

## Implementation approach rational emotive behavior therapy as efforts to improve student discipline at SMTI Bandar Lampung vocational school

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**Abstract:** This study aims to analyze the application of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) in improving student discipline at SMK SMTI Bandar Lampung. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed to gain an in-depth understanding of REBT implementation in the educational context. Research data were collected through in-depth interviews with guidance and counseling teachers, as well as three 10th-grade students who frequently committed disciplinary violations. Data collection methods included structured interviews, direct observations, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted descriptively and narratively with the aid of NVivo 12 software to facilitate data organization and the identification of key themes. The findings indicate that the application of REBT techniques through individual counseling effectively transformed students' behavior towards greater discipline. Through systematic stages such as problem identification, goal clarification, and reinforcement of rational thinking, students exhibited significant changes in their attitudes and actions towards school rules. These findings contribute significantly to the development of more effective counseling methods for enhancing discipline in educational settings.

**Keywords:** Individual Counseling; Qualitative Approach; Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT); Student Discipline

### Introduction

In the field of education, discipline serves as a crucial foundation that supports the success of the teaching and learning process (Minhua & Hock, 2024; Parsons, 2017; Shulman, 1987; Singer et al., 2012; Sugai & Horner, 2014; Zins et al., 2007). Students who demonstrate discipline tend to achieve better academic performance and develop positive character traits (Bear et al., 2022; Blegur et al., 2018; Duckworth & Seligman, 2006; Foncha et al., 2017; Kipsang, 2008; Nadunga, 2019). However, various disciplinary violations remain a challenge in schools, including at SMK SMTI Bandar Lampung, where issues such as tardiness, truancy, and violations of dress codes frequently occur.

Research on student discipline management has advanced significantly, with various approaches being implemented, such as group counseling, behavior therapy, and other psychological methods (Danitz & Orsillo, 2014; Eyberg et al., 2008; Kazdin, 1987; Long et al., 2018; Nadunga, 2019; Osher et al., 2010; Prout & Prout, 1998). Among these approaches, Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) stands out as a prominent method. REBT focuses on changing irrational thought patterns that influence an individual's emotions and behavior (David et al., 2005; Di Giuseppe & David, 2015; Matweychuk et al., 2019). This technique involves cognitive, emotional, and behavioral processes to help individuals develop more rational thinking patterns.

The effectiveness of REBT has been demonstrated in various contexts, including stress management, anxiety reduction, and addressing behavioral issues in schools (Bowman & Turner, 2022; David et al., 2005, 2018; King et al., 2024; Turner, 2016). However, studies that specifically explore the application of REBT in improving student discipline in vocational school settings remain limited (Asghar et al., 2012; Belcher, 2006). While some research emphasizes the effectiveness of group counseling, fewer studies examine the use of individual counseling with REBT techniques in the context of student discipline. As a cognitive and emotional therapy method, REBT is uniquely effective in helping students recognize and

transform irrational thoughts that lead to disciplinary violations (Eseadi, 2023; Studer & Mynatt, 2015). In the educational context, a systematic and structured application of REBT can significantly impact positive behavioral changes among students (Banks, 2011; Kara et al., 2023; King et al., 2024; Mahfar et al., 2019).

The uniqueness of this study lies in its focus on applying Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) to address specific disciplinary violations, such as tardiness and truancy, within the context of vocational schools. Additionally, this research highlights the implementation of individual counseling, a topic that is rarely explored in similar studies. The combination of systematic stages in REBT application and collaboration between guidance counselors and students introduces a new perspective emphasized in this study.

This research aims to analyze the common forms of disciplinary violations occurring at SMK SMTI Bandar Lampung and describe the application of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) techniques in managing these violations. Furthermore, the study evaluates the effectiveness of REBT techniques in improving student discipline and provides practical recommendations for guidance counselors to systematically and effectively implement REBT-based counseling.

## Methods

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the application of the Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) approach in improving student discipline. The qualitative descriptive approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore subjective experiences and social contexts that influence student discipline behavior.

The research participants consisted of one guidance and counseling teacher and three tenth-grade students from SMK SMTI Bandar Lampung. Participants were selected purposively, considering their direct involvement in the counseling process and the relevance of their experiences to the research objectives. This ensures that the data obtained provide in-depth and representative insights into the application of REBT in the educational context.

