

POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT IN INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING TO REDUCE AGGRESSION IN VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the application of individual counseling services with positive *reinforcement* techniques in overcoming the aggressive behavior of visually impaired students in client "A" at SLB-A PRPCN Palembang. Aggressive behavior is behavior that involves the act of attacking, hurting, or harming another person, either verbally or physically. The approach used in this study is a qualitative approach using a case study research method. The data collection techniques used in this study are observation, interview, and documentation methods. Meanwhile, the data analysis technique used in this study is the data analysis method of Robert K Yin's case study. The results of the study showed that the aggressive behavior that existed in client "A" was the desire to hurt someone with objects, hurt others physically, the client also often spoke harshly, was angry uncontrollably, and often quarreled because he did not accept being reprimanded that he was doing something wrong. The results after being given the application of positive *reinforcement*, client "A" has had significant changes, namely where client "A" looks calmer and more patient in dealing with various situations. The client can distinguish between what is good and bad for him, as well as stay away from unhelpful behavior, such as insulting or pranking others. Based on the results of the application of individual counseling with positive *reinforcement techniques* to overcome aggressive behavior in client "A", it can be concluded that this technique is effective can overcoming his aggressive behavior.

Keywords: Positive reinforcement, aggressive behavior, individual counseling

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui penerapan layanan konseling individu dengan teknik reinforcement positif dalam mengatasi perilaku agresif siswa penyandang tunanetra pada klien "A" di SLB-A PRPCN Palembang. Perilaku agresif adalah perilaku yang melibatkan tindakan menyerang, menyakiti, atau merugikan orang lain, baik secara verbal maupun fisik. Pendekatan yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah pendekatan kualitatif dengan menggunakan metode penelitian studi kasus. Teknik pengumpulan data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini yaitu dengan metode observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Sedangkan teknik analisis data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini yaitu metode analisis data studi kasus Robert K Yin. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perilaku agresif yang ada pada klien "A" yaitu adanya keinginan untuk melukai seseorang dengan benda, menyakiti orang lain menggunakan fisik, klien juga sering berkata kasar, marah yang tidak terkendalikan, serta sering bertengkar karena tidak

terima ditegur bahwa dia sedang melakukan kesalahan. Adapun hasil setelah diberikan penerapan reinforcement positif klien “A” sudah memiliki perubahan yang signifikan yaitu dimana klien “A” terlihat lebih tenang dan sabar dalam menghadapi berbagai situasi. Klien mampu membedakan mana yang baik dan buruk untuk dirinya, serta menjauhi perilaku yang tidak bermanfaat, seperti menghina atau menjahili orang lain. Berdasarkan hasil penerapan konseling individu dengan teknik reinforcement positif untuk mengatasi perilaku agresif pada klien “A” dapat disimpulkan bahwa teknik ini efektif atau bisa mengatasi perilaku agresifnya.

Kata kunci: Reinforcement positif, perilaku agresif, konseling individu

INTRODUCTION

Human beings are essentially social creatures who cannot live alone without depending on others, both in terms of meeting physical and emotional needs. In community life, harmonious social interaction is very important to create a peaceful and respectful environment. Islam, as a religion that brings grace to the whole world, emphasizes the importance of doing good, spreading compassion, and staying away from all forms of behavior that hurt others. Islamic teachings prioritize human values, including in treating fellow human beings regardless of physical condition, as is the case with people with disabilities. However, in the reality of daily life, not all individuals can show behavior that is per social norms and religious values. (Alifah, 2023; Andri, 2024; Siti, 2021). One form of behavior that deviates and is contrary to Islamic teachings and social norms is aggressive behavior. Aggressive behavior is behavior that aims to attack, hurt, or harm others, both physically and verbally. Sari, (2023) Explains that aggressive behavior is a form of behavior that is done intentionally to harm, harass, injure, or harm other individuals or objects directly or indirectly.

