



THE EFFECTIVENESS OF BEHAVIORAL APPROACH COUNSELING IN REDUCING STUDENTS' AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT

This study is motivated by a phenomenon that occurred at SMAN 1 Warunggunung, namely a case of aggressive behavior experienced by one of the Grade XI students. The student comes from a broken home and receives less attention from one of his parents. As a result, the student channels his anger at school, such as disturbing friends, pinching, mocking, insulting, and even engaging in fights between students. Therefore, through Individual Counseling Services with a Behavioral Approach, it is expected that such aggressive behavior can be reduced. Based on this background, the research problem is formulated as: how is the result of individual counseling with a behavioral approach in reducing the aggressive behavior of Grade XI students at SMAN 1 Warunggunung. The aim of this study is to determine the results of individual counseling with a behavioral approach in reducing students' aggressive behavior at SMAN 1 Warunggunung. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method with data collection techniques through interviews and observation. Based on the research results from observations and interviews, it was found that the counselee showed slight improvement, where the aggressive behavior had started to decrease and was no longer frequently performed. Gradually, the counselee also began to have a positive influence on his peers. The counselee's behavior slowly indicated a return to his previous personality before the occurrence of deviant behavior influenced by his father.

Keyword: Counseling, behavioral, aggression, students.



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INTRODUCTION

Behavioral Approach Counseling focuses on changing problematic behavior through the application of learning principles, such as classical and operant conditioning, as well as exposure and relaxation techniques to reduce maladaptive responses (McKay & Tryon, 2016). The main principles of this approach include reinforcement and punishment to shape desired behaviors (Depreeuw et al., 2017), as well as integration with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), which combines changes in thought patterns and actions (Ikiugu & Taff, 2025). Planned exposure is used to help clients gradually face sources of anxiety (Rodríguez-Riesco et al., 2022), while behavioral activation aims to increase engagement in meaningful activities, particularly in individuals with depression (Wenzel, 2017). In practice, motivational interviewing (MI) is used to enhance clients' readiness to change their behavior (Rhee & Braden, 2024). This approach is also known for being structured and measurable, making it easier to evaluate client progress (Terjesen et al., 2017), and flexible enough to be applied in various counseling contexts, including individual, group, and family settings (Rawson & Galanter, 2020).

The behavioral approach in guidance and counseling services has significant importance in modern education because it focuses on observable and systematically measurable behavior change (Syaddiyah & Neviyarni, 2025). Various studies show that the integration of behavioral techniques, such as reinforcement, behavior contracts, and group counseling, is effective in improving students' learning motivation and discipline (Miswati & Tambusai, 2025). In addition, this approach has been proven to reduce deviant behavior through structured school-based interventions (Madira et al., 2026). The development of the behavioral approach is further strengthened by the integration of cognitive techniques such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), which increases counseling effectiveness (Nuha & Alamsyah, 2025). However, its implementation in the field still faces challenges, such as limited resources and lack of institutional support (Putri et al., 2025). Therefore, strengthening the capacity of educators is necessary so that the behavioral approach can be implemented optimally and sustainably (Rageta, 2025).

The behavioral approach in individual and group counseling services has been widely used to address various student problems in schools. For example, behavior contracts in individual counseling are effective in reducing tardiness by providing structured reinforcement and consequences (Marthalina & Lestari, 2025). In addition, systematic desensitization techniques help students overcome social anxiety and introverted traits through gradual exposure (Syafitri et al., 2019). Individual counseling has also been shown to increase students' learning interest through consistent positive reinforcement (Lisabe, 2024). Academic procrastination can be reduced through operant conditioning techniques that emphasize behavioral consequences (Nurzulian et al., 2019). In a social context, group counseling with a behavioral approach also improves students' social adjustment in school (Siagian, 2020). Furthermore, this approach is effective in reducing bullying behavior through structured behavioral interventions (Elfina, 2024). Overall, the behavioral approach remains relevant in addressing various student problems in a systematic and measurable way (Nurlaisa et al., 2025).