Primary data were collected through structured in-depth interviews, allowing for a deeper exploration of participants' experiences with REBT implementation. These interviews explored participants' views, feelings, and experiences in counseling sessions using the REBT approach. After the interviews were recorded and transcribed, the data were analyzed using a descriptive narrative approach. This analysis process involved re-reading the transcripts to achieve a thorough understanding, followed by a coding process to identify key themes emerging from the data. The coding was done carefully to ensure that each theme identified accurately reflected the participants' experiences and perspectives.

The coding and data analysis process was supported by the use of NVivo 12 software, facilitating data organization and categorization of emerging themes. Using NVivo 12, researchers managed and analyzed qualitative data effectively, as well as visualized the relationships between identified themes. The themes generated from the analysis were then mapped to understand the relationship between REBT implementation and its impact on student discipline.

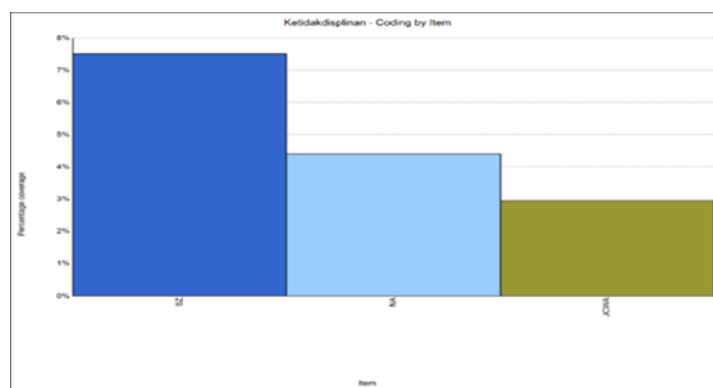
In addition, this study also involved observation and documentation as part of the data collection process, providing additional context and supporting findings from the interviews. Observations were conducted during counseling sessions and classroom interactions, allowing researchers to directly observe the dynamics that occurred and how REBT was applied in daily practice. With this approach, it is expected that this study can contribute significantly to understanding the effectiveness of REBT in improving student discipline in educational settings.



*SZ : Very undisciplined, because the students often break the rules, such as being late and their socks being too short.*

From the results of the interview data analysis, it produces World Cloud or the most frequently appearing words from the data. Therefore, the world cloud is a visualization of the analysis that has been made which is sourced from interview data.

Based on the analyzed data, it can be seen that there are 3 students who gave confessions of disciplinary violations in different schools. Students with the initials SZ dominate in explaining disciplinary violations (7.5%), students with the initials NA (4.5%) and JCWA (3%). The differences between each participant can be seen in the diagram below:



**Figure 2. Indiscipline Diagram**

The following is an explanation related to the indiscipline diagram submitted by a student with the initials SZ where the dominant one in explaining disciplinary violations is around 7.5%. When asked about the discipline in the school.

*SZ: Very undisciplined, because the students often break the rules, such as being late and their socks being too short.*

Then explain the sanctions that will be given and how the process works.

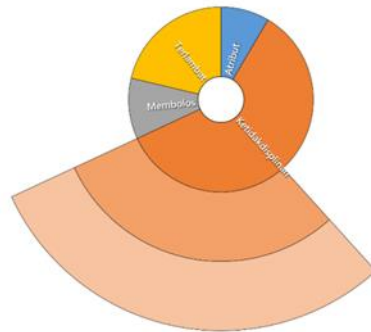
*SZ: There must be sanctions, such as having the goods taken or confiscated and then being summoned to BK. If you're like that, you'll probably be called by your parents, so if you want to take it with your parents, you'll be deterred and usually the parents will be called like that, sometimes twice, two letters first then the parents will be called.*

SZ also gave a statement regarding the importance of discipline and the violations that he often violates, as well as what efforts he has made so far so as not to violate school regulations or to be more disciplined in the future.

*SZ: Discipline is important, sis, because we are disciplined and organized. Just make it nice to look at. For me, sometimes my socks are being washed, but sometimes I'm lazy, Sis, I'm too*

*lazy to wear long socks because it's hot. The effort is not to wear short socks anymore, not to wear excessive attributes, not to be late anymore by waking up early.*

In addition to the chart in the form of a diagram that illustrates indiscipline, the researcher also presents a chart in the form of a Hierarchy Chart. The hierarchy chart is a map of the results of data coding carried out by the researcher. The hierarchy chart that the researcher obtained from coding data regarding the description of indiscipline is as follows:



**Figure 3. Overview of the Disciplinary Hierarchy Chart**

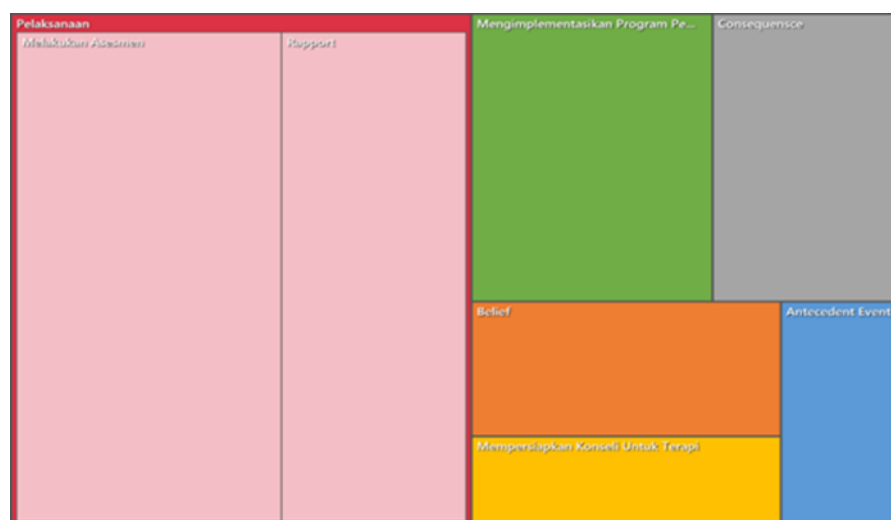
From the hierarchy chart, it can be seen that the most common depiction of indiscipline is tardiness, namely in the yellow hierarchy chart, then truancy in the gray hierarchy chart and attribute violations including wearing socks, bracelets and necklaces that violate school regulations in the blue hierarchy chart.

Based on the results of interviews with BK teachers at SMTI Vocational School, the implementation of individual counseling using REBT techniques to improve student discipline consists of several systematic stages, as follows:

1. **Identification of Undisciplined Students** In the initial stage, the BK teacher identifies undisciplined students through attendance or late lists. Students who have committed violations three or more times are called to undergo a counseling session. At this stage, the BK teacher explains to students about the counseling process and determines the time of its implementation according to mutual agreement.
2. **Building Good Relationships** The BK teacher begins counseling by building good relationships with the client. This is done by creating an atmosphere of familiarity, warmth, and trust. The BK teacher asks light questions related to the student's condition and activities to create a sense of security and comfort. Thus, students can feel free to speak openly and honestly about the problems they face.
3. **Problem Identification and Assessment** The BK teacher then identifies the problems experienced by students by starting from the student's perspective on the problem. The assessment process involves examining the problem faced, the individuals involved, and the relevant situation. Personality and non-psychological factors, such as the student's physical condition and lifestyle, are also taken into account in this process. At this stage, the BK teacher tries to actively involve students in the counseling process to get a clearer picture of the problem at hand.
4. **Clarification of Behavioral Goals** The guidance counselor then clarifies the student's behavioral goals to ensure that the goals to be achieved in counseling are specific and

agreed upon by both parties. An analysis of the student's motivation to change is conducted, and the basic rules of REBT are introduced. After that, the guidance counselor and the student discuss the approach to be used, and create a behavioral contract or give homework as part of the behavior change process.

5. **Identifying Irrational Thoughts** At this stage, the counselor helps the student become aware of the irrational thoughts that lead to negative behavior. The counselor evaluates these thoughts and helps the student understand how these irrationalities are formed and the negative impacts they have on their behavior.
6. **Exploring Rational Thoughts** After identifying irrational thoughts, students are encouraged to explore more rational thoughts and ideas. The counselor plays a role in convincing students that negative feelings and thoughts can be changed. In this process, the counselor engages in active discussion with students, using questions to challenge the irrational beliefs students hold and guide them toward more rational thinking.
7. **Changing Irrational Thinking** At this stage, the BK teacher helps students to identify and challenge the irrational thoughts they have. Students are encouraged to think rationally by considering the long-term impact of their behavior, such as delays in the context of the future world of work. The BK teacher also encourages students to develop a more rational mindset by inserting positive thoughts, so that they can be better prepared to face challenges in the future.
8. **Strengthening Rational Thinking** In the final stage, counselors help students develop sustainable rational thinking. The goal is for students to be able to formulate a more rational philosophy of life, so that they are no longer trapped in repetitive irrational thinking. Counselors also provide support and guidance to students to ensure that this change in mindset continues in the future.
9. **Monitoring and Evaluation** In the final stage, the BK teacher works together with the homeroom teacher or subject teacher to monitor the student's progress. If negative behavior is still repeated, counseling sessions will be continued up to 4-5 times. This is done because changing students' mindsets requires time and a gradual process.