Furthermore, Narramore identified the characteristics of aggressive behavior, such as argumentative, uncooperative, disobedient to rules, likes to interfere with other people's activities, likes to fight, does not like calmness, and tends to withdraw and be intolerant. This aggressive behavior not only has a bad impact on the victim, but also has negative consequences for the perpetrator (Parida dkk., 2024). These impacts include that the perpetrator will be shunned by his social environment, experience a decrease in academic achievement, and have a risk of psychological disorders such as anxiety and guilt. Victims can also experience physical injuries, psychological disorders such as trauma, and decreased motivation to learn. According to Berkowitz, aggressiveness can also appear in verbal forms such as swearing, reproach, slander, and threats aimed at hurting the feelings of others (Nazhirah & Lianawati, 2023). This verbal aggressive behavior is often more difficult to detect but is just as dangerous as physical aggression, as it can cause deep emotional wounds. Inability to control emotions is one of the main causes of aggressive behavior.

This phenomenon also occurs in the educational environment, including in Special Schools (SLB), which are places of learning for students with disabilities. Based on the results of the researchers' observations at SLB-A PRPCN Palembang, aggressive

behavior was found in one of the blind students, who is hereinafter referred to as client "A". This client shows behavior such as speaking rudely, cursing when his wishes are not fulfilled, accusing, insulting, and even slandering his friends when he loses his belongings. These actions cause the appearance of heartache and social tension in the school environment. The behavior of client "A" indicates the presence of verbal aggressiveness following Berkowitz's theory.

Aggressive behavior in blind students needs special attention because, in addition to having an impact on the individual concerned, it also has an impact on the surrounding social environment. If not handled appropriately, this behavior can hinder the learning process and cause feelings of alienation, as well as difficulty in social adaptation. Therefore, the right approach is needed to deal with this problem. One of the approaches that is considered effective in the world of education and psychology is individual counseling services. Individual counseling is an assistance service carried out by counselors to counselors face-to-face to help counselors solve their problems. Nelasari dkk., (2022) stated that individual counseling services can overcome various problems experienced by students, specifically and personally, including in managing emotions and behaviors. In the individual counseling process, various techniques can be applied, one of which is positive reinforcement.

Positive reinforcement techniques are a form of behavior reinforcement that is given in the form of rewards or pleasant stimuli after a person performs the expected action. According to Indari, (2023) This technique aims to increase the likelihood that the desired behavior will be repeated in the future. The application of positive reinforcement can be in the form of praise, rewards, or recognition given when students exhibit positive behavior. For students with visual impairments, this technique can be an effective way to form better social behaviors, as they tend to respond emotionally to positive forms of attention from their surroundings. Several previous research results have shown the effectiveness of positive reinforcement techniques in dealing with deviant behavior. For example, research by Abdi dkk., (2024) found that the application of positive reinforcement in students with special needs was able to increase prosocial behavior and significantly reduce deviant behavior. Another study by Santinovita, (2023) also showed that this technique was able to reduce the frequency of students' aggressive behavior in elementary school.

However, research on the application of positive reinforcement techniques specifically to visually impaired students is still very limited, especially at SLB-A PRPCN Palembang. This is what is unique and distinguishing from this study compared to previous research. The focus of this study is to determine the effectiveness of positive reinforcement techniques in individual counseling services in reducing aggressive behavior in visually impaired students, who have limitations in vision but still require appropriate psychological and social interventions. The urgency of this research lies not only in efforts to handle aggressive behavior, but also in the importance of providing counseling services that are inclusive and in accordance with the needs of students with special needs.

Inclusive education and responsive psychological services are part of efforts to create a welcoming and safe school environment for all students. In addition, this research is also expected to be a theoretical and practical foundation for teachers, counselors, and schools in providing treatment for blind students who experience behavioral problems.

The objectives of this study are to: (1) identify the forms of aggressive behavior shown by visually impaired students at SLB-A PRPCN Palembang, (2) describe the application of individual counseling services with positive reinforcement techniques, and (3) evaluate the effectiveness of these techniques in reducing aggressive behavior in students. This research is expected to be able to contribute to the development of guidance and counseling services in extraordinary schools, as well as improve the quality of social interaction of visually impaired students. Thus, this research is the first step in efforts to form positive behavior in visually impaired students through an appropriate counseling approach and based on behavior strengthening theory. Individual counseling services with positive reinforcement techniques can be an effective and humane solution in dealing with aggressive behavior problems, while supporting the development of students' overall potential and psychological well-being.

