



A Literature Review of Behavioral Counseling Interventions in Addressing Behavioral and Psychological Problems

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Abstract. This study aims to analyze the trends in the application of behavioral counseling techniques in addressing various behavioral and psychological problems, as well as to map the suitability between clients' problem characteristics, the use of ABC behavioral analysis (Antecedent, Behavior, Consequence), and the selection of behavioral intervention techniques. This study is important because most previous studies have primarily focused on the application of a single behavioral technique to a specific type of problem, while comprehensive studies synthesizing multiple behavioral techniques within contemporary guidance and counseling practices remain limited. This study employed a literature review approach using content analysis methods on scientific articles and journals published within the last five years. The findings indicate that modeling, assertive training, relaxation, systematic desensitization, and behavior contract techniques demonstrate different patterns of application depending on the characteristics of the problems addressed. In addition, ABC analysis plays an important role in determining appropriate interventions by identifying the relationship between antecedents, behaviors, and consequences. The study reinforces the relevance of behavioral counseling as a systematic, measurable, and adaptive approach in contemporary guidance and counseling services.

Keywords: behavioral counseling, behavioral techniques, ABC analysis, literature review, behavior modification



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Introduction

Behavioral and psychological problems among students and university students have become one of the major challenges in contemporary guidance and counseling services. Various forms of maladaptive behavior, such as academic procrastination, truancy, excessive anxiety, poor social skills, aggressive behavior, and dependence on social media and gadgets, have shown an increasing trend within modern educational contexts. These conditions not only affect academic achievement but also influence psychological well-being, interpersonal relationships, and students' ability to adjust within social and academic environments. Therefore, counseling approaches that provide systematic, measurable, and behavior-oriented interventions are highly needed to address these issues effectively.

The behavioral approach remains one of the most relevant approaches in guidance and counseling practices because it is based on the assumption that human behavior is learned through interaction with the environment. From a behavioral perspective, maladaptive behavior is considered the result of inappropriate learning processes and therefore can be modified through new adaptive learning experiences. This approach emphasizes the relationship between stimulus and response, as well as the importance of reinforcement, punishment, shaping, and modeling in shaping individual behavior (Nuha & Alamsyah, 2025). The main strength of the behavioral approach lies in its focus on observable, measurable, and empirically evaluable behavior through behavioral changes after intervention is implemented (Andriyani et al., 2022).

The development of the behavioral approach cannot be separated from the contributions of scholars such as Ivan Pavlov, B. F. Skinner, John B. Watson, and Albert Bandura, who developed the concepts of

classical conditioning, operant conditioning, observational learning, and social learning theory. These concepts later became the foundation for the development of various behavioral counseling techniques such as modeling, assertive training, relaxation, systematic desensitization, and behavior contracts, which are widely applied in educational and clinical counseling settings (Dwinda et al., 2025).

Various studies have shown that behavioral techniques are effective in addressing behavioral and psychological problems. Modeling techniques are commonly used to improve social skills and adaptive behavior through observational learning, while assertive training helps individuals enhance interpersonal communication skills and the ability to express themselves appropriately (Norrahmah et al., 2026). In addition, relaxation and systematic desensitization techniques are frequently used to manage anxiety, stress, and phobia through physiological response control and gradual exposure to anxiety-provoking stimuli (Köse Kabakcıoğlu & Ayaz-Alkaya, 2024). Meanwhile, behavior contracts are effective in improving discipline, self-control, and reducing maladaptive behaviors such as truancy, academic procrastination, and gadget addiction (Nursalim, 2022).

However, most previous studies have primarily focused on the application of a single behavioral technique within one specific type of problem. Studies synthesizing multiple behavioral techniques simultaneously and mapping the relationship between clients' problem characteristics, the use of ABC analysis (Antecedent, Behavior, Consequence), and the selection of intervention techniques remain relatively limited. In fact, ABC analysis plays an important role within the behavioral approach because it helps counselors understand the relationship between behavioral triggers, observable behaviors, and reinforcing consequences that maintain such behaviors (Mutiaranisa & Savira, 2022). Through this analysis, intervention techniques can be selected more appropriately based on the functional characteristics of clients' behaviors.

