improving interpersonal communication skills.

Keywords: Blind Walk, Group Guidance, Interpersonal Communication

A. Introduction

Humans are social beings whose needs cannot be met entirely without interaction and support from others. In school, students interact with peers, teachers, and other members of the school community. Through these interactions, they acquire not only academic knowledge but also social skills that become increasingly important during adolescence (Qin et al., 2026).

Adolescence is one of the most important developmental periods in the human lifespan. Early adolescence, generally occurring between the ages of 11 and 14, often corresponds with the transition from primary school to junior high school. At this stage, students increasingly engage in social interaction and begin to develop more

complex relationships with peers. Therefore, social interaction is an inseparable part of students' daily lives at school. Communication is among the essential abilities that students need to develop. Adolescents commonly join and interact with peer groups as part of their social development. One of their developmental tasks is to establish interpersonal relationships and communicate more maturely with peers of different backgrounds and characteristics (Li et al., 2020; Osher et al., 2020).

Students possess different levels of communication ability, and not all of them communicate effectively in interpersonal situations. Communication difficulties may appear as shyness, conflict with peers, reluctance to express opinions, limited participation in group activities, or inappropriate responses during interaction. Effective interpersonal communication is therefore important for building positive and meaningful relationships in the school environment (Ibrahim & El Zataari, 2020; Kiuru et al., 2020).

Interpersonal communication is the exchange of messages, ideas, feelings, and responses between two or more individuals who influence one another. It enables participants to share information, develop mutual understanding, and coordinate their actions. Because the communication process is reciprocal, each participant functions as both a sender and a receiver of messages. Interpersonal communication occurs when individuals respond to one another directly and mutually influence the interaction. It is characterized by reciprocal feedback, personal involvement, and a specific relational purpose. These characteristics distinguish interpersonal communication from communication directed toward a broad or anonymous audience (Smailhodzic et al., 2026; Villoresi et al., 2026). Interpersonal communication skills are particularly important for students because peer interactions often involve differences of opinion, cooperation, emotional responses, and potential conflict (Huang & Lajoie, 2023; Lobczowski et al., 2021). Students who communicate effectively are better able to express their needs, understand others, resolve disagreements, and establish harmonious relationships with peers and teachers. The development of students' interpersonal communication skills therefore requires systematic support within the school environment. Guidance and counseling teachers play an important role in identifying communication difficulties and providing services that help students interact more openly, appropriately, and confidently. Interpersonal communication skills can also guide counselors in designing interventions for students who experience social or relational problems.

Guidance and counseling teachers are professionals who assist students in developing their potential, addressing personal and social problems, and establishing positive learning habits. Previous findings have identified several interpersonal communication difficulties among students, including ineffective interaction, nervousness when speaking in front of the class, reluctance to initiate conversations, and difficulty communicating with peers, teachers, and other members of the school community. Previous findings at SMP Negeri 4 Pariaman

showed that some students experienced difficulty responding to peers, initiating conversations with teachers, expressing opinions, demonstrating empathy, and avoiding harsh language. These conditions indicate that school counselors need innovative and engaging guidance and counseling services that encourage students to participate actively in the service process (Savitz-Romer et al., 2021). Previous studies have reported improvements in students' interpersonal communication after group guidance or counseling activities incorporating word-guessing and other games. Nevertheless, game-based media specifically designed to train interpersonal communication through Blind Walk activities remain limited, particularly in junior high school guidance and counseling services. Accordingly, this study developed a Blind Walk game-based medium and examined the needs underlying its development, the development process, and its validity and practicality (Hocking et al., 2022). The Blind Walk activity involves specific roles, cooperation, and structured rules. During implementation, students must provide clear instructions, listen carefully, coordinate their movements, and build trust among group members. These activities are expected to provide meaningful opportunities to practice interpersonal communication.

Games can serve several functions in group guidance. They can direct activities toward specific service objectives, create a more engaging group atmosphere, encourage active participation, and reduce students' boredom during the guidance process. Interviews with the guidance and counseling teacher and initial observations at SMP Swasta Cerdas Murni indicated that some students had relatively weak interpersonal communication skills. The observed difficulties included limited openness during interaction, a tendency to suppress feelings, and difficulty expressing opinions accurately. Some students also generalized their personal experiences to others, which affected the way they communicated in social situations (Sjølief et al., 2022).

