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## **Miracle Question Technique to Reduce Academic Procrastination in Junior High School Students**

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of the miracle question technique in reducing academic procrastination among seventh-grade students at SMP IT Grafika Pesanggaran. The researcher used a quantitative experimental approach with a Single Subject Research model A-B design. The researcher selected subjects through purposive sampling, selecting students with the highest procrastination scores as determined by the questionnaire. In phase A (baseline), the researcher measured the initial conditions of procrastination behaviour. Furthermore, in phase B (intervention), the researcher provided individual counselling services using the miracle question technique. This technique is designed to help students imagine ideal future conditions, explore optimistic hopes, self-potential, and desired solutions to their problems, thereby encouraging more positive behavioural changes. The research instrument used was the Academic Procrastination Scale, which was adapted from the original model by Ferrari, Johnson, and McCown (1995). The researcher used descriptive analysis to compare academic procrastination score data from phase A (baseline) to phase B (intervention) using Microsoft Excel. The descriptive analysis showed a gradual decrease in procrastination scores from 106 (very high) to 55 (low). Thus, the miracle question technique has proven effective as a counselling strategy for helping students overcome academic procrastination.

**Keywords:** academic procrastination, miracle question technique, solution-focused brief counselling

### **INTRODUCTION**

The educational process is a complex and comprehensive activity encompassing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development (Hamzah, 2012). Academic success is not solely determined by intellectual ability (Krismonia, 2023) but is also influenced by psychological factors (Gutiérrez-García et al., 2020). One psychological problem frequently faced by students is academic procrastination, a

behavioural pattern in which individuals tend to postpone tasks in favour of other, more desirable activities (Diniyah, 2024).

Academic procrastination can reduce productivity, impair academic achievement, and affect students' mental health (Tian et al., 2021). Observations and interviews at the research site revealed that several seventh-grade students had a habit of postponing schoolwork, exam preparation, and other academic responsibilities. One student even exhibited a recurring pattern of procrastinating until the deadline approached, accompanied by anxiety, yet still failed to complete the assignment, resulting in a decline in academic grades. Addressing this problem requires effective, focused, solution-oriented interventions (Fauziah, 2016).

Based on the needs assessment results, the proposed intervention in this study is Solution-Focused Brief Counselling. This counselling method actively emphasises students' strengths, potential, and aspirations, enabling them to find solutions independently (Roozeboom, 2020). One technique in SFBC is the miracle question, a counselling strategy that invites students to imagine an ideal situation in which their problems miraculously disappear (Carlson & Dermer, 2017). This technique guides students to identify the goals they want to achieve, the early signs of positive change they notice, and concrete steps toward achieving the desired solution (Abdulla, 2023).

The miracle question technique helps address academic procrastination. According to Kurnanto (2019), the miracle question technique can reduce students' academic procrastination by fostering awareness of positive change and encouraging them to take small steps toward improvement. Another benefit of the miracle question technique is that it can improve individual self-control (Widayanti et al., 2020). Given the limited research on the effectiveness of the miracle question technique in reducing academic procrastination in Indonesia, this study

aims to fill this gap by integrating Islamic values and academic character development.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

### **Approaches and Types of Research**

This study used a quantitative experimental approach with a single-subject research design using the A-B model (Hardani et al., 2020). This design was chosen because it is suitable for assessing the effectiveness of counselling interventions in depth for individuals, primarily when the research focuses on behavioural changes resulting from specific treatments (Kazdin, 2019). The A-B model allows researchers to observe behavioural changes immediately after the intervention, while minimising external variables that could confound the researcher's primary variables. Phase A (baseline) in the A-B model was used to measure academic procrastination before the intervention. Meanwhile, phase B (intervention) involved providing individual counselling services using the miracle question technique (Ray, 2015).

### **Research Subject**

The subject of this study was a single seventh-grade student at SMP IT Grafika Pesanggaran. The researcher used a purposive sampling technique to select students with the highest levels of academic procrastination, based on questionnaire results. Those who met the criteria were selected as the main subjects of the study. Of the 30 students, one subject had the highest level of academic procrastination.

### **Research Instruments**

This research instrument uses the Academic Procrastination Scale from Martín-Antón et al. (2023), an adaptation of the original model from Ferrari et al. (1995). This instrument includes four leading indicators:

planning, time management, task aversion, and self-regulation (Martín-Antón et al., 2023). Based on validity and reliability tests of the Academic Procrastination Scale, 30 items were selected, yielding a Cronbach's alpha of 0.906.