Based on these conditions, this study aims to analyze trends in the application of behavioral counseling techniques in addressing various behavioral and psychological problems based on scientific studies published within the last five years. In addition, this study also aims to map the suitability between clients' problem characteristics, the use of ABC analysis, and the selection of behavioral techniques in guidance and counseling practices. Therefore, this study is expected to provide a conceptual contribution through a comprehensive synthesis of behavioral counseling techniques while reinforcing the relevance of the behavioral approach within contemporary guidance and counseling services.

Method

This study employed a literature review approach using content analysis methods to examine the application of behavioral counseling techniques in addressing various behavioral and psychological problems. This approach was used to identify, analyze, and synthesize research findings discussing the use of behavioral techniques within guidance and counseling contexts. The content analysis method was selected because it enables researchers to examine patterns, themes, and trends in the application of behavioral techniques based on systematically analyzed research findings.

The data sources consisted of scientific articles and journals discussing the implementation of behavioral counseling techniques, particularly modeling, assertive training, relaxation, systematic desensitization, and behavior contracts. Articles were obtained through searches in scientific databases such as Google Scholar and Garuda, as well as various national and international journals relevant to the field of Guidance and Counseling. Articles were selected purposively based on several criteria: (1) published between 2021 and 2026; (2) discussing the application of behavioral counseling techniques; (3) addressing psychological, social, academic, or behavioral problems; (4) explaining intervention procedures systematically; and (5) presenting findings related to the effectiveness of behavioral interventions.

The unit of analysis in this study consisted of scientific articles and journals relevant to the implementation of behavioral techniques in counseling services. Data collection was conducted through article identification, selection based on inclusion criteria, grouping articles according to the behavioral techniques applied, and recording important data from each analyzed study. Articles meeting the criteria were then examined in depth to identify patterns in the application of behavioral counseling techniques across various client problems.

Data analysis was conducted using content analysis through stages of data reduction, categorization, interpretation, and thematic synthesis. The analyzed aspects included the types of behavioral techniques used, characteristics of the addressed problems, the use of ABC analysis (Antecedent, Behavior,

Consequence), intervention procedures, and the effectiveness of counseling services. The findings were then organized thematically to identify trends in the implementation of behavioral counseling techniques and the suitability between intervention techniques and clients' problem characteristics within contemporary guidance and counseling practices.

Results and Discussions

The findings of this literature review indicate that behavioral counseling techniques remain highly relevant in addressing various behavioral and psychological problems within educational and counseling settings. The reviewed studies consistently demonstrate that modeling, assertive training, relaxation, systematic desensitization, and behavior contract techniques are widely implemented to address maladaptive behaviors, academic problems, emotional disturbances, and interpersonal difficulties. These findings confirm the main assumption of behavioral counseling that maladaptive behavior is learned through environmental interaction and therefore can be modified through structured learning experiences and behavioral interventions. Table 1 presents the distribution of behavioral counseling techniques based on the dominant problems addressed, the focus of ABC analysis, intervention procedures, and the primary findings reported in the reviewed studies.

Table 1. Summary of Reviewed Literature on Behavioral Counseling Techniques

No	Technique	Problem Addressed	Main Findings	Reference
1	Modeling	Low social interaction and adaptive behavior	Modeling improved social interaction and adaptive responses through observational learning	MacFarland et al. (2025)
2	Modeling	Low learning motivation	Modeling increased learning engagement and adaptive classroom behavior	Sudiarsana et al. (2023)
3	Assertive Training	Low self-confidence and passive communication	Assertive training increased self-expression and interpersonal communication skills	Golshiri et al. (2023)
4	Assertive Training	People-pleasing behavior	Assertive exercises improved confidence in expressing opinions and emotions	Norrahmah et al. (2026)
5	Relaxation	Stress, anxiety, and emotional tension	Progressive muscle relaxation reduced stress and emotional distress among adolescents	Köse Kabakcıoğlu & Ayaz-Alkaya (2024)
6	Relaxation	Academic anxiety	Relaxation training reduced physiological tension and emotional discomfort	Nuha & Alamsyah (2025)
7	Systematic Desensitization	Anxiety and phobia	Gradual exposure combined with relaxation effectively reduced anxiety responses	Rahman & Handoyo (2025)
8	Systematic Desensitization	Avoidance behavior	Systematic desensitization reduced avoidance behavior through anxiety hierarchy exposure	Nuha & Alamsyah (2025)
9	Behavior Contract	Truancy behavior	Behavior contracts improved discipline and reduced truancy behavior	Fitri & Darmayanti (2023)
10	Behavior Contract	Academic procrastination	Behavior contracts increased self-control and task responsibility	Nursalim (2022)
11	Behavior Contract	Gadget and social media addiction	Structured contracts reduced excessive gadget use and improved self-regulation	Nursalim (2022)