The existing services were still delivered primarily through conventional approaches that did not actively involve students (Abedi, 2024). More interactive media were therefore needed to support group guidance services. A systematically designed Blind Walk game-based medium was considered relevant because it could provide students with direct opportunities to practice communication, cooperation, active listening, and trust-building.

Based on the identified needs and research gap, this study addressed the research questions: 1) What interpersonal communication needs and difficulties are experienced by eighth-grade students at SMP Swasta Cerdas Murni? 2) How was the Blind Walk game-based medium developed through the Define, Design, and Develop stages of the 4D model to train students' interpersonal communication skills? 3) What levels of validity and practicality did the developed Blind Walk game-based medium achieve based on assessments by experts, the guidance counselor, and students?

B. Methods

This study employed a Research and Development (R&D) approach to design, develop, and assess the feasibility and practicality of a Blind Walk game-based medium (Phelan et al., 2023). The approach was selected because the study focused on producing an educational guidance product and evaluating whether it was suitable for limited use. The study adopted the 4D development model, which consists of four stages: Define, Design, Develop, and Disseminate. However, the process was limited to the Develop stage because the product had not yet been implemented or distributed on a broader scale. The participants were eight students from class VIII-B at SMP Swasta Cerdas Murni, located on Jl. Beringin Pasar VII, Tembung, Percut Sei Tuan District, Deli Serdang, North Sumatra.

The product developed in this study was a Blind Walk game-based medium designed to train students' interpersonal communication skills. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. Interviews were used to identify students' communication difficulties and the need for interactive service media. Questionnaires were used to obtain media and material expert assessments, the guidance counselor's response, and students' responses to the developed product. The research procedure followed three stages of the 4D model. During the Define stage, the researcher conducted a needs analysis through semi-structured interviews with the guidance and counseling teacher and students (Keshf & Khanum, 2021; Murphy, 2022). The analysis focused on interpersonal communication difficulties and the need for suitable group guidance media. During the Design stage, the researcher prepared the product concept, game rules, roles, route, guidebook, and assessment instruments. During the Develop stage, the initial design was produced as a functional product, evaluated by a media expert and a guidance and counseling material expert, and revised according to their recommendations (Aydin et al., 2023). A limited practicality test was then conducted with the guidance counselor and eight students. Validity and practicality percentages were calculated using the following formula:

$$P = F/N \times 100\%$$

where:

P = percentage score

F = score obtained

N = maximum possible score

Table 1. Validity and Practicality Criteria

No	Score Range (%)	Interpretation
1	81%-100%	Very Valid/Very Practical
2	61%-80%	Valid/Practical
3	41%-60%	Moderately Valid/Moderately Practical
4	21%-40%	Invalid/Impractical
5	0%-20%	Highly Invalid/Highly Impractical

C. Results and Discussion

1. Result

The development of the Blind Walk game-based medium followed the Define, Design, and Develop stages of the 4D model. The results of each stage are presented below.

Define Stage

The Define stage identified the students' interpersonal communication difficulties and the need for appropriate group guidance media. Interviews with the guidance and counseling teacher and initial observations at SMP Swasta Cerdas Murni indicated limited openness among students, a tendency to suppress feelings, difficulty expressing opinions accurately, and communication patterns shaped by overgeneralized personal experiences. The existing group guidance services were mainly delivered through conventional approaches that provided limited opportunities for active participation (Ocloo et al., 2021). These findings supported the need for an interactive medium involving cooperation, trust, and direct communication. Consequently, the Blind Walk activity was selected as the basis for product development. After the initial interview, a needs questionnaire was administered to all eight students in class VIII-B. The questionnaire was used to corroborate the interview findings and describe students' interpersonal communication needs across several indicators. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Student Needs Survey Results (SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree)

No	Dimension	Indicator	Response Distribution (%)
1	Verbal Interpersonal Communication	Expressing opinions clearly in class	SA 4; A 4; N 4; D 12; SD 8
2	Nonverbal Interpersonal Communication	Expressing feelings through facial expressions and body language	SA 4; A 4; N 4; D 12; SD 8
3	Active Listening	Listening to peers and providing relevant responses	SA 4; A 4; N 4; D 8; SD 12
4	Group Cooperation	Participating actively in group activities	SA 4; A 4; N 4; D 8; SD 12
5	Conflict Resolution	Resolving differences of opinion without conflict	SA 4; A 4; N 4; D 8; SD 12

For the indicator of expressing opinions clearly in class, the recorded responses were 4% strongly agree, 4% agree, 4% neutral, 12% disagree, and 8% strongly disagree. For the indicator concerning facial expressions and body language, the recorded distribution was also 4% strongly agree, 4% agree, 4% neutral, 12% disagree, and 8% strongly disagree. For active listening and relevant responses, the recorded responses were 4% strongly agree, 4% agree, 4% neutral, 8% disagree, and 12%

strongly disagree. The same distribution was recorded for active participation in group activities (Dunton et al., 2020; Moore et al., 2020).