Problems at SMAN 1 Warunggunung indicate student aggressive behavior influenced by improper moral development, including habits of accessing negative content such as pornography without parental supervision. This condition leads to both verbal and non-verbal aggressive behavior in the school environment. Based on observations and interviews with Grade XI students, forms of aggression include hitting, kicking, slapping, fighting, insulting, mocking, using harsh language, shouting, yelling, and slamming doors. These behaviors cause negative social impacts, such as being socially isolated and lacking empathy toward others. Students tend to seek personal satisfaction

without considering the feelings of others. Therefore, this issue is identified as verbal and non-verbal aggressive behavior that needs to be controlled. This study is limited to the use of individual counseling with a behavioral approach to reduce student aggression in Grade XI of SMAN 1 Warunggunung through systematic and continuous behavioral change guided by school counselors in the school environment.

The behavioral approach in both group and individual counseling services has shown significant effectiveness in addressing various student problems in schools. Group counseling using a behavioral approach has been proven to help overcome juvenile delinquency through structured and systematic behavioral interventions (Madira et al., 2026). In addition, behavior contract techniques in group counseling are effective in reducing truancy by providing clear reinforcement and consequences (Fitri & Darmayanti, 2023). Behavioral counseling has also been effective in reducing online game addiction by forming more adaptive habits (Magnum, 2025). In another context, this approach improves self-control among vocational high school students through structured behavior modification (Sa'adah, 2025). Furthermore, group guidance services using a behavioral approach have been shown to gradually improve students' emotional intelligence (Hasibuan & Siregar, 2023). Individual counseling with behavior contracts is also effective in addressing truancy through consistent reinforcement systems (Fauziyah, 2021). Overall, the behavioral approach remains relevant and effective in helping school counselors address various student behavior problems in a measurable and data-based manner (Novi, 2025).

The objectives of this study are to identify the aggressive behavior of Grade XI students at SMAN 1 Warunggunung, to understand the implementation process of individual counseling services using a behavioral approach in reducing student aggression, and to determine the results of such counseling in reducing aggressive behavior. Thus, this study is expected to provide a clear description of the real condition of student aggression in the school environment and the effectiveness of the counseling approach used. In addition, this research also aims to examine the extent of behavioral change in students after receiving behavioral-based individual counseling services. The benefits of this study include theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, this research is expected to enrich the field of guidance and counseling, particularly regarding the application of behavioral approaches in handling student aggression. Practically, it is expected to serve as a reference for schools in making policies and developing more effective counseling services to reduce student aggressive behavior at SMAN 1 Warunggunung in a sustainable and structured manner.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted at SMAN 1 Warunggunung, located at JL. Raya Pandeglang Km. 12 Warunggunung, Cibuh Village, Warunggunung District, Lebak Regency, Banten Province. The method used in this research is a descriptive qualitative method, focusing on individual counseling services using a behavioral approach to reduce aggressive behavior among Grade XI students at the school.

The research subject consisted of the counselee, MR, a Grade XI student with a broken home family background. He had previously witnessed family conflict that affected his emotional condition and led to aggressive behavior at school. The counselor in this study was Mrs. Charity Wulandari Hasanah, S.Pd., a Guidance and Counseling teacher at SMAN 1 Warunggunung, who directly provided counseling services to the counselee. In addition, the research informants included teachers, namely Mr. Drs. Bambang Wiratmo, M.Pd., the principal, and Mr. Fahru Roja'i, administrative staff as well as

the Scout supervisor. Peer informants included Helina, the class XI IPS 4 chairperson; Muhammad Nabil, a classmate and neighbor of MR; and Baihaki, a classmate who was often a victim of MR's bullying behavior. Family informants included Rahmawati, MR's biological mother, and Verawati, MR's aunt.

