



A Case Study on Low Learning Motivation Among 10th-Grade Culinary Students at SMK Z Surabaya

Kurnia Sintia Dewi^{1*}, IGA Noviekayati¹

¹Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya, Indonesia

Corresponding Author  kurniasintidewi@gmail.com^{1*}

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the psychological dynamics underlying low learning motivation in a 16-year-old female student, identified by the initials VPM, who was enrolled in Grade 10 Culinary 2 at SMK Z Surabaya, and to evaluate the outcome of an individual counseling intervention. This study employed a qualitative case study approach. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observation, psychological assessment, a learning motivation scale, and academic documentation. The psychological assessment included the Intelligence Structure Test (IST), Sixteen Personality Factors (16PF), Family Sentence Completion Test (FSCT), Draw-A-Person (DAP), Baum Test, and House-Tree-Person (HTP). The findings indicated that VPM's low learning motivation was characterized by avoidance of difficult subjects, inconsistent learning effort, low persistence, distractibility, limited classroom participation, and unstructured independent study habits. Although her learning motivation scale score was classified as moderate, behavioral observations indicated that motivation was not consistently translated into academic engagement. VPM's intellectual functioning was within the normal range, with relatively stronger memory and visuospatial abilities but comparatively lower verbal and numerical abilities. The case formulation indicated that low learning motivation resulted from the interaction of cognitive vulnerabilities, self-doubt, anxiety, unpleasant learning experiences, avoidance behaviors, and environmental factors. Individual counseling using a Cognitive Behavioral Counseling (CBC) approach and cognitive restructuring was implemented in five sessions. The intervention resulted in improvements across all assessed dimensions of learning motivation, with task choice increasing from 6 to 8, effort from 13 to 18, and persistence from 17 to 22. Behavioral improvements were also observed in study regularity, task completion, willingness to face difficult subjects, and development of a structured study plan. These findings suggest that cognitive restructuring-based individual counseling may be a useful approach for strengthening learning motivation and promoting more adaptive academic behaviors among vocational students.

Keywords: *Learning Motivation; Academic Engagement; Vocational Students; Cognitive Behavioral Counseling; Cognitive Restructuring; Case Study*

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INTRODUCTION

Learning motivation is an important factor influencing students' engagement, persistence, and participation in the learning process (Khafidotul Kirom Nuzulin Khumasi et al., 2025; Ningsih, 2025). Motivation does not merely refer to a student's desire to achieve high academic performance, but also encompasses the willingness to engage in learning activities, the effort exerted when facing academic difficulties, and the persistence to continue learning despite challenges (Firdaus Umar et al., 2023). Students with

adequate learning motivation generally demonstrate greater involvement in classroom activities, willingness to complete academic tasks, and sustained effort in achieving learning goals (Srimuliyani, 2023). Conversely, low learning motivation may be reflected in passive classroom participation, limited effort, avoidance of academic tasks, poor attendance, difficulty sustaining attention, and a lack of initiative to improve academic achievement.

During adolescence, learning motivation is influenced by complex interactions between individual and environmental factors (Raufelder & Kulakow, 2021). Internal factors may include cognitive abilities, self-concept, emotional conditions, personality characteristics, self-efficacy, and self-regulation. External factors may include family support, teacher-student relationships, classroom experiences, instructional methods, peer relationships, and students' daily habits (Hinduja et al., 2024). Therefore, low learning motivation should not be understood solely from academic grades or achievement. It is also necessary to examine students' learning behaviors, patterns of engagement, responses to academic demands, and the psychological and environmental factors underlying these behaviors (Koenka et al., 2021).

This issue was identified in VPM, a 16-year-old female student in Grade 10 Culinary 2 at SMK Z Surabaya. Based on an initial interview with the school counseling teacher, VPM demonstrated several behavioral indicators associated with low learning motivation. These included inadequate discipline, limited classroom participation, a tendency to avoid certain subjects, and relatively poor attendance. VPM was also reported to have repeatedly sought opportunities to leave the classroom, such as requesting permission to visit the counseling room or going to the school health unit during lessons. In addition, she had committed several violations of school regulations related to personal appearance. These behaviors may indicate difficulties in assuming responsibility for academic demands and adhering to school expectations.

The information obtained from the interview with VPM was relatively consistent with the concerns reported by the school counseling teacher. VPM acknowledged that she frequently lost focus during lessons and had limited motivation to engage in independent learning. She tended to avoid academic assignments, particularly in subjects she disliked, such as mathematics and English. Her dissatisfaction with the teachers' instructional styles was one of the reasons she reported for making less effort to participate in these subjects. Outside school, VPM rarely studied and did not participate in private tutoring or other supplementary academic activities. Furthermore, when receiving low grades, she tended to respond indifferently and showed limited motivation to improve her academic performance despite receiving reprimands from her parents.