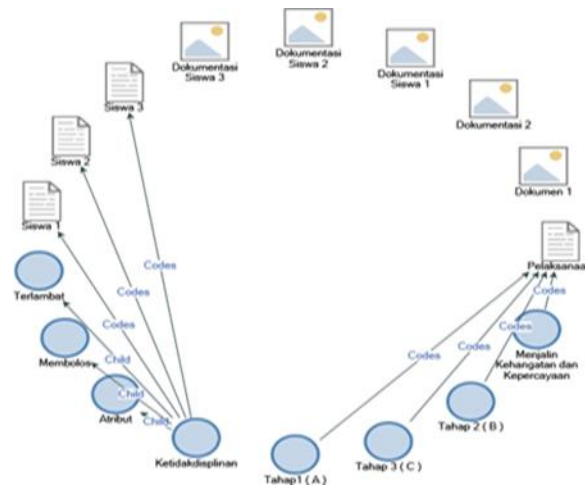


**Figure 4. Hierarchy Chart of Application of REBT Individual Counseling Techniques**

In the hierarchy chart, it can be seen that the stages carried out by the Guidance and Counseling Teacher in brief are building a counseling relationship involving the client



(rapport), conducting an assessment of the problem, people and situations, antecedent events, beliefs, consequences, preparing the client for therapy and implementing a treatment program.



**Figure 5. Map of Counseling Implementation Project Using REBT Techniques**

The project map is created based on coding themes that can be used to explore and present data relationships. Based on the project map created, the straight lines in the image show how the interview data is related to the coded interview data. Discipline in this case is related to being late for school, truant and regarding the attributes carried out by 3 SMK SMTI Bandar Lampung class 1 students (student 3) (sarah). In addition, the straight line also shows the implementation where initial counseling begins with building warmth and trust (report card), stage 1 (antecedent events), stage 2 (belief) and stage 3 (consequences).

REBT techniques involve three main approaches, namely Emotive, Cognitive, and Behavioral. Emotive techniques aim to change emotional responses with methods such as comparing emotional and rational aspects and role playing. Cognitive techniques try to change irrational thoughts into more rational ones through evaluating evidence and using alternative language. Meanwhile, Behavioral Engineering focuses on changing behavior by providing reinforcement and social modeling.

The REBT counseling process involves three stages, starting from realizing the irrationality of thinking, convincing that change is possible, to support in developing rational thinking and formulating a healthier philosophy of life. In implementing the intervention, close collaboration between the counselor and the client is an important initial step, followed by a thorough evaluation of the individual's problems and the client's preparation for therapy. The intervention process involves identifying and changing irrational thought patterns, with an evaluation of the progress achieved and the client's preparation to continue positive changes in his life. Thus, the conclusion of this study is that REBT is effective in helping clients overcome emotional disorders and develop more rational thought patterns to achieve a more satisfying life (Rajaei, 2010; Turner, 2016).

In implementing counseling interventions with the Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) approach, several specific steps need to be taken. First of all, close collaboration with the counselor is an important initial step in building a trusting and supportive relationship. Furthermore, a comprehensive evaluation of the problems faced by the individual is carried

out, taking into account individual aspects and contexts that can influence these conditions. The next process is to prepare the client to face the stages of therapy, provide an understanding of the counseling process, and motivate the client to actively participate in self-change. During the intervention program, the client uses the REBT approach to help the client identify and change irrational thought patterns that may be the cause of the problem. After that, an evaluation of the progress achieved is carried out, and the counselor and client evaluate the strategies that have been implemented. Finally, the final stage of the counseling session is to conduct a further assessment of progress, and prepare the client to end the counseling session by providing support and advice so that the client is able to continue positive changes in his life (Howard et al., 1986; Prochaska & Norcross, 2001).

## Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the application of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) through individual counseling is effective in improving student discipline at SMK SMTI Bandar Lampung. Through systematic stages, including the identification of undisciplined students, building positive relationships, problem identification, clarification of behavioral goals, and reinforcement of rational thinking, students showed significant changes in their attitudes and behaviors toward school rules. The findings identified common disciplinary violations such as tardiness, truancy, and attribute-related infractions. REBT techniques helped students recognize the irrational thoughts underlying their negative behaviors, replace them with more rational thoughts, and reinforce these patterns through counselor guidance. This research makes a valuable contribution to the development of more structured and effective REBT-based counseling methods to enhance discipline in educational settings, particularly in vocational schools.

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