

# Psychoeducation as a Means of Developing Students' Academic Self-Confidence: A Growth Mindset and Cognitive Restructuring Approach

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## ABSTRACT

Academic self-confidence is essential for student success but often becomes a challenge in presentations and classroom interactions. This study evaluated a one-day psychoeducational intervention integrating growth mindset and cognitive restructuring to enhance students' academic self-confidence. The intervention was implemented with 11 Communication Science students at Mercu Buana University, Yogyakarta, using lectures, group discussions, simulations, role-plays, and reflections. Effectiveness was assessed through pre- and post-tests. Results showed improved recognition of cognitive distortions, increased adoption of a growth mindset, and greater confidence in facing academic challenges, as indicated by higher post-test scores. The findings suggest that this programme offers a practical model for fostering non-cognitive skills and psychological resilience in higher education.

## Introduction

Academic self-confidence is a key determinant of student success. Situation analysis at the Faculty of Communication, Mercu Buana University Yogyakarta (UMBY) showed that many students experience low academic self-confidence, passivity, reluctance to participate, and difficulties completing assignments. In contrast, active students demonstrate higher confidence, as reflected in presentation skills, mastery of material, and class participation. Lecturers' observations confirm that low self-confidence negatively impacts learning outcomes.

Using Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model, this problem can be traced to multiple factors. Distal influences include socioeconomic status, parents' education, and unsupportive parenting styles. These are reinforced by microsystem risks such as demanding families without emotional support, campus social isolation, and limited academic guidance. Proximal triggers—sudden exams, deadlines, or conflicts with peers and faculty—further

exacerbate students' vulnerability. Conversely, protective factors such as family emotional support, positive peer relations, and constructive mentoring from lecturers foster resilience and academic growth.

Literature indicates that cognitive distortions are a significant barrier to confidence. Erroneous thought patterns such as negative labelling can hinder academic development (Dozois & Beck, 2008; Burns, 1980). Interventions that challenge these distortions through reframing and mindset shifts have been effective. In particular, transforming a fixed mindset into a growth mindset helps students view abilities as improvable through effort (Putri et al., 2023). Those with a growth mindset typically report higher self-efficacy, perseverance, and motivation, enabling them to approach challenges as opportunities rather than threats.

Based on these findings, a psychoeducational intervention was designed to strengthen students' academic self-confidence. The program integrates theoretical knowledge with practical skills, focusing on identifying and restructuring cognitive distortions and cultivating a growth mindset. Through this process, students learn to replace negative self-perceptions with constructive thoughts and apply adaptive strategies during presentations, discussions, and academic tasks.

The main objective of this intervention is to equip students with the knowledge and skills to enhance academic self-confidence and to apply these strategies consistently in their daily academic lives.

## **Method**

This psychoeducational intervention was conducted in eight sessions, systematically designed to encourage active learning among participants. All activities took place over one day, lasting 180 minutes, and were held in the PT meeting room. Global Intermedia Nusantara. The psychoeducational activity was conducted on the date. This activity was attended by 11 active students from the Communication Studies Program at Mercu Buana University, Yogyakarta, who were in their sixth semester or higher. Each session integrated various methods, such as lectures, simulations, group discussions, role-playing, reflection, and evaluation. Pre-tests and post-tests were administered before and after all sessions were completed to measure the effectiveness of psychoeducation. The assessment instrument consisted of 15 multiple-choice questions, designed to evaluate three main domains: cognitive distortions, understanding of growth mindset and fixed mindset, and techniques for applying

growth mindset in an academic context. The session structure consists of Session 1, which lasts 35 minutes (opening, administration of the pre-test, and ice-breaking activities), Session 2, which lasts 40 minutes (brainstorming on academic self-confidence issues in the classroom and material on the definition, types, and examples of cognitive distortions), Session 3 lasting 35 minutes (explanation of the differences between fixed mindset and growth mindset and steps for their application), Session 4 lasting 30 minutes (application of growth mindset in daily life), Session 5 lasting 20 minutes (reflection and conclusion), and Session 6 lasting 20 minutes (post-test and closing). The series aims to enhance participants' understanding and skills in developing adaptive thinking patterns and supporting their academic development.

## Results and Discussion

To provide a more straightforward overview of the changes that occurred, the findings are summarized in Table 1. The table compares participants' conditions before and after the psychoeducational intervention. It highlights improvements in their understanding of psychological mechanisms, mindset orientation, ability to apply constructive strategies, and awareness of peer support.

Table 1. Comparison of participants' conditions before and after the psychoeducational intervention.