The difficulties experienced by VPM were reported to have begun when she was in the first year of junior high school. Since that period, she has demonstrated a relatively consistent pattern of low engagement in classroom learning and avoidance of academic situations that she perceives as unpleasant or difficult. VPM reportedly left the classroom on several occasions to avoid particular lessons and sometimes visited the school health unit under the pretext of feeling unwell, particularly when certain lessons were beginning. This pattern suggests that avoidance of academic demands has persisted for a considerable period.

VPM also experiences difficulties maintaining attention during classroom instruction. She reported that she often loses focus while teachers are explaining learning materials and may engage in activities unrelated to the lesson. When receiving low academic grades, VPM tends to perceive them as ordinary events and does not consistently demonstrate an intention to improve her performance. Her learning interest is also strongly influenced by whether she likes or dislikes a particular subject. In subjects such as mathematics and English, which she finds less appealing, VPM tends to demonstrate lower engagement and greater avoidance. These patterns indicate that her

learning difficulties have not emerged recently but have continued from early adolescence into her current educational stage.

From the perspective of learning motivation, VPM's condition indicates difficulties in several important dimensions, particularly task choice, effort, and persistence. VPM tends to avoid participating in academic activities that she dislikes, demonstrates limited effort when encountering difficult or less preferred material, and shows insufficient persistence in improving her academic performance after obtaining low grades. Her low learning motivation is therefore not merely reflected in avoidance behaviors but also in the limited effort and persistence she demonstrates when dealing with academic demands.

The issue is particularly relevant within a vocational education context. As a Grade 10 Culinary student, VPM is expected to engage not only in general academic subjects but also in vocational learning activities that require active participation, discipline, task completion, concentration, and persistence. Culinary education involves both theoretical and practical learning, requiring students to follow instructions, complete assignments, work systematically, and maintain responsibility throughout learning activities. Low learning motivation may consequently interfere with students' optimal participation in both classroom and vocational learning activities.

At the same time, VPM's learning difficulties need to be understood comprehensively because low motivation may be associated with cognitive functioning, personality characteristics, emotional conditions, self-concept, interpersonal relationships, learning habits, and environmental factors. Therefore, assessment should not be limited to measuring the level of learning motivation. It should also explore intellectual functioning, personality characteristics, self-concept, emotional dynamics, interpersonal relationships, learning habits, classroom behavior, and academic experiences within the family and school environments.

A comprehensive assessment is particularly important because similar observable behaviors, such as poor concentration, task avoidance, absenteeism, and passive classroom participation, may arise from different underlying factors. Identifying these factors can help distinguish the primary characteristics of the problem from its secondary manifestations and provide a stronger basis for intervention planning.

Based on the above description, the case of VPM is important to examine to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of low learning motivation among Grade 10 Culinary students. The assessment is intended to identify VPM's psychological characteristics and environmental factors associated with her limited engagement in academic activities. The findings are expected to provide an empirical basis for developing appropriate recommendations and intervention strategies that address VPM's needs at both the individual and school levels.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study approach to obtain an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of low learning motivation in a Grade 10 Culinary student at SMK Z Surabaya. The case study design was selected because it enables the researcher to examine the problem within the student's actual educational and psychosocial context. The focus of the assessment was directed toward the student's learning behavior, classroom engagement, task avoidance, learning effort, persistence, attention, and psychological and environmental factors potentially associated with low learning motivation (Yin, 2018).

Although the primary approach was qualitative, psychological assessment instruments were also administered to obtain complementary information regarding the student's cognitive functioning, personality characteristics, emotional dynamics, self-concept, interpersonal relationships, and learning motivation. The findings from

psychological tests were not interpreted independently but were integrated with information obtained through interviews, classroom observations, learning motivation scales, and academic documentation.

Participant

The participant in this case study was a female student identified by the initials VPM, aged 16 years and 7 months, who was enrolled in Grade 10 Culinary 2 at SMK Z Surabaya. VPM was selected as the participant based on concerns raised by the school counseling teacher regarding low learning motivation, limited classroom engagement, avoidance of certain academic subjects, inadequate discipline, poor attendance, and limited effort in completing academic tasks.

To obtain supporting information, additional data were collected from the school counseling teacher and relevant academic documents, particularly the student's academic records. The use of multiple sources was intended to provide a more comprehensive and objective understanding of VPM's academic and psychological condition.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using several complementary techniques, namely interviews, classroom observations, psychological testing, a learning motivation scale, and documentation.

