

Solving Adolescent Verbal Aggressions through Transactional Analysis Counseling Approach

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Abstract

This study aimed at helping school counselors in solving issues related to adolescent verbal aggressions through implementing Transactional Analysis (TA) counseling, which was particularly given to the students in public vocational schools (SMKs) in Padang city who were majoring in engineering. Recent phenomena in Padang had revealed that among the critical problems at most secondary schools were those associated with students' aggressive behaviors. Aggressive behaviors are acts which cause other people's suffering, either through verbally or physically abuses, or in another word, actions which bring harm to someone else. However, verbal aggressions were mostly identified ones. Therefore, this study focused on two things: first, to identify kinds of verbal aggressions that these students committed, such as, criticizing, ranting, insulting and threatening others; second, to produce a transactional analysis (TA) counseling guide to overcome those identified verbal aggression issues, by means of analyzing the students' ego state, transactions, and life script. The design of this study was research & development, that attempted to produce a final product which took a mode of transactional analysis (TA) counseling guide. Experimental method was used to test the effectiveness of the transactional analysis (TA) counseling analysis to solve the identified students' verbal aggressions. The results of the empirical tests to transactional analysis (TA) counseling showed that specific transactional analysis group counseling seemed effective in reducing the adolescent students' verbal aggressions.

Keywords: problems, verbal aggressive behaviors, transactional analysis counseling

1. Introduction

Acts of violence and aggression in society today are often reported by print and electronic media. The perpetrators of this violence are mostly done by young high school age up to university. Their violence is ranging from severe to low aggressive behaviors such as murdering, raping, robbing, assaulting and doing coercion against the will of others. Suara Merdeka (www.suaramerdeka.com 2012/07/13/124082) reported that in the Yogyakarta city alone up to February 2012, as many as 135 cases of violence committed by adolescents were recorded, and in the city of Sleman, Bantul and Gunung Kidul Kulonprogo there were 145 cases reported.

Similarly, acts of violence by the high school students in Padang city have become the concern of the public. For example, wild demonstrations and fights among high school students. A recent student-beating in Padang city engaged some students of Vocational High School (SMK) 8, and was also helped by some students of Senior High School (SMA PGRI) 6 toward one student of Vocational High School (SMK) 5. The victim of the beating was as a male aged 18 years, with the condition of the stomach and head got bruises and tear-hands. However, one of the dozens of students, could be arrested by the police (Mapolresta) of Padang. Adolescent aggressive behaviors have also begun to lead to criminal acts (www.tempo.co/read/news/2012).

According to Pungky Arissandy Ibnida (2013, online) that in almost every month, brawls and other acts of violence occur among teenage students, either physically or verbally. It was found that the culprits were the same students, who were dominated by the SMK students. This year alone, in the records of Padang Express, 15 cases of serious brawls and violence had occurred.

Violence and aggressiveness can be harmful to other people or society. Aggressive behaviors committed by juveniles violate the norms or rules of the applicable law. Kinds of aggressive behaviors committed by juveniles at school and at home were physical and verbal, as described by Loeber & Hay (2005)

Aggression takes many forms, ranging from social and verbal aggressions to physical aggression and to more serious kinds of violence. Physical aggression includes behaviors that threaten or cause physical harms, such as threats of bodily harm, physical fighting,

and violent crimes such as robbery, rape and homicide.

Aggressive behaviors displayed by adolescents can be realized in several forms. A student can do two or more aggressive acts in the form of verbal or more severe violence, such as hitting, insulting and pelting peers. Based on some interviews with the counselor teachers (BK) at schools, one student in a school may do same aggressive behaviors several times, such as insulting, criticizing, and harsh speech to a peer due to anger and resentment.

There are two motives that cause individuals do aggressive behaviors, namely personal and environment reasons. The first factor comes within the individual (i.e. encouragement, traits) and the second factor comes from the outside of the individual or from situational conditions (Kornadt, 1981). Thus, factors affecting aggressive behaviors are stimulated by some unfavorable environmental conditions.