### **Research Procedures**

The study began with a preparation phase, which included obtaining legal permits, obtaining ethical approval from parents and students, and validating the research instrument (the Academic Procrastination Scale). A single subject was selected through purposive sampling, specifically the student with the highest procrastination score, which was then verified through observation and interviews. Once the subject was identified, the study entered Phase A (baseline), during which the frequency of procrastination behaviour was repeatedly measured to ensure that changes in Phase B (intervention) were due to the research intervention. Phase B (intervention) involved four individual counselling sessions using the miracle question technique within a solution-focused brief counselling framework. These sessions focused on visualising solutions, identifying successes, measuring progress, and formulating small, measurable steps. The final stage was data analysis to determine changes in academic procrastination scores from Phase A to Phase B.

### **Summary of Intervention Materials**

The miracle question technique is a key strategy within the solution-focused brief counselling framework, which focuses on solutions and personal potential (Kayrouz & Hansen, 2020). The miracle question technique can guide individuals to visualise in detail the ideal situation in which their academic procrastination miraculously disappears. The goal is to stimulate intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy to combat negative thought patterns, such as self-doubt (Purwani et al., 2021). This "miracle" visualisation addresses a lack of self-motivation by highlighting

the tangible benefits of identifying early signs of positive change, helping individuals observe small successes in each action (Lestari & Astuti, 2021). Ultimately, this technique encourages individuals to formulate small, measurable steps, starting with an easy first action, to overcome the confusion of getting started on a task, which is the core of academic procrastination (Chan & Ng, 2020).

### **Data Analysis**

This study used descriptive analysis in Microsoft Excel to assess the intervention's effectiveness. Through descriptive analysis, researchers compared academic achievement scores between the baseline (A) and intervention (B) phases. The results confirmed a difference between scores before and after the intervention. This analysis was chosen in accordance with the Single Subject Research design, which involves repeated measurements on the same subjects, thus identifying changes resulting from the miracle question technique intervention (Madssen et al., 2021).

## **RESEARCH RESULT**

**Table 1**

Classification of Academic Procrastination Scores

<b>Category</b>	<b>Class Range Interval</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very high	103-120	1	3.3%
High	85-102	10	33.3%
Moderate	67-84	16	53.3%
Low	49-66	3	10%
Very low	30-48	0	-
Total		30	100

The results of the distribution of the academic procrastination questionnaire in phase A (baseline) before the intervention were given, obtained data: 1 student (3.3%) was in the very high category, 10 students (33.3%) were in the high category, 16 students (53.3%) were in

the medium category, and 3 students (10%) were in the low category. Based on these results, 1 student with the highest academic procrastination score was selected for the research intervention (phase B).

**Table 2**

Changes in Academic Procrastination Scores

Research Phase	Scores	Category
Baseline (A)	106	Very high
Intervention (B) Phase I	94	High
Intervention (B) Phase II	80	Moderate
Intervention (B) Phase III	68	Moderate
Intervention (B) Phase IV	55	Low

After receiving individual counselling intervention using the miracle question technique, changes in students' academic procrastination levels were observed. At the beginning of phase A (baseline), students' academic procrastination scores were in the very high category (106); however, after four sessions of phase B (intervention), the scores gradually decreased.

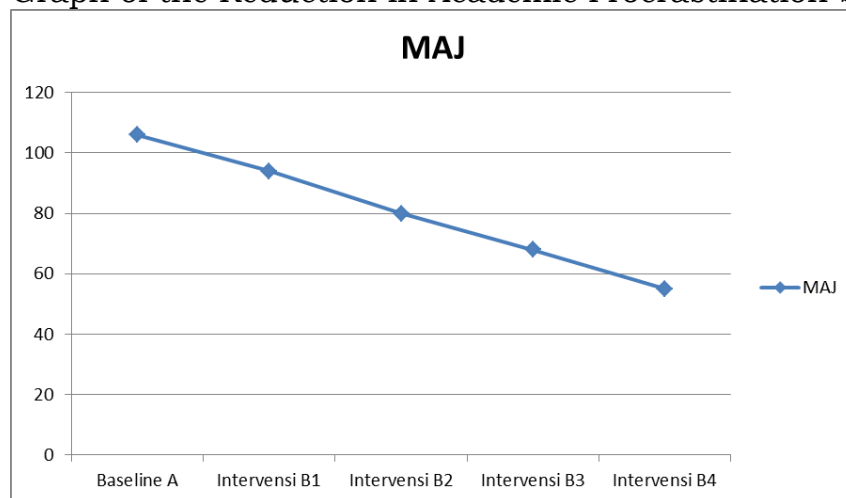
In the measurement results of the first session of phase B (intervention), an academic procrastination score of 94 was obtained. This score is in the high category; this result indicates the intervention is effective, even though students still show a relatively high tendency to delay completing academic tasks. The results of the second session of phase B (intervention) showed that students' academic procrastination scores again decreased to 80. This score falls within the moderate category; it indicates that students are beginning to control academic procrastination behaviour, although not yet at an optimal level.