1. Semi-Structured Interview

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore VPM's academic history, learning habits, experiences in school, perceptions of teachers and subjects, attitudes toward academic tasks, family circumstances, social relationships, and factors perceived to influence her learning motivation. Interviews were conducted with both VPM and the school counseling teacher. Information obtained from the two sources was compared to identify consistency and differences in the reported patterns of VPM's learning behavior.

2. Classroom Observation

A structured, non-participant observation was conducted in the classroom to directly examine VPM's learning behavior. The observation focused on attention span, responsiveness to teacher instructions, participation in classroom activities, distractibility, task engagement, interactions with peers, and potential avoidance behaviors during instruction. The observation was conducted for approximately two lesson hours to obtain a representation of VPM's behavior within an actual classroom learning environment (Morgan et al., 2017).

3. Psychological Assessment

Psychological assessment was conducted to obtain information regarding cognitive functioning, personality characteristics, self-concept, emotional dynamics, interpersonal relationships, and learning motivation. The instruments administered included the Intelligence Structure Test (IST), Sixteen Personality Factors (16 PF), Family Sentence Completion Test (FSCT), Draw-A-Person (DAP), Baum Test, House-Tree-Person (HTP), and a Learning Motivation Scale.

The IST was administered to obtain information regarding general intellectual functioning, reasoning ability, comprehension, concentration, accuracy, and cognitive strengths and weaknesses. The 16 PF was used to obtain a profile of personality characteristics relevant to self-regulation, emotional stability, interpersonal functioning, and attitudes toward academic demands.

The FSCT was used to explore interpersonal dynamics and the individual's perceptions of significant figures in her life, including relevant relational patterns. The DAP, Baum Test, and HTP were administered as supplementary projective techniques to explore aspects of self-concept, emotional expression, personality dynamics, and perceptions of self, family, and the surrounding environment. The Learning Motivation

Scale was used to obtain an indication of VPM's level of learning motivation and its relevant dimensions.

The results of the psychological assessments were interpreted in an integrated manner. No single test result was used as the sole basis for determining the case formulation. Instead, findings from the psychological instruments were compared with interview data, observation results, and academic documentation.

4. Academic Documentation

Documentation was used to examine VPM's academic history and performance patterns. Relevant academic records, particularly grades or report cards, were reviewed to identify patterns of achievement and possible fluctuations in academic performance. These data served as supporting information for understanding the relationship between VPM's learning behavior, psychological characteristics, and academic outcomes.

Assessment Procedure

The assessment was conducted in several stages. The first stage involved initial problem identification through interviews with the school counseling teacher and VPM. This stage was intended to identify the primary complaints, behavioral patterns, history of the problem, and contextual factors associated with VPM's learning difficulties.

The second stage involved formulating a preliminary hypothesis based on the initial assessment findings. The preliminary formulation indicated a tendency toward low learning motivation, characterized by limited classroom engagement, task avoidance, inconsistent learning effort, difficulties maintaining attention, and low persistence in improving academic performance.

The third stage involved comprehensive assessment using psychological tests, a learning motivation scale, interviews, classroom observations, and academic documentation. Psychological testing was conducted on January 20, 2026, while the interview, classroom observation, and documentation review were conducted on January 26, 2026. Each assessment procedure was conducted individually or in the relevant school setting according to its specific purpose.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using a descriptive-integrative approach. The analysis began by identifying findings from each assessment method and organizing them according to relevant domains, including cognitive functioning, personality, emotional characteristics, self-concept, interpersonal relationships, learning behavior, learning motivation, and environmental factors.

The findings from different assessment methods were then compared to identify consistent patterns and discrepancies. Information obtained from VPM was compared with reports from the school counseling teacher, classroom observations, academic documentation, the learning motivation scale, and psychological assessment results.

The integration of findings was conducted through method and source triangulation. Method triangulation involved comparing information obtained from interviews, observations, psychological assessments, the learning motivation scale, and academic documentation. Source triangulation involved comparing information obtained from VPM, the school counseling teacher, and academic records.

The final analysis focused on identifying the psychological and environmental factors most closely associated with VPM's low learning motivation. The integrated findings were subsequently used to develop a case formulation and provide a basis for determining appropriate recommendations and intervention strategies.

Ethical Considerations

The assessment process was conducted while maintaining the confidentiality and privacy of the participant. The student's identity was represented using the initials VPM to protect personal information. Data obtained through interviews, observations, psychological assessments, and academic documentation were used solely for assessment and academic purposes. The interpretation of psychological assessment results was conducted carefully and contextually, with consideration given to the limitations of each assessment method. Conclusions regarding VPM's condition were based on the integration of multiple sources of evidence rather than on a single psychological test or observed behavior.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Assessment Results of VPM

The assessment results indicate that VPM experiences difficulties with learning engagement, characterized by inconsistent participation in the learning process, limited effort in completing assignments, and a tendency to avoid academic activities perceived as difficult. Based on the interview, VPM reported that she often had difficulty maintaining focus during lessons, particularly in English. When she encountered difficulties understanding the material, VPM tended to remain silent and refrain from asking the teacher for clarification. VPM also reported that her study activities at home were not conducted regularly, and that most of her time after school was spent using her mobile phone, socializing with friends, or engaging in other activities. These conditions indicate that VPM has not yet developed a structured study routine and has difficulty maintaining consistent effort in learning.