No	Before Training	After the Training
1	Participants experienced academic self-confidence issues, such as anxiety during presentations, self-doubt, and passivity in class, but did not understand the psychological mechanisms behind them.	Participants are able to identify the types of cognitive distortions they experience and understand how these patterns of thinking affect their academic self-confidence.
2	Participants had a fixed mindset, such as believing that failure was proof of incompetence and comparing themselves negatively to others.	Participants are able to understand the concepts of growth mindset and fixed mindset and realise the importance of a growth mindset in building academic self-confidence.
3	Participants lack knowledge of specific strategies to address negative thoughts or academic challenges and tend to avoid or resign themselves to them.	Participants gain the knowledge to apply a growth mindset and are able to discuss its application in simulated academic situations such as presentations, discussions, and responding to criticism.
4	Participants feel alone with their	Participants are able to openly share

issues and are unaware that their peers face similar challenges.

their experiences and provide support to their group members during discussion sessions, creating a supportive environment.

### *3.1 Session 1 Activities: Opening, Pre-Test, and Ice Breaking*

The first session created an open and supportive atmosphere (Figures 1 and 2), an essential foundation for the subsequent sessions. All participants demonstrated active participation and followed instructions well. The pre-test administered at the beginning of the session was completed by all participants, enabling the collection of initial data on their understanding of academic self-confidence as a benchmark for subsequent sessions. Through the ice-breaking activity, a game called 'Positive Challenge,' participants who were initially hesitant to participate became more enthusiastic and willing to answer questions voluntarily. This game lightened the atmosphere and built participants' courage to speak in front of the group in a relaxed and non-stressful environment. This situation made participants appear more comfortable and open to engaging in discussions. Additionally, the facilitator began to identify participants who seemed to be passive or required a special approach to encourage more active participation in subsequent sessions.



**Figure 1. Opening**



**Figure 2. Pre-test work**

### *3.2 Session 2 Activities: Brainstorming and Introduction to Cognitive Distortions*

The second session explored participants' personal experiences related to academic self-confidence (Figures 3 and 4). The open-ended brainstorming activity encouraged participants to share the challenges they had experienced during presentations, discussions, and when asked to express their opinions in class. Participants began to realise they were not alone in facing fear and self-doubt. The discussion led to an introduction to the concept of cognitive distortions, explained simply yet profoundly. Participants could identify types of cognitive distortions, such as catastrophising, labelling, and emotional reasoning, from their own life examples. The facilitator actively guided participants in transforming negative statements into more logical and positive versions. This session significantly impacted the participants, as they began to reflect on how their flawed thinking patterns had been hindering their academic participation. The warm and open interaction showed that participants felt safe to share.



**Figure 3. Brainstorming**



**Figure 4. Cognitive Distortion Material**

### *3.3 Session 3 Activities: Introduction and Growth Mindset Exercises*

In the third session, participants were introduced to concepts of growth and fixed mindsets using easy-to-understand and relatable language (Figure 5). The explanations were conveyed using academic examples familiar to students' daily lives so that the material could be quickly absorbed. Most participants showed enthusiasm through questions and spontaneous responses to the material. The facilitator also guided participants through simple exercises to identify fixed mindset patterns that often emerge when facing failure and replace them with growth mindset patterns. Participants began to understand that an inability at one



point does not reflect one's overall ability. The steps to apply a growth mindset, such as recognising negative self-talk, focusing on the learning process, and accepting criticism as feedback, began to be absorbed well. In this session, participants appeared more reflective, with some sharing personal experiences that illustrated a shift in their perspective on academic challenges.



**Figure 5. Growth mindset and fixed mindset material**

### *3.4 Session 4 Activities: Applying Growth Mindset in Academic Situations*

The fourth session serves as a practical application of the understanding developed in previous sessions (Figure 6). Through role-playing and simulations, participants are directly engaged in applying growth mindset techniques in real-life situations such as failing an exam, feeling nervous during a presentation, or receiving criticism from a professor. Participants are encouraged to choose a problem they have experienced and demonstrate their response using a growth mindset.

This activity facilitates concrete and practical learning. The group atmosphere remains supportive and non-judgmental, allowing participants to feel safe to try and laugh when they make mistakes, yet still learn from the experience. Facilitators provide immediate feedback on each participant's response, reinforcing the importance of constructive language and flexible perspectives. The results of this session demonstrate that participants can internalize the concept of a growth mindset and apply it practically in their respective academic contexts.



**Figure 6. Purpose of the growth mindset app**

### *3.5 Session 5 Activities: Reflection and Conclusion*

This session began with screening a light and easy-to-understand reflective video (Figures 7 and 8). The atmosphere during the screening was relatively quiet, with participants appearing focused, some thinking or looking at each other when there were parts that felt relevant to their experiences.