For resolving differences of opinion without conflict, the recorded responses were 4% strongly agree, 4% agree, 4% neutral, 8% disagree, and 12% strongly disagree. Collectively, these responses indicated difficulties across verbal communication, nonverbal communication, active listening, group participation, and conflict resolution. The needs survey reinforced the interview finding that interpersonal communication remained an important concern among the participating eighth-grade students. The results provided the primary basis for designing a medium that required students to communicate, coordinate, cooperate, and respond directly to one another (Kim et al., 2022). A media needs analysis was also conducted to identify the characteristics of the product expected by students and to determine whether the school environment could support its use. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Learning Media Needs Questionnaire Results for Junior High School Students (SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree)

No	Dimension	Indicator	Response Distribution (%)
1	Media Needs	Interactive and engaging media are needed	SA 10; A 15; N 5; D 5; SD 5
2	Learner Characteristics	Experience-based or hands-on media facilitate understanding	SA 10; A 15; N 5; D 5; SD 5
3	Media Availability	School facilities support varied learning media	SA 15; A 10; N 5; D 5; SD 5
4	Learning Motivation	Engaging media can increase learning motivation	SA 15; A 10; N 5; D 5; SD 5

For the need for interactive and engaging media, 10% of responses were strongly agree, 15% agree, 5% neutral, 5% disagree, and 5% strongly disagree. For experience-based or hands-on media, the responses were 10% strongly agree, 15% agree, 5% neutral, 5% disagree, and 5% strongly disagree. Regarding the availability of supporting school facilities, the responses were 15% strongly agree, 10% agree, 5% neutral, 5% disagree, and 5% strongly disagree. For the motivational value of engaging media, the responses were 15% strongly agree, 10% agree, 5% neutral, 5% disagree, and 5% strongly disagree. The media needs analysis indicated support for an interactive and experience-based product that could be used with the available school facilities. These findings informed the selection of the Blind Walk format and the design of its practical components (Bredmose et al., 2023; Cohen & Dalyot, 2021).

Design Stage

During the Design stage, the researcher prepared a prototype of the Blind Walk game-based medium for use in group guidance services. The eight participating students were divided into two groups of four. Within each group, students

assumed the roles of direction giver and blindfolded direction receiver, requiring them to communicate and cooperate throughout the activity. The product included colored plastic bottles used as route markers, cups containing route maps suspended with wool thread, and a guidebook explaining the implementation procedures. The researcher also prepared media and material validation sheets, a guidance counselor response questionnaire, and a student response questionnaire (Selim et al., 2023).

Develop Stage

During the Develop stage, the prototype was evaluated, revised, and tested on a limited scale. A media expert and a guidance and counseling material expert assessed the product using questionnaires covering safety, ease of use, attractiveness, alignment with service objectives, and potential usefulness. The assessment results were analyzed to determine the product's validity and practicality. The experts also provided comments and recommendations for product improvement. Based on this feedback, the product's appearance and implementation instructions were revised. Table 4 presents the product before and after revision (Chung et al., 2021; Crompton & Sykora, 2021).

Table 4. Product Improvements

Validator's Recommendation	Before Revision	After Revision
Media expert: Color the bottle caps to create a more uniform, neat, and attractive appearance.		

Table 5. Media Expert Validation Results

Score Obtained	Maximum Score	Percentage	Criterion
40	50	80%	Valid

As shown in Table 5, the media expert awarded 40 out of 50 points, equivalent to 80% and categorized as valid. The expert recommended coloring the bottle caps so that the route markers would appear more uniform, neat, and attractive.

Table 6. Material Expert Validation Results

Score Obtained	Maximum Score	Percentage	Criterion
54	60	90%	Very Valid

As shown in Table 6, the material expert awarded 54 out of 60 points, equivalent to 90% and categorized as very valid. The recommendations included using a more readable font, adding illustrations that matched the game context and service objectives, and consistently italicizing foreign terms.