The interview findings were further supported by information provided by the English teacher and the school counseling teacher. The English teacher reported that VPM was frequently absent from school, resulting in missed learning materials and incomplete assignments. Although VPM still demonstrated a desire to complete assignments and memorize the learning material, her achievement remained suboptimal. Meanwhile, the school counseling teacher observed that VPM tended to show low enthusiasm, limited participation, and a tendency to avoid assignments when faced with material she perceived as difficult. Thus, VPM did not demonstrate complete rejection of learning activities; rather, she experienced difficulties maintaining engagement and effort when confronted with academic demands.

Observations during Basic Culinary learning also revealed a consistent pattern of behavior. At the beginning of the lesson, VPM was observed using her mobile phone and demonstrated attention only briefly after the teacher began the lesson. During the learning process, VPM was observed talking with peers, looking backward, looking at herself in the mirror, using her mobile phone, and engaging in other activities while the teacher was giving instructions to take notes. VPM also appeared relatively passive and demonstrated limited interaction during classroom activities. These findings indicate that VPM's engagement in learning remains low and that her attention to academic activities is easily diverted by non-academic activities.

From a cognitive perspective, the results of the Intelligence Structure Test (IST) showed that VPM obtained an IQ score of 93, which falls within the lower-average range while remaining within the normal range. VPM demonstrated relatively stronger abilities in memory and visuospatial processing, whereas her abilities in understanding verbal and numerical information were comparatively lower. This profile indicates that VPM possesses adequate intellectual capacity to participate in learning but may benefit from learning materials presented in a more concrete, systematic, and gradual manner, accompanied by clear instructions. This is important because difficulties in understanding

material, particularly material that is verbal or abstract in nature, may contribute to VPM's tendency to lose interest during learning activities.

In contrast to her classroom behavior, VPM demonstrated relatively adequate concentration during the individual assessment sessions. She was able to understand instructions, complete tasks systematically, maintain attention, and complete the entire assessment process without significant difficulties. The difference between VPM's behavior in the classroom and during individual assessment suggests that her concentration difficulties are not necessarily pervasive. Instead, VPM was able to perform effectively when working in a structured, calm environment with minimal distractions. Therefore, VPM's low classroom engagement is more likely to be associated with motivation, self-regulation, and learning-environment factors rather than being solely attributable to cognitive limitations.

In terms of personality, the results of the Sixteen Personality Factors (16PF) indicated that VPM tends to be relatively independent, aware of rules, and sufficiently responsible. However, she also demonstrated a tendency toward elevated anxiety and less optimal self-management when experiencing pressure. These characteristics may influence VPM's beliefs regarding her own abilities, particularly when she encounters tasks or learning materials that she perceives as difficult. This tendency was also reflected in the interview, in which VPM reported that she often hesitated to ask questions because she was afraid of making mistakes or felt that she would be unable to understand the material.

The results of the Family Sentence Completion Test (FSCT), Draw-A-Person (DAP), Baum Test, and House-Tree-Person (HTP) generally indicated a need for security, doubts regarding self-ability, a tendency to suppress emotional expression, and sensitivity to experiences of failure or rejection. These findings should be understood as supportive and indicative data rather than as independent evidence. When integrated with the interview and observation findings, the results suggest that emotional factors may contribute to the way VPM responds to academic demands. When encountering difficulties, VPM tends to remain silent, avoid assignments, or shift her attention toward other activities rather than seek assistance and sustain her effort.

On the learning motivation scale, VPM obtained a total score of 36, which falls within the moderate category. The dimensions of task choice, effort, and persistence were also classified within the moderate category. These results indicate that, subjectively, VPM's learning motivation does not fall within the low category. However, there is a discrepancy between her scale scores and the learning behaviors observed in her daily academic activities. Several responses indicate a tendency to pay insufficient attention to assignments, give up easily when facing difficult tasks, postpone task completion, and choose other activities instead of studying. Therefore, VPM's difficulties are more appropriately understood as learning motivation that has not yet been consistently translated into academic behavior, particularly in terms of effort, persistence, and active engagement.