The main purpose of aggressive behaviors shown by adolescents could serve as (1) outlets for their anger, disappointment, tension, and (2) a chosen solution of an obstacle or received hindrance (Chester, D.S., Lauren, M., Dewall, C., and Nathan, 2014). These aggressive behaviors can be realized into action, but if such behaviors are prevented they will be channeled through verbal abuse. Aggressiveness distributed in the form of verbal abuse are expressed through profanity, invective, insult, ridicule, and shouting uncontrollably (Sadarjon, 2002; Turner & Helms, 1995 in Nisfiannor & Yulianti, 2005). In lab studies, verbal aggressions are mostly collected through recording the harsh comments from the participants to the others and counting the frequency of attacks or other negative verbal statements (Wheeler and Caggiula, 1966, the Russell Geen G & Donnerstein Edward, 1998). Verbal aggressions displayed by adolescents, either at school or in the community, have called public attention, considering that humans are social creatures who should act in accordance with their norms. These phenomena should be the educators' and parents' concern, therefore aggressive behaviors can be reduced or eliminated.

During the stages of adolescent development, aggressive behaviors may appear in different quantity and quality. For example, rejection from the parent can increase one's aggressiveness, moreover, if it happens since childhood. Specifically, rejection from the parent will encourage ones' negative behaviors that associated with discomfort feelings, emotional responses with rude behaviors, insecurities against a hostile environment, and self-defense to cover up mistakes. Thus, acceptance and warmth from the parent at teenagers' early age will reduce the formation of discomfort feelings, prevent them from insecurity, and prevent the feelings of being threatened and doubt towards other individuals as well as the surrounding environment (Hamburg & Van Lawick-Goodall in Harahap, P., 1987).

In the higher age, when the warmth of the parent came in the form attitudes that allow freedom, then it can increase aggression motive. If the child is too early to be forced to behave according to the principles of high moral, whereas this principle has not been fully understood by the child, then this would increase his aggressiveness. There is correlation between children aggressive behaviors and parent behaviors.

Rubab G. A., Susan, D. S., Marshall & Jennifer D. S. (2009) describes that the determinants of aggressive adolescents comes from genetic factors; environmental influences, such as peer socialization in the family as well as the nurturing of the parents. Children and adolescents who are socially punished retaliation in the form of direct physical aggression and as the effect, they are rejected by their peers. Children who are very aggressive may have low social competence, thus they experience difficulty adjustment (Hudley C, 2008). These findings give an idea if there are individual factors in performing acts of aggression, namely diverse backgrounds and motives. Motives and background need to be studied in depth in order to plan appropriate responses.

From the research report, an increase in the perception of parental care can reduce adolescent aggressive behaviors. These findings support the ideas that among the factors that influence adolescent aggressive behaviors are those motivated by families and parents. This finding is consistent with the views that suggest the parents to continuously influence the development of their children throughout adolescence (Collins, 2006, in Rubab V. Susan G. Arim & Dahinten Sheila K & D. Marshall & Jennifer Shapka, 2009).

In line with the above discussion and Wakschalag Keenan (2000: 14) echoed that,

Report aggressive behaviors that spans across Several diagnoses in preschoolers. What may be more important is understanding the complex factors that shape developmental trajectories over time, the child Including outside factors such as the capacity of parents to socialize Reviews their children and support healthy development. Until we intensively measure both child factors and contextual factors over time we will be limited in Determining how each carries the child forward on a trajectory toward aggression and

violence.

From above explanation, it can be understood that aggressive behaviors can be seen since infancy, adolescence and adulthood. Thus, it is necessary to take into account factors that might influence adolescent aggressive behaviors. As have been mentioned earlier, significant factors that can affect aggressive behaviors are factors of parental and social interaction. For that we need the guidance of parents and educators from early to prevent unhealthy behaviors in children.

According to Ommen, M (2005) out of 80 parents with violent behaviors toward their children can influence aggressive behaviors of the children, so that both parents and children need to be given cognitive therapy to reduce aggressive behaviors in children. This study describes the importance of the role of parents in a child's behaviors. In other words, parents are the first to provide education on the child's behaviors. Parents who say rude to children will affect the behaviors of children. Children will also be inclined to say rude to other people when they are in a state of uncomfortable and hurt.