No	Technique	Problem Addressed	Main Findings	Reference
12	Self-Management Behavioral Technique	Truancy behavior	Behavioral self-management reduced truancy behavior among students	Vibrianti et al. (2023)
13	Behavioral Counseling	Learning motivation	Behavioral intervention improved students' academic motivation	Qamaria & Astuti (2023)
14	Operant Conditioning	Study habits and discipline	Operant conditioning improved learning habits and classroom discipline	Safitri et al. (2022)
15	Video Modeling	Peer social interaction	Video modeling improved peer interaction and communication skills	MacFarland et al. (2025)
16	Behavioral Counseling	Aggressive behavior	Behavioral reinforcement reduced maladaptive aggressive responses	Damayant et al. (2023)
17	Behavioral Counseling	Academic procrastination and anxiety	Behavioral intervention reduced procrastination and emotional distress	Jochmann et al. (2024)
18	ABC Behavioral Analysis	Maladaptive behavior patterns	ABC analysis improved understanding of antecedents and reinforcing consequences	Melanson & Fahmie (2023)

The reviewed literature demonstrates that behavioral counseling techniques have been implemented across various behavioral and psychological problems within educational settings. Most studies reported positive outcomes, particularly in modifying maladaptive behavior, improving social functioning, reducing anxiety, increasing academic motivation, and strengthening self-control. These findings strengthen the empirical relevance of behavioral counseling as a practical and measurable intervention approach that can be adapted to different client characteristics and counseling needs.

Table 2. Distribution of Behavioral Counseling Techniques Based on Problems and Intervention Characteristics

Behavioral Technique	Dominant Problems Addressed	ABC Analysis Focus	Main Intervention Procedures	Main Findings
Modeling	Low social skills, low learning motivation, maladaptive social behavior	Behavior and consequence	Observation, imitation, behavioral practice, reinforcement	Improved adaptive behavior and social interaction skills
Assertive Training	Passive communication, people-pleasing, low self-confidence	Antecedent and behavior	Role play, behavioral rehearsal, feedback, reinforcement	Increased self-expression and interpersonal communication
Relaxation	Anxiety, stress, emotional tension	Antecedent and physiological response	Breathing exercises, muscle relaxation, emotional regulation	Reduced physiological tension and emotional distress
Systematic Desensitization	Phobia, academic anxiety, avoidance behavior	Antecedent and emotional response	Anxiety hierarchy, relaxation, gradual exposure	Reduced anxiety and avoidance behavior

Behavior Contract	Truancy, procrastination, gadget addiction, indiscipline	Consequence	Behavioral agreement, reward system, monitoring, evaluation	Increased self-control, discipline, and behavioral responsibility
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The reviewed studies reveal that behavioral counseling is predominantly applied to problems that involve observable and measurable behaviors, including academic procrastination, truancy, anxiety, aggressive behavior, poor social skills, indiscipline, and excessive gadget use. These findings are consistent with the principles of behavioral theory, which emphasize that behavior is shaped through stimulus-response interactions and maintained by reinforcement patterns (Nuha & Alamsyah, 2025). The relevance of behavioral counseling in educational settings is further strengthened by its practical and measurable intervention procedures, allowing counselors to evaluate behavioral changes objectively.

Among the identified techniques, modeling was frequently applied to improve social behavior, learning motivation, and adaptive interpersonal skills. The findings suggest that individuals more easily acquire adaptive behaviors through direct observation and imitation of positive models rather than through verbal instruction alone. This finding aligns with Bandura’s social learning theory, which explains that individuals learn new behaviors through observational learning processes. Previous studies also reported that modeling effectively improves social interaction and adaptive behavior because clients receive concrete behavioral examples that can be imitated and reinforced through practice (Dwinda et al., 2025).

Assertive training was commonly used to address passive communication patterns, low self-confidence, and people-pleasing tendencies. The reviewed studies demonstrate that assertive training helps clients express thoughts and emotions appropriately without violating the rights of others. Behavioral rehearsal, role play, and positive reinforcement were consistently identified as the primary procedures used in assertive interventions. These findings indicate that assertive behavior can be developed gradually through repeated practice and reinforcement, supporting the behavioral assumption that adaptive interpersonal behavior is a learned response rather than an innate personality trait (Norrahmah et al., 2026).