The academic documentation further supports these findings. Overall, VPM's academic achievement was relatively satisfactory in most subjects, including Islamic Religious Education and Character Education with a score of 90, Local Language with a score of 85, Physical Education, Sports, and Health and Visual Arts with scores of 83, and Fundamentals of Culinary with a score of 80. However, her English score of 66 was the lowest among the recorded subjects. This finding is consistent with VPM's report of difficulties in understanding English and the teacher's observation that her participation and task completion in the subject were not optimal.

Assessment Findings Integration

The assessment findings indicate that VPM's primary difficulty does not lie in intellectual impairment but rather in low learning engagement associated with inconsistent motivation, unstructured study habits, self-doubt, and a tendency to avoid tasks perceived as difficult. VPM's cognitive abilities remain within the normal range, supported by relatively strong memory and visuospatial abilities. However, her comparatively lower verbal ability may cause her to require more time to understand certain learning materials. When these difficulties interact with anxiety, limited self-confidence, and inconsistent study habits, VPM tends to reduce her effort and engagement in the learning process.

Thus, VPM's case demonstrates an interaction among cognitive, affective, and learning-behavioral factors. The cognitive factor, particularly her relatively lower verbal ability, may increase the difficulty of understanding certain learning materials, whereas affective factors, such as anxiety and self-doubt, may reinforce her tendency to avoid academic tasks. Furthermore, unstructured study habits, mobile phone use, school absenteeism, and fatigue resulting from activities outside school may further contribute to VPM's low engagement in the learning process. Ultimately, this pattern contributes to passive learning behavior, task procrastination, low persistence, and suboptimal academic achievement in certain subjects.

Overall, the assessment findings indicate that VPM's low learning motivation is multifactorial and cannot be explained by a single factor. Rather, the difficulties appear to result from the interaction of her ability to understand learning materials, emotional condition, beliefs about her own abilities, study habits, and the learning environment and academic demands. At the same time, VPM's relatively strong memory and visuospatial abilities, capacity to follow instructions, and willingness to improve her study habits represent important strengths that can be utilized in intervention to enhance her learning engagement and motivation.

Psychological Dynamics and Case Conceptualization

Based on the overall assessment findings, VPM's low learning motivation can be understood as a problem that has developed through the interaction of predisposing factors, precipitating factors, perpetuating factors, protective factors, and learning behaviors manifested in her daily activities. The predisposing factors, including relative weaknesses in verbal and numerical abilities and unstable academic self-confidence, represent initial vulnerabilities that increase the risk of difficulties in following the learning process. The IST results indicated that VPM's verbal and numerical abilities were relatively less developed, suggesting that she may require more time to understand abstract material, language-based information, and numerical reasoning. These conditions are also related to her beliefs about her own abilities. The results of the DAP, BAUM, HTP, FSCT, and 16PF also indicated tendencies toward self-doubt and a need for security when facing certain demands. From the perspective of Social Cognitive Theory, Bandura, as discussed by Albarracín et al. (2024), explains that an individual's beliefs about their own capabilities (self-efficacy) influence behavioral choices, effort, and persistence when facing difficulties. Thus, relative limitations in academic abilities, combined with unstable self-confidence, may constitute an initial condition that increases VPM's vulnerability to low learning motivation.

This vulnerability was subsequently triggered by unpleasant learning experiences and difficulties in understanding certain academic materials. Based on the interview findings, VPM reported that she disliked several subjects, particularly Mathematics and English, because she experienced difficulties understanding the material presented. Such experiences may contribute to the perception that she is less capable of learning, which may subsequently reduce her willingness to engage actively in the learning process. This condition is consistent with Self-Determination Theory, as discussed by Wadi & Mukminin,

(2025), which suggests that motivation is influenced by the fulfillment of basic psychological needs, particularly the need for competence. When students repeatedly experience difficulties and perceive themselves as less capable of understanding learning materials, their sense of competence may decline, potentially affecting their motivation to participate in learning activities (Eberle & Hobrecht, 2021; Lastari et al., 2025; Patall et al., 2018).

The interaction between these initial vulnerabilities and precipitating factors subsequently developed into the current problem of low learning motivation. In VPM's case, this condition was demonstrated by her tendency to avoid subjects perceived as difficult, difficulty maintaining focus during lessons, limited willingness to ask questions, and the absence of a consistent independent study schedule. VPM also tended to remain silent when experiencing difficulties and occasionally postponed or avoided academic tasks. According to Schunk et al., (2014), learning motivation can be reflected in an individual's choice of activities (choice), the amount of effort exerted (effort), and persistence when facing difficulties (persistence). These three dimensions were not yet optimally developed in VPM, which consequently contributed to her limited engagement in the learning process.

