

# The Influence of Group Counseling With Assertive Training on Student's Assertive Ability

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**Abstract**— This research aims to understand the importance of group counseling with assertive training techniques for student assertiveness in SMPN 18 Bengkulu. This research used quasi-experimental method with one group pre-test and post-test designs. Statistical test results using the z test show increased assertiveness ability after being provided with group counseling services with assertive training techniques, showed with a z value of minus 2.803 with a significance level (two tails) of 0.005 which means 0.005 is less than 0.05, so it resulted that  $H_0$  was denied and  $H_a$  was accepted, thus there was a significant change in the students' assertiveness ability that were given group counseling services with assertive training techniques.

**Keywords**— *assertive ability, group counseling services, assertive training*

## I. INTRODUCTION

According to Hurlock adolescence is a stage of development between childhood and adulthood which is characterized by general physical changes and cognitive and social development. Adolescence begins when a child is sexually mature and ends when he reaches maturity [1]. John W. Santrock adolescence (adolescence) is a period of developmental transition from childhood to adulthood which includes biological, cognitive, and social emotional changes [2].

Limitation of adolescence according to Hurlock, the beginning of adolescence lasts from the age of 13-16 years or 17 years, and the end of adolescence begins from the age of 16 or 17 years to 18 years, namely legal ripe age [1]. Thus the end of adolescence is a very short period. According to Santrock, early adolescence begins at the age of 10-12 years and ends at the age of 21-22 years [2].

The characteristics of adolescence, namely adolescence as an important period, the changes experienced by adolescence will have a direct impact on the individual concerned and will affect subsequent development. Adolescence as a transitional period, here childhood is considered unable to as an adult. His adolescent status is unclear, this situation gives him time to try different lifestyles and determine the patterns of behavior, values and traits that best suit him. Adolescence as a period of change, namely changes in emotions, changes in body, interests and influences (being adolescents who are mature and

independent) changes in the values adopted, and the desire for freedom.

Adolescence as a problematic age because adolescent problems are often difficult problems to overcome. The inability to overcome problems makes many teenagers finally find that the solution is not always in line with expectations. Adolescence is considered as an unstable period where the individual tries to find identity and is very easy to receive information from the outside without further thought [3].

The tasks in adolescent development according to Hurlock are being able to accept physical conditions, being able to accept and understand the effects of adult sex, being able to foster good relations with members of different types of groups, achieving emotional and economic independence, developing concepts and intellectual skills that are indispensable for Influence as members of the community, understand and internalize the values of adults and parents, and develop socially responsible behaviors needed to enter the adult world [1].

According to Erikson the main task of adolescence is to solve the identity crisis with identity confusion, to be able to become a unique adult with an understanding of self and to understand the influence of values in society. This identity crisis is rarely overcome in adolescence, various issues related to identity breakdown emerge and re-emerge throughout adult life [4].

Not all teenagers can fulfill these tasks well. According to Hurlock there are some problems experienced by adolescents in fulfilling these tasks, namely personal problems related to situations and conditions at home, school, physical condition, appearance, emotions, social adjustment, tasks and values, problems that are typical in adolescents who arises due to unclear status in adolescents such as the problem of achieving independence, misunderstanding or assessment based on erroneous stereotypes, the existence of greater rights and fewer obligations imposed by parents [3].

For teenagers, the existence of friends is important, often influencing decisions and attitudes taken in dealing with problems. Friends are often seen as a place to evaluate each other's views while developing individual values and attitudes. Teenagers also often do anything and behave in accordance with the expectations of their friends. This

situation is triggered by the desire to be recognized and accepted in their group. Teenagers try to adjust and can survive and try to be accepted in their groups, even though they have to do some negative activities [5]. If there are group members who ask to skip school and try to drink alcohol, cigarettes, and illegal drugs, then teenagers tend to follow it regardless of their own condition.

Teenagers are often unable to behave assertively due to fear of disappointing others, a sense of solidarity with peers, fear of being disliked and not accepted in the group. In adolescence, student assertiveness is still in development stage, and there is a possibility of developing in a positive or negative direction [3]. By having the ability to behave assertively, adolescents will be more easily communicate what their desires and feelings are and able to firmly reject negative conformity.

Assertiveness is an ability to communicate what is wanted, felt, and thought to others while maintaining and respecting the rights and feelings of personal and other parties [6]. Cawood states assertive behavior that is an expression that is direct, honest, and in its place of the students' thoughts, feelings, needs, or rights without unwarranted anxiety. Directly means that student behavior can convey the message delivered straightforwardly and naturally, and does not judge other students. Honest means to behave shows all the message signals match the meaning of words, gestures, feelings all say the same thing. Whereas in place means students can defend the rights and feelings of other students as well as themselves, the time and place [7].