The results of the third session of phase B (intervention) showed an academic procrastination score of 68. This score is still in the moderate category, but approaching the low category limit. This condition indicates consistent changes in student behaviour in reducing academic procrastination. The results of the fourth session of phase B

(intervention) showed an academic procrastination score of 55, which falls within the low category. These results indicate that providing individual counselling interventions using the miracle question technique can gradually reduce students' academic procrastination.

**Figure 1**

Graph of the Reduction in Academic Procrastination Scores



Based on the graph, the decrease in academic procrastination scores from 106 to 55 shows that the miracle question technique helps students visualise positive goals, build internal motivation, and develop concrete strategies to reduce academic procrastination.

## **DISCUSSION**

The results of this study indicate that individual counselling services using the miracle question technique within a solution-focused brief counselling approach are effective in reducing students' academic procrastination. This finding reinforces the initial argument that procrastination arises not only from weak time management skills but also from an individual's inability to imagine themselves as individuals capable of completing tasks on time (Popowiranta et al., 2019). At the beginning of the study, subjects displayed four indicators of procrastination: the habit of delaying completion of obligations, a gap

between plans and actions, a tendency to choose more enjoyable activities than academic tasks, and a perception of time availability. After counselling, all four indicators decreased, demonstrating gradual changes in beliefs and behaviour.

The counselling material focuses on the miracle question technique, which guides participants to imagine what they would be like if procrastination were eliminated. This process of imagining an ideal state creates a psychological reconstruction of themselves as competent, responsible, and capable of completing tasks on time (Novriansyah et al., 2020). Psychologically, change occurs through the activation of internal motivation and future self-continuity, namely the individual's ability to see continuity between their current and future selves. When participants can imagine a life without procrastination, they begin to realise the concrete behaviours necessary to achieve that state, such as starting tasks sooner, reducing distractions, and implementing time-blocking strategies (Jaradat & Ababneh, 2021). Thus, the miracle question encourages a shift in focus from problems to solutions, which, in turn, leads to behavioural change (Pujowati et al., 2022).

This counselling process narrows the gap between what is planned and what is actually done. Reinforcing small steps and exploring small successes helps participants realise that completing a task does not always require full emotional readiness. Emotionally, participants learn that discomfort when starting a task is normal and can be overcome through small but consistent steps. Furthermore, the counsellor's support in exploring internal resources, such as focus, learning strategies, and the desire to achieve, helps participants restructure negative beliefs, such as "I need an ideal environment to start working on a task." Thus, the miracle question not only changes mindsets but also prompts behavioural restructuring, leading to reduced procrastination (Fernando & Rahman, 2016; Rahman & Rosada, 2023).



The findings of this study align with those of Maykam et al. (2023), who found that future-oriented visualisation through miracle questions increases motivation and encourages changes in academic behaviour. Similarly, research by Asri et al. (2021) demonstrated that solution-focused brief counselling effectively reduces procrastination by strengthening individuals' awareness of their personal resources and clarifying concrete steps toward change. Research by Karababa (2024) also confirmed that solution-focused brief counselling techniques can improve self-control in individuals who tend to procrastinate. Therefore, the results of this study not only support previous findings but also expand the body of research showing that miracle questions can be an effective intervention for helping individuals break out of the cycle of procrastination by focusing on the desired future rather than on obstacles in the present.

Although this study indicates that individual counselling using the miracle question technique is effective in reducing academic procrastination, it is limited by the relatively small sample size and the lack of long-term follow-up. Therefore, further research is recommended to involve a larger number of subjects and conduct long-term follow-up to test the sustainability of the intervention's effects.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the research results and discussion presented above, the miracle question technique can reduce students' academic procrastination. Changes were clearly visible from the initial condition, which was in the very high category, to the low category at the end of the intervention. These results indicate that, after participating in the intervention, students improved their academic procrastination in a more targeted manner. In terms of application, the miracle question was shown to help students imagine ideal future conditions, foster motivation, and

encourage them to develop practical steps to reduce the tendency toward academic procrastination. This study has three main limitations: first, the generalizability of the results is limited by the small sample size. Second, the Single Subject Research design did not provide data for group comparisons. Third, the long-term impact of the intervention cannot be determined due to the lack of a follow-up period in this research methodology.

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