After the video ended, an interactive discussion began. At first, there was a pause, but gradually participants began to speak actively. They responded to one another, shared perspectives, and started to recognise patterns of thinking they had been following, such as being overly demanding of themselves or struggling to accept mistakes. The discussion flowed smoothly and was reflective. Participants began to connect previous material with personal experiences. The atmosphere was not overly tense but remained serious, with many appearing deeply reflective and starting to open up to changes in their thinking.



**Figure 7. Question and answer session**



**Figure 8. Reflections and conclusions**

### 3.6 Session 6 Activities: Post-Test, Impressions and Messages, and Closing

The final session served as a moment of evaluation and appreciation. All participants completed the post-test enthusiastically, and based on observations, they worked with more confidence than in the previous pre-test. The post-test results showed a significant score increase, indicating that the participants' understanding of the concepts discussed had improved.

During the feedback and message-sharing session, participants expressed gratitude and satisfaction for participating in this activity. They felt more prepared to face academic challenges and better understood the importance of a constructive mindset. Some participants even mentioned that they planned to apply a growth mindset in educational contexts, social relationships, and personal life. The activity concluded with a group photo, marking the end of a meaningful and positively impactful psychoeducational session.



**Figure 9. Group photo session and closing ceremony**



**Figure 10. Post-test work**

This psychoeducation activity has several limitations that need to be considered. First, the intervention only lasted one day, limiting the time available for in-depth discussion of the material, participant discussion, and reflection. It impacted exploring changes in participants' mindsets, particularly when facing complex academic challenges. Second, the absence of follow-up sessions or further monitoring meant that it was impossible to ascertain the extent to which the effects of the intervention would last in the medium to long term. Based on these limitations, there are several suggestions for future programme development. It is recommended that psychoeducational interventions be supplemented with follow-up sessions two to four weeks after the main activity to monitor the sustainability of participants' application of the growth mindset. Providing modules or written guides on cognitive distortions and the growth mindset would also be handy as post-intervention tools.



The psychoeducational intervention produced significant improvements in participants' academic self-confidence. Initially, students reported anxiety during presentations, passivity in class, and a lack of strategies to manage negative thoughts. After the training, they could identify their cognitive distortions, understand their impact, and apply alternative constructive thoughts. This finding supports Dozois and Beck (2008), who emphasize that distorted thinking patterns contribute to vulnerability to academic and psychological functioning. Similar evidence was also highlighted by Burns (1980), who explained that labelling and catastrophizing can hinder achievement if not restructured. Thus, cognitive restructuring in this intervention effectively enabled participants to reduce self-defeating thoughts.

In addition, participants demonstrated a shift from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset. Before the intervention, they tended to view failure as incompetence, whereas afterward, they recognized that ability can be developed through effort and persistence. This result aligns with Putri et al. (2023), who found that students with a growth mindset show higher motivation and resilience in facing academic challenges. Likewise, Mayshita et al. (2023) showed that a growth mindset strongly correlates with grit and persistence in achieving goals. It indicates that the intervention increased self-awareness and encouraged adaptive learning orientations.

Another notable result is the role of group support during discussions and simulations. Participants realized they were not alone in experiencing low academic self-confidence and began to share their struggles openly. This finding is consistent with Hutagaol (2024), who highlighted the role of peer social support in building confidence, and Bandura (1997), who emphasized the importance of social persuasion in enhancing self-efficacy. Moreover, the collaborative and supportive group environment mirrors Sander and Sanders' (2003) findings that academic confidence is strengthened when students engage in a safe and encouraging learning climate.

Overall, these results show that psychoeducational interventions integrating cognitive restructuring and growth mindset training can enhance students' academic self-confidence individually and collectively. Similar interventions were also found to be effective in previous studies on resilience and academic stress reduction (Fitri & Kushendar, 2019; Puspitasari & Suminar, 2018). Therefore, the present study not only confirms existing literature but also demonstrates practical strategies that can be replicated in higher education to support students' psychological resilience and academic performance.

## Conclusion

Psychoeducational interventions focused on growth mindset and cognitive restructuring have been proven effective in addressing the issue of low academic self-confidence among Communication Science students at Mercu Buana University, Yogyakarta. Thus, this programme has successfully changed participants' mindsets from fixed to growth mindsets. The results show that psychoeducational interventions with a growth mindset approach effectively increase students' academic self-confidence. Participants understand the concepts theoretically and can identify cognitive errors, comprehend the importance of a growth mindset, and apply it when facing challenging academic situations. This change is evident in the increased positive attitude toward failure and the willingness to keep trying when facing learning difficulties. This programme has the potential to be applied more widely as a preventive intervention model for students facing academic challenges, particularly those related to low self-confidence. Additionally, growth mindset-based psychoeducation can also serve as a routine training model to support students' psychological resilience in the higher education learning process.

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