This was also expressed by Chibuike and Chimezie that someone who behaves assertively that their behavior reflects the expression of feelings, the ability to defend rights and be able to express requests to others without hurting other people's feelings, so assertive behavior is very important for students to have in their daily lives when facing certain experiences or situations [8]. In addition, according to Alberti, having an assertive attitude is very beneficial for students, namely being able to defend their rights without hurting and harming others, obtaining self-respect, having a good self-adjustment to the problem, students who are able to be assertive can build positive interpersonal relationships [6].

Fensterheim says that people who behave assertively have 4 characteristics, namely feeling free to express emotions felt through words and actions. For example "this is who i am, this is what i feel and what i want. Can communicate with others, both with strangers, friends, and family. In communicating relatively openly, honestly, and as it should be. Having an active view of life, because assertive people tend to pursue what they want and try to make something happen and realize that they cannot always win, so they accept their limitations, but they always try to achieve something with the best effort good and vice versa people who are not assertive always waiting for something to happen. Acting in a way that he respects himself. This means that because he is aware that he cannot always win, he accepts limitations but he tries to cover up by trying to develop and always learn from the environment [9].

When undergoing daily activities, not all students are able to behave assertively and instead choose to behave non-

assertive (passive), such as harboring feelings, pretending, holding differences of opinion or vice versa by being aggressive [10]. Allowing yourself to be non-assertive can threaten the relationship because one party will feel used by the other party, not solve the emotional problems they face and can cause anxiety and stress. Students who are unable to behave assertively tend to be disadvantaged by their peers. Many students are unable to behave assertively because they fear being shunned by their friends if they express feelings honestly and honestly and say no and refuse to ask for an invitation.

Nurfaizal's research results show that the problem of students' inability to behave assertively is students who are indecisive or reject friends who want to cheat. Students who experience these situations usually feel afraid, embarrassed or hesitate expressing their wishes or opinions openly, not confident, afraid of being shunned and ignored by friends [11].

Based on the results of interviews with guidance and counseling teachers in SMP Negeri 18 Bengkulu stated that students today have very little assertive behavior. The minimal assertive behavior is that it is difficult for students to express feelings honestly and honestly, lack of confidence if asked to express ideas or ideas, tend to feel embarrassed when communicating with friends and teachers, and unable to say no and refuse friend invitations.

Based on the results of observations made by researchers found that the guidance and counseling teacher in carrying out counseling does not use a technique, but only through lectures and provide solutions. This happens because the guidance and counseling teacher lacks understanding or lacks knowledge of counseling techniques. In addition, guidance and counseling teachers have rarely used group counseling and have never done assertive training techniques, so that it becomes an obstacle for guidance and counseling teachers in conducting counseling to students.

The problem is compounded guidance and counseling teachers in the school there are only 3 people. This is not proportional to the number of students in the school, so guidance and counseling teachers cannot provide services to students optimally, including in providing counseling services to students who have low assertive behavior.

One way that is considered capable of training, developing, and increasing student assertiveness is by assertive training techniques. Based on the opinion of Bishop said that the way to improve students' assertive behavior is by practicing positive speaking, learning to listen, building relationships, and being brave to say yes or no [12]. Another opinion explained by the assertive behavior Drum can try to be improved by doing assertive training because in assertive training there will be activities or practices in each session with the aim of providing input, given input and interaction between group members, as well as giving homework assignments to practice outside the assertive training session [13].

Hamoud in the Journal of American Science explains that assertiveness training is a systemic approach to self-expression more assertive, based on the balance between achieving one's own goals and honoring the needs of others. Trisnaningtias also added that "assertive training is a skill

exercise that can help someone behave assertively, where assertive behavior is interpersonal or interpersonal behavior that involves honesty and openness of mind and feeling" [14].

Corey argues that typically structured procedures or stages in assertiveness training are first, starting with the introduction of unrealistic social anxiety, disconnection in learning to erase ineffective internal responses that have resulted in lack of clarity and learning the role of behavior assertive new behavior. Second, introducing a number of relaxation exercises, and each member explaining specific behavior in suggested interpersonal situations becomes a problem. The members then make an agreement to carry out specific behavior in interpersonal situations that are felt to be a problem. The members then make an agreement to carry out their self-affirming behavior that they initially avoided before entering the next session. Third, the members explained about their self-affirming behavior in real-life situations. They try to evaluate and if they have not been fully successful, the group immediately runs the game. Fourth, it can be tailored to the individual needs of members. Some groups tend to focus on additional role play, evaluation and training, while others focus on discussing attitudes and feelings that have made it difficult to assert themselves [15].