Results of a preliminary study on 844 students consisting of grade 2 and grade 3 class batch 2013 and 2014 about the adolescent aggressive behaviors showed that; (1) high aggressive behaviors were noted 7.5% as displayed by 63 students out of 844 students; (2) moderate aggressive behaviors were noted 18.8% as displayed by 159 students out of 844 students, (3) low aggressive behaviors were noted 73.7% as displayed by 622 students out of 844 students. Behaviors displayed by those teenage students need special attention and actions of educators, particularly counselor teachers at the schools. Causes of verbal aggressive behaviors displayed by the students are issues that need to be studied further.

A social environment which aims at improving conformity and bonding in the social relations, often creates a situation in which a negativity also arises. There is one or a group of people who disturb the tranquility by starting a debate through expressing statements with are unpleasant (Shelley E. T, Letitia A. P. & David, O.S, 2009). Furthermore, conflicts due to inappropriate communication might trigger another's verbal aggressions. Individuals who are likely to display verbal aggressions could be stimulated by encountering an unfriendly environment in their social interaction. These problems can be solved with counseling approaches such as Transactional Analysis (TA). Analysis of one's communication with others in social relationships is a fundamental concept in TA counseling approach. Social relations of an individual can be observed through his/her ego state at TA counseling because the ego state is the feelings that a person has which can be reflected in the behaviors, either verbal or non-verbal.

The TA approach emphasizes on social relationships, namely to build a life script and the right trades. One way to create conducive and pleasant conditions in counseling activities is by showing the members of the group or the student that they are appreciated, understood and given a nice atmosphere thus it can be a source of students' strengths to construct proper behaviors. TA group counseling aims at helping students to recognize, understand, and become aware of the displayed behaviors and find the best solutions in reducing verbal aggressions. TA counseling focuses on providing assistance to students that they are able to make appropriate decisions concerning displayed verbal aggressions and make a future life script.

To overcome the problem of verbal aggressive behaviors of young students, researchers chose counseling transactional analysis (TA) in a group setting. This approach was chosen based on the consideration that aggressive behaviors is motivated by the social, cognitive and emotional, in which TA counseling approach also emphasizes social communication, cognitive and emotional in providing assistance to clients. TA counseling approach emphasizes the aspects of cognitive-behavioral rational to raise awareness so that the client is able to make new decisions and to change his ways. TA counseling process reduce aggressive behaviors in adolescents by improving their communication and appropriate display of ego state in the group.

2. Method

The population of this present study was all students from two public vocational schools (SMKs) in Padang City majoring in engineering. Reasons for the selection of all SMK students as the population of the present study was based on the consideration that SMK students were highly involved in the verbal aggressions and other forms of aggressive behaviors. They were also teenagers who were growing and developing, emotionally unstable, and displaying aggressive behaviors in Padang city, thus they seemed suitable for the study's examination.

The population in this study was 391 students of SMK Negeri 1 Padang, and 453 students of SMK 5 Padang. The total number of 844 students. Sample of the study consisted of 88 students. The sampling technique

used was a random sampling, where each individual had the same chance to be selected as the study sample (Furqan, 2009). The 88 students were divided randomly into two equal groups, thus 44 students were in the experimental group and the other 44 were in the control group.

This present study used Research & Development design that refers to the opinion of Gall & Borg (2003) who argue that Research and Development is a powerful strategy for improving practice. In addition, it is a research method that is used to develop and validate educational product. Hence, Research and Development aims to produce specific products and tests the effectiveness of the product.

The testing of the effectiveness of transactional analysis counseling to reduce adolescents verbal aggressions was attempted by applying pretest-posttest control group design, meaning by comparing the condition of adolescent aggressive behaviors before and after treatment. Pretest posttest control group design was used to compare the state or condition of the participants before and after treatment using a comparison group or the control group (Heppner, B.E Wampold and D.M Kivlinghan, 2008).