The findings also show that relaxation and systematic desensitization were predominantly applied in addressing anxiety-related problems, including academic anxiety, emotional tension, phobia, and avoidance behavior. Relaxation techniques were implemented to reduce physiological arousal through breathing exercises and muscle relaxation, while systematic desensitization involved gradual exposure to anxiety-provoking stimuli based on an anxiety hierarchy. The reviewed studies indicate that these techniques effectively reduce emotional distress and avoidance behavior because clients gradually learn adaptive responses to previously threatening situations. These findings support previous behavioral studies emphasizing that emotional responses can be modified through repeated exposure and counterconditioning processes (Köse Kabakcıoğlu & Ayaz-Alkaya, 2024).

Behavior contract emerged as one of the most effective techniques for addressing maladaptive behaviors associated with discipline and self-control, such as truancy, procrastination, gadget addiction, and academic irresponsibility. The reviewed studies consistently describe behavior contracts as structured agreements containing behavioral targets, rewards, consequences, monitoring procedures, and evaluation schedules. The effectiveness of this technique appears to be strongly influenced by reinforcement consistency and active client involvement in the behavioral agreement process. These findings support Skinner’s operant conditioning theory, which explains that behavior is shaped and maintained by its consequences (Nursalim, 2022).

Another important finding of this study is the consistent use of ABC analysis (Antecedent, Behavior, Consequence) as a functional framework for understanding maladaptive behavior and selecting appropriate interventions. The reviewed literature indicates that maladaptive behaviors do not occur independently but are triggered by specific antecedents and maintained through reinforcing consequences. Antecedent analysis helps counselors identify environmental triggers, emotional conditions, academic demands, and social situations preceding behavior, while consequence analysis explains why certain behaviors continue to occur. This finding strengthens the importance of ABC analysis in behavioral counseling because intervention effectiveness depends on understanding the functional relationship between antecedents, behaviors, and consequences (Mutiaranisa & Savira, 2022).

The findings of this study contribute to the understanding that different behavioral counseling techniques are appropriate for different categories of problems. Modeling and assertive training appear more relevant for interpersonal and social skill problems, whereas relaxation and systematic desensitization are more suitable for anxiety-related conditions. In contrast, behavior contract is more effective for behavioral control and disciplinary issues. This synthesis extends previous studies that primarily focused on a single

technique within a specific problem context by providing a broader conceptual mapping of behavioral counseling applications across various behavioral and psychological conditions.

Despite these findings, this study has several limitations. The reviewed articles were limited to studies published within the last five years and focused primarily on educational and counseling contexts. In addition, differences in research design, intervention duration, and participant characteristics across studies may influence the interpretation of intervention effectiveness. Therefore, future studies are recommended to conduct systematic literature reviews or meta-analyses involving broader databases and more diverse populations to strengthen the empirical understanding of behavioral counseling effectiveness across settings.

Overall, the findings reinforce the relevance of behavioral counseling as a systematic, measurable, and adaptive counseling approach for addressing behavioral and psychological problems. The reviewed techniques demonstrate flexibility in both individual and group counseling settings and provide practical intervention procedures that can be directly implemented in contemporary guidance and counseling services.

Conclusions and Suggest

Behavioral counseling remains a relevant and adaptive approach for addressing various behavioral and psychological problems within contemporary guidance and counseling settings. The findings of this literature review demonstrate that modeling, assertive training, relaxation, systematic desensitization, and behavior contract techniques show different patterns of application depending on the characteristics of the problems experienced by clients. Modeling and assertive training were more frequently applied to interpersonal and social skill problems, while relaxation and systematic desensitization were predominantly used in anxiety-related conditions. In contrast, behavior contracts were more effective in addressing maladaptive behaviors associated with discipline and self-control. In addition, the consistent use of ABC analysis strengthens the effectiveness of behavioral interventions by helping counselors understand the functional relationship between antecedents, behaviors, and consequences. The findings highlight that the strength of behavioral counseling lies not only in its measurable and structured procedures but also in its flexibility to be implemented across diverse counseling contexts. This study contributes to the existing literature by providing a broader conceptual synthesis of behavioral counseling techniques rather than focusing on a single intervention approach. Therefore, the study reinforces the importance of selecting behavioral techniques based on the functional characteristics of clients' problems and supports the continued development of evidence-based behavioral counseling practices in educational and psychological services.

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