A similar study was conducted by Nurfaizal [10] that with assertive training techniques can improve students' assertive behavior. In addition, research conducted by Akhmad Rifqi [16] shows that assertive training has proven to be effective in increasing assertive behavior of students who are victims of bullying. Research conducted by Mousa [17] with assertive training can improve assertive behavior skills and reduce social interaction anxiety.

Also added by Mona [18] that assertive training has proven to be effective in increasing students' self esteem and academic achievement. Sipayung [19] assertive training has proven to be effective in increasing self-esteem. The results of the study indicate that assertive training is effective in increasing student assertiveness.

In this study using group counseling with assertive training techniques. Group counseling is a service that helps students in the discussion and alleviation of personal problems through dynamics in groups [20].

The purpose of group counseling is to increase awareness and self-knowledge, find out the common needs and problems among group members and to develop a sense of connectedness between members, assist members in finding strength in the group as a way to overcome problems, develop concern for others, find ways alternatives in overcoming problems, as well as learning effective social skills [21].

According to Corey assertive training is more focused on group implementation. The formation of groups is done by dividing the participants where in one group consists of eight to ten members who have the same background. Counselors act as organizers and directors of role play, trainers, reinforcement and as role models. In group discussions, the counselor acts as an expert, provides guidance in role play simulations and provides feedback to members [21].

Assertive training can assist individuals in applying behavior by developing ways of dealing more directly in interpersonal situations [21]. The purpose of assertive training is to train individuals to express themselves by reflecting sensitivity to their feelings and rights, assertion does not mean aggressive, people who are really firm do not defend their rights in any way, but do not ignore the feelings of others [10].

Group counseling with assertive training techniques is used to help students improve their assertiveness, so that in everyday life students are able to express feelings honestly and honestly without hurting the feelings of others. This research is expected to provide benefits both theoretically and practically. Theoretical benefits are for the development of the science of guidance and counseling, specifically assertiveness training and assertive behavior of students, as well as providing an understanding and description of the stages of assertiveness training in improving student assertive behavior. The practical benefits of this research are to provide input to schools about the importance of assertiveness training to improve student assertive behavior, provide knowledge to counselors in providing assertiveness training coaching, provide reference material for further research related to improving student assertive behavior and assertiveness training.

## II. METHODS

This research was conducted to 10 students of class 8.8 SMPN 18 Bengkulu using a quasi-experimental method. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling technique. Data collection techniques in this research used assertiveness scale. The design used was a one group pretest-posttest design experiment.

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result Analysis of the pre-test and post-test of assertiveness ability of students in class 8.8 SMP Negeri 18 Bengkulu. Score categorization as follows:

Table 1. Category Determination

Number	Score	Category
1	>121	Very high
2	109-120	High
3	97-108	Moderate
4	73-96	Low
5	≤72	Very low

Based on the calculations that have been made, it can be concluded that the scores and categories are as follows score totaling 2 students became very high, the percentage is 20% with intervals (> 121). Six students became high, the percentage is 60% with intervals (109-120). Two students became moderate, the percentage is 20% with intervals (97-108). The pre-test results obtained from students are as follows:

**Table 2. Pre-test Frequencies**

Number	Interval	Frequency	Category
1	>121	-	Very high
2	109-120	-	High
3	97-108	4	Moderate
4	73-96	5	Low
5	≤72	1	Very low
Total		10	

Samples included in the category of very low and low assertiveness ability will be given treatment in the form of group counseling with assertive training techniques. After conducting a post-test by giving the scale of assertiveness to 10 students, the following results are obtained:

**Table 3. Post-test Frequencies**

Number	Interval	Frequency	Category
1	>121	2	Very high
2	109-120	6	High
3	97-108	2	Moderate
4	73-96	-	Low
5	≤72	-	Very low
Total		10	

Based on the results of the post-test which illustrates an increase in students' assertiveness abilities which were originally in the moderate, low and very low categories totaling 2 students became very high, the percentage is 20% with intervals (> 121). Six students became high, the percentage is 60% with intervals (109-120). Two students became moderate, the percentage is 20% with intervals (97-108). Hypothesis Testing Result as follows:

**Table 4. Hypothesis Testing Result  
Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test (Z test)**

Number		Pretest-Posttest
1	Z	-2.803 <sup>a</sup>
2	Sig (2-tailed)	0.005

Based on the calculation results in the table above, for the Wilcoxon test, it can be seen that the value of z, that is - 2.803 with a significance (2-tailed) 0.005 <0.05. The criterion for acceptance or rejection of this hypothesis means that Ho is rejected and Ha is accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is an effect of group counseling with assertive training techniques on the assertiveness ability of students in grade 8.8 at SMPN 18 Bengkulu. Difference in mean pre-test and post-test assertiveness ability as follows:

**Table 5. Difference in Mean Pre-test and Post-test  
Assertiveness Ability**

Number	Design	Mean	Escalation
1	Pre-test	91.50	23
2	Post-test	114.50	

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the mean pre-test 91.50 and the mean post-test 114.50 that means after treatment, an increase in mean assertiveness is 23, it can be concluded that group counseling with assertive training techniques in increasing effective assertiveness skills was carried out in SMPN 18 Bengkulu City effectively.