Each of the experimental and control group was given a pretest on the trends of adolescent verbal aggressions. A questionnaire adopting a Guttman scale was used to elicit the participants' answers. Before the participants carried out transactional analysis counseling, they were given a pretest on the trends of adolescent verbal aggressions in order to know kinds of verbal aggressions these participants had previously experienced. Finally, both groups were given a post-test to measure whether a change happened regarding the trends of verbal aggressions.

Analysis of the effectiveness of TA counseling to reduce adolescent verbal aggressions was conducted through analyzing the changes in the verbal aggressions before and after AT counseling for both experimental and control groups. Data analysis techniques used were the t-test, analysis of variance (ANOVA) and ANCOVA. Process analysis was using SPSS version 17.0 Windows. Testing the effectiveness of TA group counseling was attempted through pretest-posttest control group design, meaning by comparing observation O1 and O2. The effectiveness test was calculated by comparing the effectiveness of the condition before the treatment with the condition after treatment.

3. Results

Displays of the verbal aggressions of the SMK students in Padang City majoring in engineering as collected from a total of 844 students who were in grade 1 and grade 2 Batch 2013 and 2014 as follows: (1) a high category was 7.5% as represented by 63 students; (2) a moderate category was 18.8% as represented by 159 students; (3) a low category of the teenager aggressive behaviors was 73.7% as represented by 622 people.

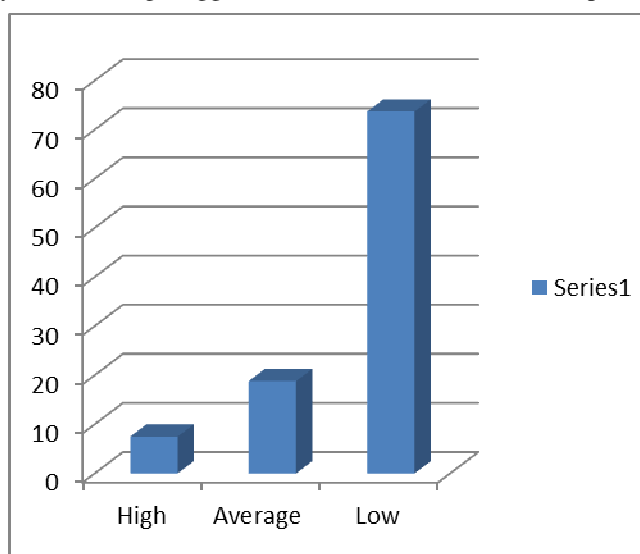


Figure 1. Profile of Student Verbal Aggression

The results of interviews with the students showed that one student hurt others because there were other friends who encouraged him to do so and or was instigated by other friends to give someone he hated a resistance. The students also reported that the verbal aggressions such as insulting, saying rude were to maintain self-esteem. It was revealed, the students who displayed verbal aggressions were those whose parents were high

school graduates and those whose home did not feel warm because their parents were focused on making the living alone. Unpleasant situation in the home that was felt by the students had colored the attitudes and behaviors of students. In addition, there were some students in the experimental group who did not have parents anymore because they had died or divorced. These were the conditions that made students received less attention from their parents.

In an adolescence stage, students need attention and affection from parents as they are in their developmental stage as well as puberty to that they search for identity. A developmental period marked by the transition from childhood to adolescence is associated with increased aggressive behaviors and violence. Some teens engage openly aggressive behaviors such as hitting, kicking, or pushing. Teens express physical intimidation and direct threat to their peers with the intention of causing physical damage (Little, 2003 in Williford, A. P. Brisson, D., Kimberly, A., Jenson, J. M., 2010).

Students initially commit aggressions because they have a poor interaction so that they tend to harm peers, such as gossiping, spreading rumors, ignoring or ostracizing and bullying other students as common forms of relational and verbal aggression (Card 2008; Crick and Grotpeter 1995; Pepler, 2004; Underwood, 2003 in Williford, A. P. D. Brisson, D., Kimberly, A. Jenson, J. M., 2010). Thus, in social relationships, word choice used in communicating needs to be appropriately controlled therefore, it does not offend other people.