Low learning motivation was further maintained by perpetuating factors, including avoidance of difficult subjects, low classroom engagement, and a tendency to become easily distracted while studying. These patterns formed a maladaptive cycle. When experiencing difficulties, VPM tended to reduce her involvement or avoid learning activities, thereby limiting opportunities to experience academic success. The lack of successful learning experiences could subsequently reinforce self-doubt and increase her tendency to avoid academic activities again. Wang and Eccles, as discussed by Prananto et al., (2025), explain that low academic engagement may be characterized by reduced attention, participation, and effort during the learning process. In VPM's case, her difficulty maintaining focus, passive participation in classroom activities, and tendency to avoid tasks when experiencing difficulties indicate academic disengagement that may contribute to maintaining her low learning motivation.

Nevertheless, the assessment findings also revealed protective factors that may serve as a foundation for positive change. VPM demonstrated relatively strong memory and visuospatial abilities, indicating potential for the use of more concrete and visually oriented learning strategies that are compatible with her cognitive strengths. VPM also continued to express a desire to improve her academic performance, although this intention had not yet been consistently translated into learning behaviors. In addition, support from subject teachers, the school counseling teacher, and the school environment represents an important external resource for strengthening her academic engagement. Zimmerman, as discussed by Xia et al., (2024), explains that the development of self-regulated learning can help students establish goals, organize learning strategies, monitor their learning processes, and maintain effort when facing difficulties.

Based on the overall psychological dynamics, VPM's low learning motivation can be understood as a cycle that begins with vulnerabilities in verbal and numerical abilities and unstable academic self-confidence, which are then reinforced by difficulties in understanding learning materials and unpleasant learning experiences. These conditions may generate perceptions of inadequacy, which subsequently encourage avoidance of difficult subjects, reduced effort, difficulty maintaining focus, and limited classroom engagement. These behaviors, in turn, restrict VPM's opportunities to experience academic success, thereby reinforcing her self-doubt and low learning motivation. Therefore, the case conceptualization and psychological dynamics of VPM indicate a reciprocal relationship between personal factors, learning experiences, and academic behaviors. However, her adequate cognitive potential, willingness to improve academic performance, and available support from the school environment represent important

protective factors that can be utilized to interrupt this cycle through appropriate learning strategies, strengthening self-efficacy, providing gradual experiences of success, and developing self-regulated learning skills.

Diagnosis/Problem Formulation and Prognosis

1. Problem Formulation

Based on the overall assessment findings, VPM's primary problem can be identified as low learning motivation, which is examined based on the concept of learning motivation proposed by Schunk et al. (2014). Learning motivation is not merely related to students' willingness to participate in learning activities, but is also reflected in their ability to choose and engage in academic tasks, exert effort, maintain persistence when facing difficulties, and demonstrate academic engagement throughout the learning process (Zainuddin, 2018). In VPM's case, low learning motivation is reflected in her tendency to avoid subjects that she considers difficult or less enjoyable, limited independent learning effort, inconsistency in completing academic tasks, easy distractibility, and limited active participation in learning activities. These difficulties are also evident in her day-to-day academic functioning, including suboptimal classroom engagement and inconsistent school attendance.

More specifically, in terms of task choice, VPM tends to avoid subjects that she does not like and has occasionally left the classroom during lessons. In terms of effort, VPM has not demonstrated optimal learning effort, as indicated by her infrequent independent study at home, several assignments that are only completed at school, and inadequate effort in completing memorization tasks. Meanwhile, in terms of persistence, VPM demonstrates inconsistent effort and is easily distracted when faced with academic demands. This condition is associated with low academic engagement, as reflected in her limited attention when teachers explain the material, frequent use of her mobile phone, and engagement in other activities during lessons. Thus, these indicators suggest that VPM's low learning motivation is not manifested through a single behavior, but rather through a pattern of suboptimal task choice, effort, persistence, and academic engagement.

2. Prognosis

Based on the assessment findings, VPM's prognosis is considered to be relatively favorable, given the presence of several supportive factors that can be utilized during the intervention process, although several obstacles remain. Internally, VPM still demonstrates a desire to complete academic tasks and improve her grades, possesses relatively good memory and visuospatial abilities, understands school rules, and is able to maintain her attention when learning in a structured and conducive environment. These factors indicate that VPM has the potential to develop more adaptive learning patterns when provided with strategies that are appropriate to her characteristics and needs.

On the other hand, several internal factors may hinder the change process, particularly unstable learning motivation, inconsistent learning effort, doubts about her own abilities, distractibility, and a tendency to avoid tasks or subjects perceived as difficult. External supportive factors include relatively positive relationships with teachers and the school environment, support from the school counseling teacher, and the presence of family members who can provide support throughout the learning process. Meanwhile, the main external barriers are related to learning situations that are occasionally less conducive and VPM's school absences, which may contribute to gaps in her understanding of learning materials. Therefore, these protective factors can serve as important resources in the intervention process to improve VPM's learning motivation, particularly through the development of structured study habits, reinforcement of successful academic experiences, increased classroom engagement, and consistent environmental support.