**Discussion**

Hypothesis test results that have been done show the significance of 0.005 <0.05 which is based on the criteria of acceptance or rejection of the hypothesis Ho is rejected and Ha is accepted. The results of the research from the pre-test and post-test also showed that the overall problem of the low ability of students' assertiveness was higher after receiving treatment (treatment) than at the time before getting treatment (treatment). In this study the meaning shows that there is an influence of treatment or group counseling, and effective by using assertive training techniques in increasing students' assertiveness ability which means that after being given group counseling with assertive training techniques students' assertiveness abilities increase.

This was expressed by students from previously unable to be able to, as well as students having difficulty expressing feelings clearly, firmly and honestly, unable to reject an invitation, difficult to say no, easily influenced or persuaded and unable to ask for help when being facing problems, with the assertive training group counseling students can have better assertiveness abilities such as: being able to express feelings clearly, decisively and honestly, being able to reject an invitation, being able to state no, not being easily influenced and being able to ask for help when being face a problem.

Assertive training is a behavior counseling technique that focuses on cases that have difficulty expressing what is felt [8]. In addition, assertive training can assist individuals in applying behavior by developing ways of dealing more directly in interpersonal situations [23]. This is in line with Chibuike and Chimezie, skills learned to adjust one's behavior to the needs of interpersonal situations, so that positive consequences are maximized and negative ones are minimized.

In this study the cause of low student assertiveness ability is because students feel embarrassed and afraid in expressing opinions, lack of self-confidence, and afraid of being shunned by friends if they say no or reject an invitation. Research conducted by Nurfaizal revealed that allowing oneself to be non-assertive can threaten the relationship because one party will feel exploited by the other party, not solve the emotional problems they face and can cause anxiety and stress. Students who are unable to behave assertively tend to be harmed by peers. Many students are unable to behave assertively because they are afraid of being shunned by friends if they say no to an invitation [22].

This research is important because if students cannot behave assertively, in the future students will feel inferior and dare not express feelings honestly and honestly to others. In addition, according to Canter's, assertiveness is important to be owned by students because they have a belief that students have high expectations for respect and

most importantly basically educate students that with courage students can do what they want [23].

The focus of this research is assertive training techniques through role playing by training students to express feelings honestly and honestly, as well as training students to be able to say no or reject an invitation. Alberti mentioned that what included assertive training techniques were modeling, behavioral training, systematic feedback and training, homework assignments, games and exercises, journals and systematic assessment [8].

Assertive training is one of the techniques in behavioral therapy. According to Willis behavioral therapy comes from two conceptual directions namely Pavlovian from Ivan Pavlov and Skinnerian from B.F Skinner. Skinnerian is someone who supports the behavioristic tradition of B. F Skinner, namely psychology must study the conditions in which behavior occurs and behavior that can be observed and measured, such as environmental conditions that control it. The essence of Skinner's theory of behaviorism is conditioning operants. Operant conditioning is a form of learning where the consequences of behavior produce changes in the behavior of the behavior will be repeated.

Willis states that the basis of Behavioral theory is behavior that can be understood as a result of a combination of past learning in relation to relations with similar circumstances, motivational states now and their effects on environmental sensitivity and also biological differences both genetically or due to physiological disorders.

The benefits of assertive training are that it helps those who are unable to express anger and feelings of being offended, have the hardness to say no, have difficulty expressing affection and positive responses, and feel they have no right to have their own feelings and thoughts [24] This is in line with Willis the benefits of assertive training, which is to help people who can not reduce anger or irritation, have difficulty in saying no, find it difficult to respond to other positive things and also someone who does not have the courage in expressing opinions and thoughts [25].

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research that has been done there was the effect of treatment or group counseling, and effective by using assertive training techniques in improving student assertiveness abilities. This can be proven from the results of statistical tests using the z test showing increased assertiveness after group counseling services with assertive training techniques, indicated by the value of  $z = -2.803$  with a significance level (2-tailed) of 0.005, which means  $0.005 < 0.05$ , so it can be concluded that  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted, meaning that there was a significant influence on students' assertiveness ability given group counseling services with assertive training techniques.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

In this study there are limitations that researchers only conduct research on the ability of assertiveness with assertive training techniques with limited samples, and only using the design used is a one group pretest-posttest design experiment. Future studies are expected to be able to conduct research on the same problem, but with different techniques, in order to broaden horizons and alleviate the same problems much better.

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