Based on data obtained during the process of TA counseling, one of the causes of students' verbal aggression was because they had low social skills. The students were not able to adapt with the peers at school because they were selfish and used offended speech. These cases were discussed in counseling in order to give the students an understanding and awareness, therefore they could change their behaviors better, especially to reduce verbal aggressions.

Changes noted on the students' verbal aggressions after implementing TA counseling can be seen in table 1.

Table 1 Mean of Students' Verbal Aggression

| Description | Pretest | Posttest |
|--------------------|---------|----------|
| Mean | 19.27 | 9.27 |
| Standard Deviation | 4.496 | 5.133 |

After implementing TA counseling, the mean score on the pretest which was 19.27 went down become 9.27 on the posttest. However, these data are potential to be tested experimentally. Thus, process of TA counseling had received a positive stimulus among the group members and it benefited them that these activities were continued to a wider testing.

Based on the observation during the counseling progressed, the students verbal aggressions which were stimulated by unpleasant environmental conditions, as well as the atmosphere in the classroom which was noisy, had provoked the students to say dirty to their peers. Another factor that triggered the verbal aggressions were peers humiliation and rejection in social relationships, which ultimately created fights. According to Geen, R., G., & Donnerstein, E. (1998) stimulus associated with unpleasant events could lead to aggressive reactions in teenagers even though indirectly displayed, and this incident harm others.

Individual displeasure causes a negative reaction to the environment and can harm others. One who tends to harm others is a person who is less responsible. There is a strong correlation between hostility and impulsive aggressive behaviors displayed by individuals. One of the factors that drive a person to do aggression is a lack of comfort in the environment and in interacting with others (Ramirez, J. M., 2009).

The profile of the level of verbal aggressions of SMK students' in Padang city can be assumed not too disruptive to the learning as well as less risky to the school security. These conditions can be seen from the data description of the students verbal aggressions. The pretest results of the experimental group (KE) and the control group (KK) can be explained as follows: the experimental group which has the high category of verbal aggressions is 18.18%; whilst the majority are in the moderate category, 81.82%; and 0% in the low category. Results of pretest from the control group are: 9,09% in the high category, 90.9% in moderate category and 0% in the low category. Furthermore, data from the pretest is presented in figure 2.

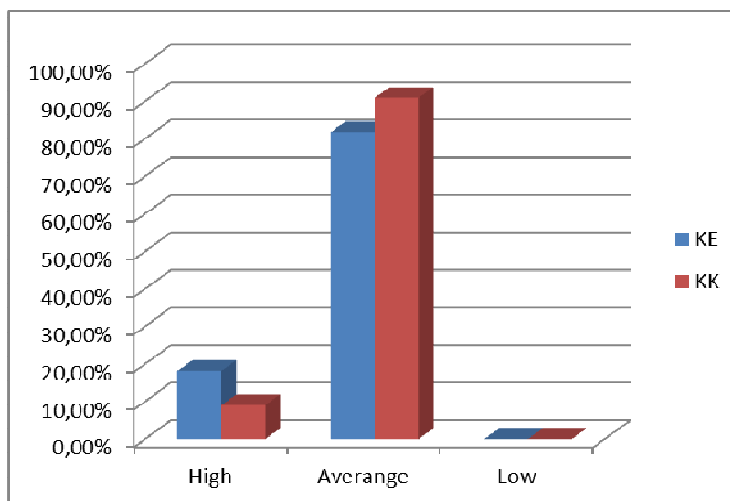


Figure 2. Pretest Scores of Students' Verbal Aggressions in the Experiment and Control Groups

Figure 2 shows the condition of the students verbal aggressions before getting TA counseling. Students' aggressions are in high and moderate categories. Students in the experimental group have a higher percentage in the high category than those in the control group. The low category of aggressive behaviors does not exist in both control group and experimental groups.