Intervention

1. Intervention Objectives

The intervention for VPM was designed to improve learning motivation through changes in thought patterns and behaviors related to the learning process. Specifically, the intervention aimed to help VPM understand the factors contributing to her low learning motivation, including her tendency to avoid subjects perceived as difficult, limited effort in completing academic tasks, inadequate classroom engagement, and difficulties maintaining attention. In addition, VPM was encouraged to identify negative thoughts that emerged when she faced academic demands, such as doubts about her abilities and the belief that she was unable to understand the learning material. By increasing her awareness of the relationship between thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, VPM was expected to develop more realistic ways of thinking, increase her effort and persistence in learning, and gradually demonstrate more adaptive academic engagement.

2. Intervention Method

The intervention employed individual counseling using a Cognitive Behavioral Counseling (CBC) approach through the cognitive restructuring technique. This approach was selected because VPM's low learning motivation was manifested not only through task avoidance and limited classroom engagement but also through the way she perceived her own abilities when facing subjects that she considered difficult. Within the cognitive-behavioral approach, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are viewed as interconnected components; therefore, changes in thought patterns are expected to facilitate more adaptive emotional and behavioral responses (Corey, 2021). The cognitive restructuring technique was used to help VPM identify, evaluate, and replace negative or unrealistic thoughts with more rational and adaptive alternative thoughts that could support the learning process (Shidara et al., 2022; Takdir et al., 2025; Yuzva Clement et al., 2026). Thus, the intervention focused on one primary problem, namely low learning motivation, while changes in thought patterns, increased effort, persistence, and academic engagement were positioned as supporting aspects in addressing the primary problem.

3. Intervention Techniques and Stages

The intervention was designed to be implemented in five sessions conducted progressively. The first session focused on exploring the learning difficulties experienced by VPM and identifying the thoughts that emerged when she encountered challenging academic situations. At this stage, rapport was established, and VPM was encouraged to reflect on her learning experiences, difficulties, task-avoidance behaviors, and situations that contributed to her difficulty maintaining focus.

The second session focused on understanding the relationship between situations, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors through an ABC analysis (Activating Event–Belief–Consequence). VPM was guided to recognize that avoidance behaviors and limited effort were not solely caused by the difficulty of the learning material but were also influenced by her beliefs about her own abilities.

The third session focused on evaluating negative thoughts using the cognitive restructuring technique. VPM was encouraged to examine whether thoughts such as “I cannot understand the lesson” or “I will definitely fail” were actually supported by evidence or were assumptions shaped by previous experiences. The fourth session focused on developing more realistic and adaptive alternative thoughts through the use of a thought record. Negative thoughts were gradually replaced with more rational alternatives, for example, changing “I cannot understand the lesson” into “I may not understand the material yet, but I can learn it gradually.” These alternative thoughts were then applied to learning behaviors, such as continuing to participate in difficult lessons,

making efforts to complete assignments, and asking for help when experiencing difficulties.

The fifth session focused on evaluating the changes that had occurred and reinforcing the learning behaviors that had been developed. VPM was encouraged to reflect on the changes she had experienced, develop a simple study plan, and maintain more adaptive patterns of thinking and learning behavior.

4. Intervention Implementation

The intervention was conducted in person through individual counseling over five sessions, with each session lasting approximately 45–60 minutes. The intervention began on Tuesday, February 3, 2026, followed by sessions on February 4, 5, and 6, 2026, with an evaluation session conducted on Friday, February 13, 2026. All sessions were conducted in the counseling room and followed a sequential process, beginning with the exploration of learning experiences, identification of automatic thoughts, evaluation of negative thoughts, development of alternative thoughts, and evaluation and reinforcement of positive changes. This sequence was designed to ensure that improvements in learning motivation were not limited to an increased willingness to learn but also involved observable behavioral changes in task choice, effort, persistence, and academic engagement.

5. Intervention Results

The results of the intervention indicated positive changes in VPM's understanding and learning behavior. At the initial stage, VPM began to express her unpleasant learning experiences, particularly when facing subjects she perceived as difficult. VPM also recognized that fear, low self-confidence, and the belief that she was unable to understand the learning material were often followed by behaviors such as difficulty maintaining focus, avoiding academic tasks, or making insufficient effort. After developing an understanding of the relationship between thoughts and behavior, VPM became increasingly able to identify negative thoughts that emerged and evaluate their accuracy. The subsequent cognitive restructuring process helped VPM develop a more realistic perspective, namely that difficulty understanding learning material did not mean that she was incapable of learning, but rather that such difficulties could be overcome through gradual learning and consistent effort.