The data analysis technique in this study does not use a specific statistical model but instead presents findings directly from respondents, which are then written in the discussion section as answers to the research problems. Data were obtained through interviews and documentation at SMAN 1 Warunggunung and processed systematically to provide a clear description of the research findings. The data analysis process was carried out in several stages, namely data presentation, which displays findings in an integrated descriptive form for easier understanding; comparison, which involves comparing field findings with relevant theories in previous chapters to identify similarities and differences; and presentation of results, which summarizes the final analysis to answer the research questions clearly and systematically.

In addition, data processing was conducted through four main stages: data collection, which involves gathering objective data from observations and interviews in the field; data reduction, which involves summarizing and selecting relevant data according to the research focus; data display, which organizes information in a structured form for easier analysis; and conclusion drawing/verification, which is the stage of drawing preliminary conclusions that may change if stronger evidence is found in subsequent data collection, ensuring that the research results are more valid and reliable.

Data collection techniques in this study were used to obtain accurate information from the research object through several methods, namely in-depth interviews and written questionnaires distributed to informants, with responses returned via paper or email for further analysis. In addition, observation techniques were used to directly observe the research object to gain a clear picture of field conditions. Literature study was also conducted by collecting theories and references from books, journals, magazines, and other relevant scientific sources. Interviews served as the main technique by determining key informants, namely Grade XI students of SMAN 1 Warunggunung as research subjects. Furthermore, documentation was used to record research activities through photos and audio-visual recordings as supporting data.

To ensure data validity, several techniques were applied, including prolonged engagement, increased persistence, and triangulation. Prolonged engagement was carried out by returning to the field until the data reached saturation and verifying data with original and additional sources to ensure accuracy. Increased persistence involved observing data more carefully, thoroughly, and continuously so that every event could be recorded systematically and accurately, including rechecking collected data to avoid errors. Meanwhile, triangulation was used as a data validation technique, consisting of source triangulation (comparing data from multiple sources), technique triangulation (checking data using different methods such as interviews, observation, and documentation for the same source), and time triangulation (verifying data at different times to ensure consistency). With these techniques, the research data is expected to be valid, credible, and scientifically accountable.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Counselee Description

Table 1. Overview of Counselee Condition

No	Aspect	Description
1	Counselee Identity	Name: MR (pseudonym). Date/Place of Birth: Lebak, 9 June 2000. Address: Jl. Cibuah Masjid RT.07 RW.09, Cibuah Village, Warunggunung District, Lebak Regency. Gender: Male. Religion: Islam.
2	Family Background	The counselee is the eldest of three siblings. He lives with his mother and grandmother, who work as street vendors selling fried snacks and <i>nasi uduk</i> around the village to meet the family's daily needs.
3	Educational Background	The counselee began his education at PAUD At-Tadzki, continued at SDN 2 Cibuah where he showed good academic performance. He then attended SMPN 1 Warunggunung and is currently a Grade XI student at SMAN 1 Warunggunung.
4	Environmental Conditions	The counselee lives in a community dominated by farmers and small traders. The local economy is simple, with most residents engaged in home-based businesses and mobile vending activities.
5	Economic Condition	The family's economic condition is relatively sufficient. Income is unstable, but still able to meet daily needs. The family owns their own house and runs a small business to support their economy.
6	Counselee Personality	Since childhood, the counselee has been known as diligent, kind, and high-achieving. He has achieved class rankings and won running competitions. He is also active in religious activities and has generally positive daily habits.
7	Problem Description	The counselee experiences emotional and behavioral problems that require guidance, motivation, and direction so that he can return to a more stable and positive personality.

The counselee, MR (pseudonym), lives with his mother and grandmother. Initially, his life developed normally like other children. He attended school and played with peers his age. However, a significant change occurred when he became aware of deviant behavior committed by his father. The counselee felt powerless when witnessing his father's actions and threats, which led to feelings of anger, frustration, and helplessness. The main problem is that the counselee was unable to help his mother, who was betrayed by his father, and he could not express his anger and disappointment. These feelings were suppressed over time until he eventually chose to channel them at school. He began associating with peers whom he believed could help him forget his problems by adopting their lifestyle. His aggressive behavior emerged after being influenced by peer invitations, which gradually became a habit during his time in senior high school. Several factors hinder the counselee from improving his behavior, particularly aggressive behavior. These include threats from his father, which make him feel powerless and unable to act, as well as peer influence from friends who encourage and reinforce aggressive behavior.