Posttest results from both experimental group (KE) and control group (KK) are presented as follows: The verbal aggressions of the experimental group are: 0% in the high category; 11.36% in the moderate category; and 88.64% in the low category. Meanwhile, results from the control group are: 6.88% in the high category; 68.18% in the moderate category; and 18.18% in the low category. These data show the differences of the verbal aggressions between the experimental and control groups. The experimental group is no longer having aggressive behaviors in the high category, while in the control group, aggressions still exist in the high category. Furthermore, these data are presented in figure 3.

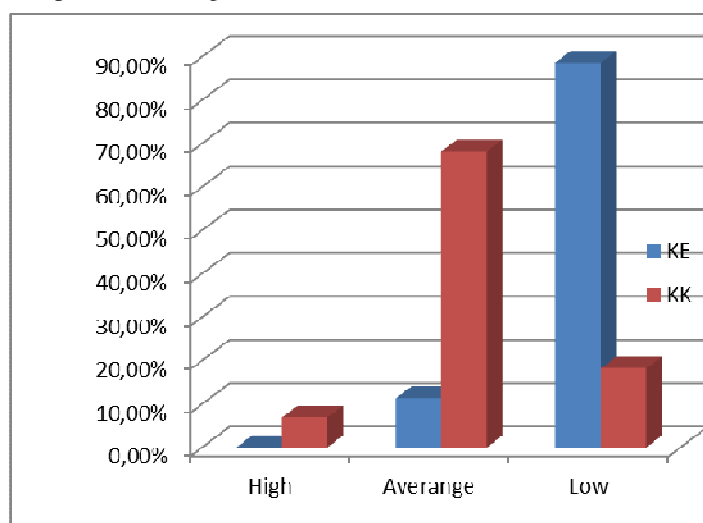


Figure 3. Posttest Scores of Students' Verbal Aggressions in The Experiment and Control Group.

Figure 3 illustrates the profile of the posttest results, namely, the students' aggressive behaviors in the experimental and control groups. In the high category, there is no great difference between the students' aggressive behaviors either in experimental and control groups. Meanwhile, in the moderate and low categories, there is a sizeable percentage of change recorded.

Results of Tests on The Effectiveness of TA Counseling in The Aspect of Direct Verbal Aggression

A statistical technique used to test the hypothesis was the analysis of covariance. This analysis was conducted to see the effectiveness of TA counseling to reduce students' direct verbal aggression behaviors by

controlling parents nurturing. The statistical analysis used was:

$$H_0: \mu_{KE} = \mu_{KK}$$

$$H_1: \mu_{KE} < \mu_{KK}$$

Table 2. Test Results of ANCOVA that TA Counseling Reduces Direct Verbal Aggression

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: dirc.verbal_post_test

| Source | Type III Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-------------------|-------------------------|----|-------------|--------|------|
| Corrected Model | 93.695a | 3 | 31.232 | 12.612 | .000 |
| Intercept | 16.990 | 1 | 16.990 | 6.860 | .010 |
| pola_asuh | .622 | 1 | .622 | .251 | .617 |
| d.verbal_pre_test | 15.407 | 1 | 15.407 | 6.221 | .015 |
| Kelompok | 89.484 | 1 | 89.484 | 36.134 | .000 |
| Error | 208.021 | 84 | 2.476 | | |
| Total | 1345.000 | 88 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 301.716 | 87 | | | |

a. R Squared = ,311 (Adjusted R Squared = ,286)

Based on test results obtained by Sig. = 0.00 < 0.05 thus H₀ is rejected. This shows that TA counseling is effective in reducing adolescent verbal aggressions. A conclusion of the test is that TA counseling is effective in reducing students' verbal aggressions with a confidence level of 95%. Specifically, TA counseling had a decrease of verbal aggressions to be 28.6%. The decline in verbal aggressions is in criticizing and insulting the peers.

A research report by Boxer, P., Laura, E., Sara, E., Goldstein, Musher, D.E and Eric, F. (2005) propose that their social cognitive approach which is mixed with some counseling techniques have given a helping hand to reduce adolescents' verbal aggressions. A confident and well accepted teenager has had a significant decline in aggressive behaviors. The finding showed that the students who did not have confidence and were not accepted by peers, they would display certain prosocial behaviors, such as giving criticism to get what they want. Another research by Ingrid, Barbara, Robert, and Cristina (2012) which lasted for 12 months proposed that efficacy intervention study could reduce media violence and verbal aggressions in the adolescents.