Table 7. Practicality Assessment Based on the Guidance Counselor's Response

Score Obtained	Maximum Score	Percentage	Criterion
47	50	94%	Very Practical

After the expert-recommended revisions were completed, a limited practicality test was conducted with the guidance counselor and students. As shown in Table 7, the guidance counselor awarded 47 out of 50 points, equivalent to 94% and categorized as very practical. The counselor reported that the product was engaging, met the service needs, and was easy to facilitate (Fjellfeldt et al., 2026).

Table 8. Practicality Assessment Based on Student Responses

Number of Respondents	Score Obtained	Maximum Score	Percentage	Criterion
8	386	400	96.5%	Very Practical

As shown in Table 8, the eight students awarded a combined score of 386 out of 400, equivalent to 96.5% and categorized as very practical. The students reported that the product was engaging, easy to use, and helpful in encouraging communication during the activity (Donelan & Kear, 2024; Tang & Hew, 2022).

2. Discussion

The validity and practicality results indicate that the Blind Walk game-based medium is suitable for limited use in group guidance services. The high scores from the experts, guidance counselor, and students show that the product's design, instructions, materials, and implementation procedures were generally understandable and acceptable. However, these results demonstrate feasibility and practicality rather than effectiveness in improving interpersonal communication skills (Freytag et al., 2022; Sasnal et al., 2021).

The Blind Walk activity creates a structured situation in which students must convey instructions clearly, listen actively, coordinate their movements, respond to feedback, and build trust. These actions correspond with important dimensions of interpersonal communication, including openness, responsiveness, support, empathy, and cooperation (Jaedun et al., 2024). The experiential nature of the activity may therefore provide students with opportunities to practice communication rather than merely discuss it conceptually.

The product also offers a practical alternative to conventional group guidance activities dominated by explanation or discussion. By assigning complementary

roles to group members, the activity encourages participation and mutual dependence. The direction giver must formulate understandable messages, while the blindfolded participant must listen, interpret, and respond carefully. This reciprocal process can help create a more active and collaborative group atmosphere (Barker Scott & Manning, 2024).

The main contribution of this study is the development of a structured Blind Walk medium specifically linked to interpersonal communication objectives in guidance and counseling. The product integrates physical route markers, defined participant roles, implementation rules, and a counselor guidebook. Nevertheless, the study did not measure changes in communication skills before and after the activity. Claims regarding improvement or effectiveness therefore require further empirical testing (Buljac-Samardzic et al., 2020; Harris et al., 2022).

This study has several limitations. It involved only eight students from one class at one school, which limits the transferability of the findings. The development process ended at the Develop stage and did not include broader dissemination. The evidence was also limited to expert validation and user responses, without a control group, pretest, posttest, or long-term observation. Future studies should address these limitations through experimental or quasi-experimental designs, larger and more diverse samples, and validated measures of interpersonal communication (Heier et al., 2024; Saraya et al., 2026).

D. Conclusions

This study developed Blind Walk game media through the Define, Design, and Develop stages of the 4D model to support group guidance services aimed at strengthening junior high school students' interpersonal communication skills. The needs analysis indicated that students still experienced difficulties in expressing opinions, using appropriate verbal and nonverbal responses, listening actively, participating in groups, and resolving differences without conflict. These findings justified the development of an experiential and game-based medium that requires students to communicate instructions, listen carefully, cooperate, and build trust. The developed product consisted of route markers, game maps, role arrangements, implementation procedures, and a guidebook for guidance and counseling teachers. Expert validation showed that the media obtained a score of 80%, categorized as valid, while material validation reached 90%, categorized as very valid. Practicality testing also produced strong results, with a score of 94% from the guidance counselor and 96.5% from eight participating students. These results indicate that the Blind Walk media is feasible, understandable, engaging, and practical for use in small-group guidance activities. Practically, the media provides counselors with an alternative to conventional discussion-based services by placing students in situations that require direct communication and coordinated action. It may help create a more active group atmosphere and provide opportunities for students to

practice clarity, trust, empathy, responsiveness, and teamwork. Nevertheless, the findings should be interpreted cautiously because the study involved only eight students from one class at one school, stopped at the Develop stage, and assessed validity and practicality rather than measurable improvement in communication skills. Future research should complete the Disseminate stage, involve larger and more diverse samples, use experimental or quasi-experimental designs, and administer validated pretests and posttests. Further studies should also examine long-term effects, implementation safety, and the specific communication behaviors most influenced by the Blind Walk activities across educational settings.

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