

## Group Counseling with Behavior Contract Technique to Reduce Verbal Aggressiveness Behavior

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### Article Info

#### History Articles

Received:  
August 2019  
Accepted:  
September 2019  
Published:  
December 2020

#### Keywords:

*group counseling with  
behavior contract technique  
to reduce verbal  
aggressiveness behavior*

#### DOI

<https://doi.org/10.15294/jubk.v9i2.34353>

### Abstract

The aim of this study was to determine the effectiveness of group counseling with behavior contract technique to reduce verbal aggressiveness behavior of MTs students in Kudus Regency. The study used a pre-test post-test one group design. The sample of this study was selected through purposive sampling technique. There were 7 students selected to form a group. They received five times treatment in form of group counseling with behavior contract technique. Meanwhile, the researchers used Wilcoxon analysis to analyze the data. Afterwards, the results of this study proved that group counseling with behavior contract technique effectively reduced verbal aggressive behavior ( $z = -2.366$ ,  $p = < 0.05$ ).

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## INTRODUCTION

At the junior high school ages students need to form positive behavioral characters. It is because this characters are very useful for students' learning development. Then, students must also have strong willingness to form virtuous characters who speak softly, honest, and do not talk dirtily in which those are categorized as verbal aggressiveness characters. By doing so, they can be optimal in behaving in their personal development.

Berkowitz (2003) defines verbal aggressive behavior as a form of aggressive behavior or action expressed to hurt others. Verbal aggressive behavior can be in form of curses, reproaches, ridicule, slander, and threats through words. In addition, verbal aggressive behavior is able to destruct students learning motivation which in the end it will decrease their motivation (Berkiari, 2014).

Therefore, reducing verbal aggressive behaviors is very important for students so that they can have good personalities, learn effectively, and achieve their optimal learning achievement. Yet, it is not uncommon for students to experience obstacles related to verbal aggressiveness behavior due to the inability of students to control themselves and lack of self-awareness to do better. It is a concerning phenomenon considering that human is a social being who has basic needs to interact with others, especially to make friends and get along in their respective environments (Schneider, 2002).

The high level of verbal aggressiveness behavior of students is caused by their inability in self-conditioning primarily in resisting emotions and anger. Sari, Sari, Vony, A., Lasan, Blasius, B, & Sari, Eva, Kartika (2017) mention that one behavior that appears in adolescence is that they are less able to restrain emotions and easy to express their annoyance or anger through inappropriate words.

Myers (2012) says that aggressive behavior is realized in physical or verbal behavior intended to cause damage. Whereas, verbal aggressive behavior is manifested in form of harsh words such as curses, ridicule, shouting, insults,

threatening criticism and even insulting. If these behaviors are not reduced or not immediately handled, they will have a potential to trigger non-verbal aggressive behavior such as hitting, fighting and physical destruction.

Verbal aggressiveness behavior can change one's self-concept to be negative so that it can cause acute depression and provokes the victims of verbal aggressiveness to commit suicide (Nagaraja & Sudarshan, 2015). Thus, students need to have high motivation to learn, have ability to hold anger or emotion, and a high social life towards others. Through these efforts, in the end they are expected to minimize the verbal aggressive behavior.

Also, the low level of verbal aggressive behavior shows the magnitude of students' confidence and ability to overcome various difficult situations related to emotions within themselves and academic processes. As a result, they will be able to control their emotional demands and academic burdens. Furthermore, people who have low verbal aggressiveness will be able to speak friendly and politely, easily overcome changes in their environment, and take advantage of opportunities to develop their potential and ability (Siwinarti, Imam & Joko, 2012). Therefore, it is important to reduce the verbal aggressive behavior through a counseling technique. One of techniques that can be used is behavior contract. Tutiona, Marti, Yoan. Munir & Bau, Ratu (2016) explain that behavior contract is one of the behavioral approaches that is useful in problem solving. In this approach, the choice of technique can be made by considering the background of counseling problems.

According to Erford (2015), a behavior contract is a written agreement between two individuals or more in which one or both of them agree to be involved in a target behavior. In creating a behavior contract, it is necessary to regulate the condition of the counselee so that the counselee is able to show the expected behavior based on the contract between the counselee and the counselor (Komalasari, Gantina., Eka, Wahyuni, and Karsih, 2014). More importantly, the behavioral contract undertaken by the counselee must be clear and accurately describe

the expected behavior (Alberto & Troutman, 2009). Wahyuni (2016) notes that a behavioral contract is an agreement between a student and a teacher both spoken and written to behave in a certain manner and there will be a reward in the end. The behavior contract technique was selected since behavior can be learned and changed by providing reinforcement as soon as the expected behavior appears.

Interestingly, this study intended to see the impact of behavior contract technique on students' verbal aggressiveness behavior in group counseling design. Sukarti, Kurniawan, & Mulawarman (2018) suggest that group counseling effectively reduces verbal bullying behavior. It is proved by the decrease in behavior before and after being treated. Through group counseling, students are more active in alleviating problems related to the high verbal aggressive behavior they have. Besides through group counseling activities, students will interact through group dynamics so that they will practice their academic competencies. Additionally, group dynamics will create verbal persuasion and experience of success from other group members who already have high verbal aggressive behavior in a particular field. Wibowo (2005) explains group dynamics is a study that illustrates the various forces that determine the behavior of members that cause changes to achieve the goals.