The findings showed that efficacy intervention could decrease verbal aggressions and media violence. Another finding by Siwinarti, Tajri, Faith and Joko Widodo (2012) reported that the use of a fun game could decrease the student verbal aggressions. Students' verbal aggressions was examined in terms of self-emotional management. After the intervention given, the mean score of student verbal aggressions on self-emotional management was found in the low category. Meanwhile, verbal aggressive behaviors that hurt others' feelings were in the low category even after the participants had received an intervention of fun game approach.

Based on the observation data during the counseling process, the students tended to criticize peers if they were not satisfied with the peers' styles and appearances. The students revealed that these behaviors occurred because there was a poor relationship among them and that they were incompetent in a social interaction. These cases were solved with a psychodrama game and it gave an emphasis that the students should use positive words in interacting with others. However, the previous students' reason was to maintain their dignity. After discussing the effects of these behaviors, the students began to gain some better understanding. However, not all students were able to do so because there were those who made excuses like to maintain self-esteem and prestige.

3. Discussion

Among the uniqueness of the AT counseling was that the group was trained to communicate in appropriate ways and they displayed the position of my life OK you're OK. Data from observation said that all group members could follow the activities well. From observation in the first meeting, a doubt to do the activities was identified, namely the students perceive themselves as students with issues and that their parents would be called to school. After explaining the purpose of the counseling, there was a change of perception among the students. In the first meeting, a client had exposed some aggression issues found in his school and at home.

In the first counseling, the students displayed some aggressive behaviors which were in accordance with

the data obtained in pre-test. Those aggressive behaviors were: (1) to berate and humiliate ones' opinions and were replied with harsh words, (2) took a pen from other peers and hid it so that the students fought and hit the head of others because of anger, (3) hid the peers' bag so the students who lost it ranted, (4) broke one's eyeglasses because he did not like to listen to the his impolite words.

The issues shown by students were discussed in the second counseling and the client discussed their ego state and ego state of the parents. Furthermore, students were trained how to use the adult ego state. Cross transactions displayed by the students were analyzed and a new transaction that was parallel was drafted so that issues were no longer cause aggressive behaviors. Furthermore, they discussed the position of 'my life is not OK and you're not OK' and displayed them. Later, some students planned the position of 'my life OK you OK' where the verbal aggressions can be reduced.

The study was in line with the classical experiments conducted by Barker, Dembo and Lewin 1941 (Widyarini Nilam, 2005) whereas a group of children were made frustrated in the experimental group, meanwhile the other group of children were made enjoy (the control group). The experimental group displayed some abusive behaviors: destroying toys, stepping on toys and throw toys into the wall. These results are consistent with the theory of frustration-aggression, whereas frustration of not achieving the desired goals can increase the likelihood of aggressions. Haris (Widyarini Nilam, 2005) states that there are conditions that could improve further frustration and increase the likelihood of aggression, namely the delay of success, the proximity of the destination, and the frustration of unexpected. The closer the destination or a desired object, the less possibility of the aggressive behaviors to occur. If a frustrating situation is well understood, thus the tendency to aggressions will be reduced. Aggression may occur because ones' desire to revenge after being provoked by others. In a study by Robert Baron (Widyarini Nilam, 2005) individuals who would revenge for harsh treatments were the people who had got rough treatment beforehand unlike the individuals who were in a state of pleasant or soft conditions.

Research by Asan Aghabeg (2014) in cognitive behavioral approach (CBT) counseling state that it can reduce aggressive behaviors and increase social adjustment among adolescents. Research results by Richart and Ephrem Beck and Fernandez (1999) on cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) has emerged as the most common approach to anger management that is part of the aggressive behaviors. In short, with CBT intervention, a client can learn to manage his anger better than those clients who did not receive CBT treatment.

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