METHOD

In this study, the researcher used a qualitative approach, with a case study research method. According to Iswadi dkk., (2023) case studies are a type of qualitative research, where researchers conduct an in-depth exploration of programs, events, processes, activities, against one or more people, where a case is bound by time and activity. The types of data used in this study are primary data and secondary data. Primary data in this study was obtained from the results of interviews with students or clients "A" who behaved aggressively. Meanwhile, secondary data in this study includes books, journals, articles, theses, and other scientific works related to this research. In addition, secondary data sources were also obtained from the parents and friends of client "A," who behaved aggressively. The data collection techniques used in the research are observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation is a data collection technique that is carried out through an observation, accompanied by recording the state or behavior of the target object (Budianto, 2024).

Furthermore, interviews are data collection methods used orally or face-to-face between researchers and informants. Before the interview, questions are asked that have been prepared in advance according to the data to be obtained or the data needed (Mamik, 2014). And finally, documentation is a record of past events in the form of writings, drawings, or monumental works by a person. (Imam, 2013). The researcher conducted documentation to obtain data on aggressive behavior in client "A" students with visual impairments. In the data analysis technique, the researcher used Robert K Yin's case study data analysis method, which was divided into three analysis techniques for case studies, namely pattern matching, data explanation, and time series analysis. Pattern matching is done by comparing empirical patterns with predicted patterns. If the two patterns show

similarities, this can reinforce the internal validity of the case study being studied. After the pattern matching process is completed, the researcher continues with data explanation, which is a method to explain a phenomenon by looking for relationships between one phenomenon and another. The relationship is then interpreted based on the researcher's ideas or ideas supported by the literature. Finally, the researcher conducts a time series analysis, which is a chronological analysis or a study of the sequence of events.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to uncover and describe in depth the aggressive behavior shown by a blind student at SLB-A PRPCN Palembang (client "A"), as well as how individual counseling services with *positive reinforcement techniques* can help overcome these behaviors. Through a qualitative approach and case study methods, the researcher managed to obtain a comprehensive picture of the client's behavioral dynamics, the response of the surrounding environment, and the impact of counseling interventions on behavioral change.

1. Observation Results: Identification of Client "A" Aggressive Behavior

Through direct observation techniques carried out periodically in the school environment, the researcher recorded various forms of aggressive behavior exhibited by client "A". These forms of behavior include:

- a. Saying harsh words when you feel disturbed.
- b. Insulting and accusing classmates without evidence when they lose their belongings.
- c. Blaspheming teachers or school staff when their requests are not granted.
- d. Refusing cooperation in group activities.
- e. Showing angry body gestures such as banging on a table, raising your voice, and throwing things away.

This aggressive behavior does not only occur on one or two occasions, but is repeated, especially when the client feels frustrated, neglected, or does not understand the social situation that is happening around him. From observations, researchers also saw that some negative responses from the school environment, such as ridicule from friends or avoidance from teachers, actually strengthened the aggressiveness of clients.

2. Interview Results: Perceptions and Behavioral Triggers

In-depth interviews were conducted with three groups of informants: client "A", parents, and client friends.

Interviews with client "A" show that he is aware of some of his abusive behavior, but feels that he does not have good control over his emotions. She revealed that frustration arises because she often feels unfairly treated and is not understood by friends and teachers.

The client's parents, especially the mother, revealed that their child's aggressive behavior has been seen since elementary school and tends to worsen when they enter adolescence. Parents also convey that clients often show emotional outbursts if they don't get what they want. Family factors such as the lack of time together due to parental work, as well as the lack of emotional training since childhood, are the background that also affect the development of client behavior.

Interviews with classmates show that most friends feel scared and reluctant to interact with clients for fear of being verbally attacked. Some students even avoid clients, which makes clients feel lonely and increasingly aggressive.

3. Documentation: Track Record and School Records

The documentation collected includes:

- a. Records of student behavior from classroom teachers and homeroom teachers for the past two semesters.
- b. Record of cases of violation of school rules.
- c. Visual documentation (photos of class activities) and correspondence between the school and parents.

From these notes, it can be seen that the aggressive behavior of client "A" has become a concern for teachers, especially because it has an impact on class dynamics. The client has received an official reprimand from the school and has been coached several times by BK teachers, but the results have not been optimal.