These changes were subsequently reflected in VPM's learning behavior. She began to demonstrate a greater willingness to understand learning materials, complete academic tasks, and develop a more structured study plan. VPM also demonstrated a more positive attitude toward subjects that she had previously perceived as difficult. These findings suggest that changes in the way VPM perceived her own abilities may have contributed to increased learning motivation, particularly in terms of effort, persistence, and academic engagement.

6. Intervention Evaluation

The evaluation was conducted by comparing VPM's learning motivation scores before and after the intervention and by observing behavioral changes throughout the counseling process. The measurement results indicated an increase across all assessed dimensions. At the pre-test stage, VPM obtained a score of 6 for task choice, 13 for effort, and 17 for persistence. Following the intervention, the post-test scores increased to 8 for task choice, 18 for effort, and 22 for persistence. Thus, the scores increased by 2 points, 5 points, and 5 points, respectively, across the three dimensions.

The increase in scores was consistent with the behavioral changes observed during the intervention process. VPM began to understand that beliefs about her own

abilities could influence her feelings and learning behaviors. She also became increasingly able to replace negative thoughts with more realistic and constructive thoughts and demonstrated a greater willingness to face learning difficulties gradually. In addition, VPM began to show greater effort in completing academic tasks and developed a plan to study more regularly. Based on the overall findings, individual counseling using the Cognitive Behavioral Counseling approach and cognitive restructuring technique showed a positive outcome in improving VPM's learning motivation, particularly in the areas of task choice, effort, and persistence. However, these changes need to be maintained through continued teacher support, regular monitoring, and consistent practice of effective learning strategies so that the improvement in learning motivation can be sustained over time.

CONCLUSION

Based on the overall assessment and intervention process conducted over five sessions, it can be concluded that VPM experienced difficulties related to low learning motivation. This condition was reflected in VPM's tendency to avoid subjects that she perceived as difficult or disliked, difficulty maintaining focus throughout the learning process, and inconsistency in fulfilling academic responsibilities. VPM also demonstrated suboptimal learning effort, as indicated by infrequent independent study at home, limited participation in classroom activities, and a tendency to become easily distracted while the teacher was explaining the material. In addition, VPM tended to doubt her own abilities, fear failure, and lack confidence when facing academic tasks or being asked to perform in front of the class. These conditions contributed to VPM's low academic engagement and negatively affected her overall learning motivation.

The assessment results indicated that VPM's intellectual ability was in the lower-average range but remained within the normal range. VPM demonstrated relatively good potential in memory and visuospatial abilities, suggesting that she still had sufficient capacity to participate effectively in the learning process when provided with a conducive and structured learning environment. In terms of personality, VPM appeared to be relatively disciplined and independent, but also tended to be reserved, easily anxious, and uncertain about her own abilities. Furthermore, the assessment indicated a need for security, a tendency toward emotional withdrawal, and sensitivity to failure and rejection from her environment. These factors may have contributed to VPM's low learning motivation and academic engagement at school.

Throughout the intervention process, VPM was assisted in recognizing the relationship between thoughts, feelings, and learning behaviors through Cognitive Behavioral Counseling using the cognitive restructuring technique. VPM gradually became able to identify negative thoughts that emerged when she encountered subjects she perceived as difficult, such as believing that she was unable to understand the material or fearing failure when asked to answer questions in class. Through cognitive evaluation and restructuring, VPM began to understand that these negative thoughts were not necessarily accurate and could be replaced with more realistic and constructive ways of thinking. VPM also began to recognize that learning difficulties are a normal part of the learning process and can be addressed gradually through consistent effort and practice. This change in thinking contributed to greater confidence and motivation when engaging in learning activities.

These changes were reflected in the results of the intervention evaluation, which showed an increase in learning motivation across all assessed dimensions following the counseling process. At the pre-test stage, VPM obtained a score of 6 for task choice, 13 for effort, and 17 for persistence. Following the intervention, the post-test scores increased to 8 for task choice, 18 for effort, and 22 for persistence. In addition to the increase in scores, behavioral changes were also observed, as VPM began to demonstrate a greater

willingness to study more regularly, attempt to understand learning materials gradually, and make greater efforts to complete assigned tasks. VPM also began to develop a simple study plan to improve the regularity and consistency of her learning in the future. Therefore, individual counseling using the Cognitive Behavioral Counseling approach and cognitive restructuring technique can be considered relatively helpful in improving VPM's learning motivation and supporting the development of more adaptive thought patterns and learning behaviors.

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