Counseling Process

1. Problem Identification of the Counselee

Table 2. Identification of Counselee Problems

No	Data Source	Description
1	Counselee Data	The counselee is the eldest of three siblings living with his mother and grandmother. His parents divorced when he was 14 years old. Before experiencing problems, the counselee was active in social activities, schooling, and religious practices. Behavioral changes began to appear when he experienced emotional stress and frustration due to family conflict. He

No	Data Source	Description
		then expressed his emotions through negative behaviors such as mocking friends, sleeping in class, not paying attention during lessons, and even being involved in school fights. These behaviors were a form of escape from family problems and psychological pressure.
2	Peer Data	According to his friends, the counselee was previously active, diligent, and disciplined in school and religious activities. However, after the family incident, he became quiet, often isolated himself, was frequently late, and often absent from religious activities. He also became passive and only participated in activities when pressured by authority figures such as teachers or his grandmother.
3	Close Relatives Data	According to the counselee's aunt, before his parents' divorce, the counselee often experienced verbal pressure from his father in the form of shouting and anger. This condition affected his psychological state. The counselee had run away from home, often stayed out at night, associated with adults, and once stole money from his grandmother. These behavioral changes were also observed by the surrounding environment and peers.
4	Conclusion of Interviews	Based on observations and interviews, it was found that the counselee's aggressive behavior was influenced by family trauma due to parental divorce and psychological pressure within the family environment. In addition, association with negative peer groups further reinforced the emergence of aggressive behavior.

2. Diagnosis

The next step is diagnosis. At this stage, the counselor focuses on identifying the core problem experienced by the counselee. Based on the information obtained from various sources and observations, the counselor determines that the main problem is aggressive behavior. Several indicators show that the counselee exhibits aggressive behavior, including frequently causing disturbances in class and having been involved in fights with classmates. The role of the counselor in guidance and counseling services is crucial in helping students understand and develop their potential optimally within the school environment (Ulfah & Arifudin, 2019). The effectiveness of the counseling process is strongly influenced by the counselor's readiness to create a conducive psychological condition during the service process (Syahri et al., 2022). In addition, counselors are required to possess strong personal qualities to fully understand the counselee's condition and provide appropriate services (Tasmara et al., 2023). In practice, structuring the counseling relationship is an important aspect to ensure that interaction between counselor and counselee is effective and well-directed (Dewany et al., 2023). Multicultural competence is also needed so that counseling services can be adjusted to the diverse characteristics and backgrounds of counselees (Setiawan, 2022). Furthermore, the use of assessment in guidance and counseling helps counselors obtain an objective picture of the counselee's condition so that interventions can be carried out accurately (Wahidah et al., 2019). Overall, counselor professionalism and readiness are key factors in determining the success of guidance and counseling services in schools (Supriyanto & Handaka, 2016).

3. Treatment or Therapy

The counselor provides assistance using a predetermined type of therapy. The therapy used in this counseling process is based on a behavioral approach. In this approach, the counselor engages directly and intensively so that the client feels comfortable enough to share their experiences. In the first meeting, the counselor first builds communication by introducing each other to establish mutual trust between the counselor and the client, so that a sense of safety is created and the client becomes

aware that they are participating in the counseling process voluntarily, without any coercion. This introductory stage takes place over two meetings. On the second day, once both parties are sufficiently familiar with each other, the counselor and client establish a counseling agreement or contract. The purpose is to determine the schedule of the process so that the counseling goals can be achieved on time. In addition to ensuring time efficiency, this counseling contract also serves to build a therapeutic commitment that the client is participating entirely voluntarily, without any pressure, and purely from personal willingness.