4. Intervention: Individual Counseling Services with Positive Reinforcement Techniques

Counseling services were carried out six times during three weeks. In each session, counselors apply *positive* reinforcement techniques by:

- a. Give compliments directly when clients exhibit cooperative behavior.
- b. Provide symbolic rewards (such as gold stars) for each session without aggressive behavior.
- c. Assign positive daily tasks and assess their success verbally.
- d. Associate positive experiences with the feelings the client experiences so that the client begins to form associations between good behavior and social acceptance.

At the first meeting, the client still showed resistance to counseling. But in the 3rd session onwards, the client began to respond more openly. He begins to express his feelings, shows a desire to change, and begins to hold back when he is angry.

An important note of this counseling process is that clients respond strongly to forms of verbal appreciation and personal attention. The client shows significant changes such as:

- a. Able to withstand harsh words in the last two sessions.
- b. Demonstrate cooperative behavior in group work for two weeks.
- c. Apologizing to a friend who has been wrongfully accused.

5. Data Analysis: Application of the Yin Model

In this study, the analysis was carried out through three stages according to the case study model of Robert K. Yin:

a. Pattern Matching

The researcher compared empirical patterns (client behavior before and after counseling) with predicted patterns based on reinforcement theory. The results of the matchmaking showed that the application of positive reinforcement was consistently able to reduce the frequency of aggressive behavior. Clients who previously showed emotional outbursts on a daily basis began to decline to only once a week during the counseling period.

b. Data Explanation

Researchers explain this phenomenon of behavior change by linking the causes of aggressive behavior (lack of emotional control, need for attention, and negative experiences) to intervention outcomes (social acceptance, positive reinforcement, and growing confidence). It can be concluded that positive reinforcement functions not only as a behavioral technique but also as an emotional bridge that strengthens the client's self-identity as an individual who can be accepted by the environment.

c. Time Series Analysis

Researchers mapped the sequence of events from week to week during the counseling process. From this analysis, it appears that there is a consistent gradual change, from resistance at the beginning to the emergence of awareness and self-control. This shows that changes in client behavior occur progressively and not instantaneously, so consistency and patience are needed in the application of this technique.

DISCUSSION

The discussion in this study focuses on an in-depth understanding of the effectiveness of individual counseling services with *positive reinforcement techniques* in overcoming aggressive behavior in visually impaired students, especially client "A" at SLB-A PRPCN Palembang. The results showed that individual counseling conducted in four sessions with the application of positive reinforcement techniques was able to bring about significant changes in client behavior. Aggressive behavior, both physical and verbal, as well as uncontrollable anger tendencies and hostility towards the surrounding environment, decreased significantly after the intervention was performed. These results show that the counseling approach, by providing reinforcement to positive behaviors, can modify negative behaviors that previously appeared repeatedly. This finding is very much in line with the operant *conditioning* theory developed by B.F. Skinner. In this theory,

Skinner asserts that human behavior can be shaped through the provision of consequences, both in the form of reinforcement and punishment (Skinner, 1984). Positive reinforcement is given after the expected behavior appears, with the aim that the behavior is carried out more often. In the context of this study, reinforcement was given in the form of compliments, pleasant verbal expressions, and small rewards to the client when he or she exhibited appropriate behavior or managed to control his aggressive impulses. This strengthening process is carried out consistently in each counseling session, so that behaviors that were previously rarely or even never done begin to appear and strengthen in the client.

Psychologically, the aggressive behavior exhibited by client "A" can be understood as a form of response to stress or inability to manage emotions, which may also be influenced by the physical limitations he or she has as a visually impaired individual. This reinforces Berkowitz's theory that aggressiveness is behavior aimed at hurting others, both physically and verbally, which can be triggered by anger, frustration, or certain situational factors. Berkowitz also emphasizes that aggressiveness does not always arise because there is a specific purpose, but it can be a form of venting on internal pressure (Grothe-Hammer dkk., 2022). In the case of client "A", the aggression that emerges seems to be more of a form of venting due to emotional discomfort and an inability to channel feelings adaptively. This study also shows that with the right and empathetic approach, individuals who have limitations can still experience positive behavior changes. The individual counseling process provides a safe personal space for clients to express their feelings without fear of being punished or ostracized. This is in line with Carl Rogers' view of the importance of empathetic counsellor-client relationships, *unconditional positive regard*, and *genuineness* (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994). The counselors in this study provide reinforcement not only as a form of behavioral strategy but also as a form of emotional support that makes the client feel valued and accepted.