Thus, this research was expected to be able to emphasize the effectiveness of the use of behavior contract technique in reducing verbal aggressive behavior in group counseling activities. Therefore, group counseling with behavior contract technique was considered appropriate to reduce aggressive verbal behavior.

## METHODS

The subjects of this study were 7 students of class VIII of MTs NU TBS Kudus in which all of them were men whose age ranged between 12-14 years. All subjects were chosen due to their high level of verbal aggressive behavior. The data collection technique of this study was verbal aggressive scale. This scale was used to determine the level of verbal aggressive behavior. It is in

form of a liker scale with 5 choices, according to Sugiyono (2013) Likert Sekala is used to measure the opinions and perceptions of a person or group of people about social phenomena, this likert scale consisting of (1. Strongly Agree (SA), 2. Agree (A), 3. Doubtful (D), 4. TS: Disagree (Da), 5. STS: Strongly Disagree (SD). Previously, the scale has been tested for its validity and reliability. To test the validity and reliability the researchers used factor analysis technique. The results of the validity test showed 44 valid items with a correlation coefficient between 0.245-0.669. Meanwhile, the reliability of the Cronbach's Alpha of verbal aggressiveness scale was 0.92. Then, the 44 valid items on the verbal aggressive scale were used to measure students' verbal aggressive levels.

This study used pre-test post-test one group design, while for the analysis it used Wilcoxon non-parametric test. The procedures of this study covered several stages. First, distributing verbal aggressive questionnaires to students to determine the level of verbal aggressiveness of students. Second, analyzing the questionnaire that students have filled in order to determine the level of verbal aggressiveness of students. Third, determining the subjects of the study which consisted of 7 students who had high level of verbal aggressiveness, and recording the initial conditions of students before being given the treatment.

Fourth, conducting group counseling with behavior contract as an intervention. This treatment was given five times with the time allotment of 60-75 minutes. The first session of the treatment was the formation of group and the provision of verbal aggressiveness understanding. The second session was the orientation of behavior contract technique and deepening verbal aggressiveness more. The third session was conceptual level and verbal aggressiveness sources on the source of ability beliefs. They covered the concepts of expectation regarding how low verbal aggressiveness looks like, and how to achieve it. The fourth session was the application of skills and follow-up. The fifth session was the observation of changes and endings of all counseling sessions. The last, the

provision of verbal aggressiveness questionnaire, and compared the results before and after the treatment.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data of the pretest, it was known that there were 7 students having verbal aggressiveness. In detail, there were three students having high level of verbal aggressiveness, three students having fair level of verbal aggressiveness, and 1 student having low level of verbal aggressiveness. Those seven students received group counseling with behavior contract technique with the aim of reducing verbal aggressiveness. Moreover, based on the results of data analysis it could be seen that there was improvement in the posttest.

**Tabel 1.** The Results of Wilcoxon Test Analysis

	Pre test	Post test
M	123.43	78.00
SD	24.378	10.693
Min	77	59
Max	159	94
z	-2.366	
p	< 0.05	

According to the above table, the group counseling with behavior contract technique was effective to reduce verbal aggressiveness behavior ( $z = -2.366$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). The findings of the study proved that verbal aggressiveness experienced a significant improvement after the counseling was given.

The findings were in line with widiyastuti's study (2016) stating that counselees are able to reduce their academic procrastination behavior after receiving a special treatment in form of group counseling with behavior contract technique. As a result, the students no longer postpone their tasks or homework.

Another study was from Sanna, Bee, Jihadarozza, & Nursalim Mochammad (2018). This study explains that group counseling with behavior contract technique contributes significant influence on the improvement of students' personal responsibility. Similarly, Strahun, Oconnor & Peterson (2013) assume that there are great benefits when using behavior

contract technique, namely helping in the process of improving students' positive behavior, and reducing the use of scoring at schools. If it is used in the right way, behavior contract can improve children behavior issues and help teachers continue to monitor the changes.

Most of previous studies investigated the use of group counseling with behavior contract to improve responsibility and procrastination, so they only focused on prevention and maintenance. Meanwhile, this study findings asserted that group counseling with behavior contract could reduce verbal aggressiveness behavior as an alleviation of students' problems that already have various problems regarding the high verbal aggressiveness behavior.

The provision of group counseling with behavior contract technique to reduce verbal aggressiveness behavior made students aware of the problems they faced and other members' experience so that it would expand their skills and knowledge. Further, Aprezo, Dwi, yuwono & Edi, Purwanto (2017) state that the reduction of verbal aggressiveness of students is formed from the knowledge and experience factors they have.

Based on the research findings, counselors are suggested to reduce verbal aggressiveness by using group counseling with behavior contract technique. Besides, it is important to consider the time allotment of the application of this counseling so as to make it optimum.

The findings could also prove that group counseling with behavior contract technique was effective and significant to reduce students' verbal aggressiveness. However, this study had several limitations. In detail, the subjects of this study only covered senior high school students, and used pretest posttest design. Therefore, this study has not yet covered broader education level as well as repeated measurement to see time and changes in the reduction of verbal aggressiveness using group counseling with behavior contract technique.

## CONCLUSION

This study found that group counseling with behavior contract technique is effective to

significantly reduce students' verbal aggressiveness. By referring to the findings, counselors are suggested to use group counseling with behavior contract technique to reduce verbal aggressiveness behavior. Meanwhile, the future researchers are recommended to involve broader education level (higher education and primary education) to know broader effectiveness. Also, there should be repeated measurements to investigate the time from group counseling with behavior contract technique on verbal aggressiveness behavior.

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