The counselor then begins introducing the therapeutic process using a behavioral counseling approach, which will be applied throughout the counseling sessions. This therapeutic process consists of three stages. The first stage is establishing a counseling contract or commitment. The second stage involves helping the client recognize the risks if aggressive behavior continues and becomes a habit until graduation from school. The third stage is a trial process in which the client practices abandoning negative habits that they usually engage in with their peers. In this stage, the client is also directed to build closer relationships with teachers and to leave behind negative behaviors. On the first occasion, in addition to establishing communication and starting with neutral topics, the client was also invited to observe various phenomena of adolescents who previously exhibited aggressive behavior and later attempted to change their habits into more positive ones. The counselor also explained that adolescence is a stage in which identity formation begins and individuals start to engage with a broader social environment; therefore, they need to be equipped with knowledge on how to protect themselves from aggressive behavior. Good communication between the counselor and the client facilitated the counseling process, particularly in delivering therapy using a behavioral approach. The client also agreed on the process that would be carried out during the therapeutic intervention.

Before starting the therapy, the counselor first provided motivation, emphasizing that in order to become a better person, the client must have positive goals. The client needs to begin identifying life goals and understand why he wants to improve himself. At a minimum, the client should understand what actions to take when facing pressure or problems in life, while maintaining enthusiasm and remembering that becoming a better person can benefit others, especially those closest to him. The stages or counseling process applied to the client are as follows:

1) The first case: the client witnessed the father's deviant behavior and was threatened not to disclose it.

These feelings emerged when the client discovered his father's affair with another woman and was threatened not to reveal it. Since that day, the client felt confused, angry, and sympathetic toward his mother. The counselor visited the client's home to observe his daily activities and noticed that the client appeared uncomfortable when interacting with his mother, as seen from occasional raised tones when the mother spoke and criticized the client's behavior. The counselor also advised the client's mother to communicate more frequently and ask about the client's school activities so that the client feels that his parents care for and love him. The counselor then explained that every human is created uniquely with different problems, and that God gives trials with certain purposes that only He knows. The counselor reassured the client that he is capable of going through all of this and can become a better person if he has the willingness and intention to change. The client was also reminded that he is not alone in facing these problems, as there are many people who care for him, including his mother and teachers at school. The counselor encouraged the client to be more active in school activities for one week and, if possible, to join extracurricular activities that interest

him. In the following week, the counselor observed that the client had become more active at school by joining the scouting and volleyball extracurricular activities. In accordance with the counselor's guidance, the client carried out these activities willingly and without coercion, as it was his own decision.

2) The next case: the client associated with peers who displayed aggressive behavior. From previous observations, it was known that the client had been involved in fights, and according to information received by the counselor, the client engaged in such behavior as a way to express or release anger related to his father's behavior. This was caused by the threats made by the father, stating that if the client disclosed the affair, he would be physically punished. According to the client, during fights he imagined his father's face, and this was something he often did when he tried to fight his classmates. When feeling angry, the client consistently imagined his father's face. The client stated that he felt satisfied after engaging in such behavior because he felt as if he was hitting his father rather than his classmates, as expressed during the interview. Based on this situation, the counselor advised the client to keep a distance from peers who could potentially reinforce aggressive behavior. However, this may not be easy for the client, as he feels uncomfortable distancing himself from his friends. Therefore, the counselor suggested that the client invite his friends to join the extracurricular activities he participates in. In this way, the client would not be isolated and would also not need to distance himself from his peers.

4. Evaluation

Evaluation is a step to follow up on the counseling process that has been carried out. In this stage, the counselor determines the extent of the success of the assistance provided to the client using a behavioral approach in reducing aggressive behavior as an effort to resolve the client's problems. In addition to re-observing the client after the intervention has been applied, the counselor also conducts follow-up interviews using secondary data to assess the extent of behavioral changes in the client through the behavioral approach. The client showed gradual changes after the counseling process, although these changes did not appear immediately but developed progressively over time.