If it is associated with Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development, then the change in behavior experienced by the client can be attributed to an increased awareness of the value of right and wrong. Clients begin to be able to distinguish which actions are socially acceptable and which are not, and show changes in attitudes towards their social environment (Botes & Niekerk, 2024). This signifies that through consistent positive reinforcement, individuals can experience an increase in moral thinking and form a more responsible attitude. Client "A" shows an increased ability to understand that his actions have consequences for others and begins to learn to regulate his behavior to be more acceptable to the environment. From a special education perspective, these findings confirm the importance of using individualized approaches and behavior modification techniques that are appropriate to the needs of children with special needs. Blind children, as described by Kirk and Gallagher, require a pedagogical approach that is not only cognitive but also social and emotionally oriented (Kirk dkk., 2023). Positive *reinforcement* techniques are one of the effective methods because they directly focus on strengthening appropriate behaviors and can create a supportive learning climate. A

consistent environment that reinforces positive things can create a sense of security and comfort for students with special needs to develop without pressure.

The findings in this study also reinforce the results of Lubis, (2024) A study shows that *positive reinforcement* techniques can reduce aggressive behavior in children in social institutions. In the study, negative behaviors such as hitting, kicking, and speaking rudely were significantly reduced after positive reinforcement was given in the form of compliments, gifts, smiles, and grades. The similarities with this study lie in the context that both subjects were in psychosocially challenging situations, both due to environmental conditions and personal limitations. The results of both studies show that positive reinforcement has a universal impact in helping children understand expected behavioral values and encouraging them to act more constructively. Furthermore, the behavioral changes that occurred in client "A" after individual counseling with *positive reinforcement* techniques showed how non-pharmacological interventions can be highly effective in managing behavioral disorders in children, especially those with visual impairments. This provides a strong basis for educational institutions and those involved in psychological services and exceptional education to consider this approach as part of behavioral intervention strategies. This technique is not only easy to apply, but it also does not cause negative side effects, such as dependence on forms of punishment or fear that can hinder the child's psychological growth.

From the overall discussion above, it can be understood that the change in aggressive behavior in client "A" is not only the result of *positive reinforcement* techniques, but also the active involvement of the counselor in understanding the client's needs and emotional state. This research is empirical evidence that a humane, consistent, and structured approach can bring meaningful results in the lives of individuals with special needs. This technique, when applied correctly, not only reduces negative behavior, but also forms a more positive identity and self-concept in the client. Thus, the findings of this study not only make a practical contribution in the field of counseling services, but also enrich the treasure trove of theories about behavior change and psychological interventions in special education. This study also reflects that reward-based interventions, if done consistently and on target, can transform aggressive behaviors into more cooperative and adaptive behaviors, even in individuals with sensory limitations such as the visually impaired.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research that has been conducted by researchers regarding individual counseling services with *positive reinforcement* techniques to overcome aggressive behavior in visually impaired students at SLB-A PRPCN Palembang which was held 4 times. Therefore, it can be concluded that the description of aggressive behavior in client "A" is the desire to hurt someone with objects, to hurt others by using physical means by pinching and pushing, the client also often speaks rudely such as insulting and threatening his friend, uncontrollable anger such as when angry there is a

desire to hit others, and often fights because he does not accept being reprimanded that he is doing something wrong. However, after being given the application of positive *reinforcement*, client "A" already has a significant change, namely where client "A" looks calmer and more patient in dealing with various situations. The client can distinguish between what is good and bad for him, as well as stay away from unhelpful behavior, such as insulting or pranking others. This positive change can be seen from the client's attitude in his daily life, and is strengthened by the results of interviews with his parents and friends after the counseling process is carried out, so that it can be concluded that the application of individual counseling with *positive reinforcement* techniques to client "A" is effective or can overcome his aggressive behavior.

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