Final Counseling Results

After all counseling stages were completed, the counselor found that the client's aggressive behavior had gradually decreased. This was supported by interview results with secondary informants, namely the client's classmates. After the therapy was implemented, aggressive behaviors previously shown by the client, such as causing disruptions in class and teasing classmates, began to decrease. At this stage, the client started to adapt and adjust. The client showed positive development in the first issue, which was causing disruptions in the classroom. This was demonstrated when the client independently took the initiative to replace the class leader in leading the prayer at the beginning of lessons. On another occasion, the client also showed confidence by reprimanding classmates who were being noisy during lessons.

The second issue involved the client associating with peers who frequently encouraged fighting. Previously, the client was known as a diligent and obedient student, and was considered well-behaved both at school and in his home environment. However, this gradually changed after he began associating with peers who displayed aggressive behavior and often came home late due to spending time with them. This issue is also considered a form of emotional release related to the client's father's behavior. The client often did not return home, claiming to stay at a friend's house. According to the mother's account, the client frequently did not come home for several days. Based on information

from classmates, the client also occasionally skipped school or was absent for an entire week. His attendance records showed more absences than presence.

At this stage, the client was encouraged to attend school regularly and was seated separately from peers who tended to cause trouble. The counselor also requested assistance from the homeroom teacher to monitor and pay closer attention to the client's development. During this stage, the client initially experienced social withdrawal from his previous peer group, which made the adjustment process difficult, as he had previously depended heavily on those friends in his daily school life. However, with continued support and reinforcement from the counselor, the client's gradual progress began to show positive results.

After all counseling processes were carried out, the changes in the client's behavior became evident. In this study, an individual counseling intervention using a behavioral approach was applied to reduce the client's aggressive behavior. This is consistent with the results of observations and interviews conducted by the counselor with primary and secondary data sources, including the client's family, classmates, and teachers. At present, the client has shown positive changes regarding aggressive behavior. The client has begun to actively participate in extracurricular activities and no longer skips school, even without the counselor's direct supervision. Therefore, the study entitled "*Individual Counseling with a Behavioral Approach to Reduce Students' Aggressive Behavior at SMAN 1 Warunggunung (Case Study of Grade 11 Students)*" can be considered successful. The following are the symptoms observed before the counseling intervention was conducted: first, the client often caused disturbances in class during learning activities, teased classmates, and showed defiant behavior toward teachers. Second, the client had been involved in fighting incidents initiated by classmates. Condition before and after the counseling intervention

Table 3. Final Counseling Results

No.	Aggressive Behavior	Before Counseling		
		(A)	(B)	(C)
1.	Teasing classmates	✓		
2.	Opposing teachers	✓		
3.	Causing disturbance in class during lessons	✓		

Explanation: A = Never, B = Sometimes, C = Still Occurs

Based on the data presented in the table above, the client shows some improvement, as the aggressive behaviors previously exhibited have begun to decrease and are no longer being carried out. Gradually, the client has also begun to have a positive influence on his peers. The client's behavior slowly indicates a return to his original personality prior to the emergence of deviant behavior caused by issues related to his father's actions.

CONCLUSION

The results of the implementation of individual counseling using a behavioral approach to reduce aggressive behavior in students (a case study of Grade XI students at SMAN 1 Warunggunung) show that aggressive behaviors that appear in the school environment such as mocking classmates, physical aggression, causing disturbances in class, opposing teachers, and engaging in fights are serious issues that need to be addressed immediately through appropriate guidance and counseling services. If these behaviors are not handled promptly by the school counselor (BK teacher), they may

have negative impacts not only during the students' time at school but also after graduation, affecting their social life in the community and potentially influencing their academic and social future. The process of individual counseling services using a behavioral approach applied in this study ran well because the student demonstrated openness and willingness to change, and was able to follow each stage and instruction given by the counselor consistently and in a structured manner. This indicates that the behavioral approach is quite effective in helping students control their emotions and transform aggressive behavior into more adaptive behavior. The results of the intervention also showed positive changes, where the client began to show greater enthusiasm for learning, was able to manage himself better, and was encouraged to engage in various positive activities that support personal development and academic achievement. Therefore, this approach can be considered an effective alternative in handling aggressive behavior among students in the school environment.

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