

The Effectiveness of Group Guidance with Shame Attacking Exercise to Improve Students' Assertive Behavior

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the effectiveness of group counseling services using the Shame Attacking Exercise technique in enhancing the assertive behavior of eighth grade students at UPT SMP Negeri 27 Medan. The study employed a quasi-experimental design with a non-equivalent control group, involving 16 students with low assertive behavior, divided into experimental and control groups. The experimental group received an intervention consisting of six group counseling sessions using the Shame Attacking Exercise technique, while the control group participated in regular group guidance. Data were collected using an assertive behavior scale and analyzed with normality tests, homogeneity tests, and paired sample t-tests. The research results showed a significant increase in assertive behavior in the experimental group (post-test mean = 97, high category), compared to the control group (post-test mean = 89, medium-high category), with a significance value of $0.001 < 0.05$. These findings confirm that the Shame Attacking Exercise technique is effective in helping students express themselves assertively, honestly, and confidently. This study has implications for guidance counselors, school counselors, and parents supporting the development of students' assertive behavior. The study's limitations include a small sample size and a short intervention duration; therefore, further research is recommended with a larger sample and mixed-methods approach to strengthen the generalizability of the results.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Schools play an important role in shaping students' social-emotional development through guidance and counseling services [1]. Group guidance services are a practical approach to enhancing communication skills, self-confidence, and social abilities through the use of group dynamics [2]. Within this framework, the Shame Attacking Exercise technique developed in the Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) approach becomes one of the methods that can be used to help students face feelings of shame or fear of

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rejection, thereby encouraging courage in self-expression and strengthening self-confidence [3].

Adolescence is a crucial stage of human development, marked by a high level of curiosity, the quest for identity, and a desire to make independent decisions [4]. At this stage, adolescents are expected to be able to accomplish important developmental tasks, such as forming a stable self-concept and establishing healthy social relationships. However, this period is also marked by psychological vulnerability, as their emotional maturity is not yet complete, making adolescents highly susceptible to influence from their surrounding environment [5].

One of the important social competencies to develop during adolescence is assertive behavior [6], [7], [8], which is the ability to express feelings, opinions, and needs confidently without violating the rights of others. Globally, research by Pahmiah et al. shows that low assertive behavior in adolescents is correlated with social withdrawal, inability to resist peer pressure, and low academic engagement [8]. According to Nwakpadolu et al., assertive behavior is not innate, but rather a result of learning that reflects the ability to regulate emotions and communicate effectively in social contexts [9]. Adolescents who exhibit good assertive behavior will be better able to manage interpersonal conflicts, maintain their self-esteem, and make independent academic and social decisions.

Nevertheless, the research by Mahlangu et al. indicates that many adolescents still experience low levels of assertiveness, which is reflected in difficulties expressing themselves, reluctance to refuse friends' requests, and a lack of confidence in social and academic activities [10]. The low level of assertive behavior is often influenced by authoritarian parenting styles, weak self-concept, socio-cultural norms that limit self-expression, and fear of being rejected by the environment. This condition not only hinders adolescents' social adjustment but also affects their academic performance, as students tend to be passive, less participatory, and reluctant to take on roles in group activities.

In the context of Indonesia, the research by Mahmood & Kalo on adolescent assertive behavior largely still focuses on high school students or university students [11]. Thus, there is a research gap at the junior high school level, which is a critical period when personality formation and social behavior begin to develop. In addition, most previous studies employed descriptive or correlational methods, whereas experimental research that directly tests the effectiveness of interventions to enhance assertive behavior in the school environment remains very limited. This indicates the need to develop a structured, evidence-based guidance service model to improve students' assertiveness at the junior high school level.

Initial observations at UPT SMP Negeri 27 Medan suggest that a substantial number of students exhibit low levels of assertive behavior. They often struggle to communicate effectively, are reluctant to express their opinions or feelings honestly, and tend to conform to peer pressure due to fear of rejection or exclusion. This pattern indicates the need for guidance interventions that can strengthen students' assertiveness, courage, and self-confidence.

Numerous empirical studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of group guidance services in enhancing students' assertive behavior. Research by Beaumont et al. showed a significant increase in the assertive abilities of students at SMA Kartika III-1 Banyubiru after

participating in group guidance [12]. Meanwhile, Stone-Sabali et al. [13] found that group counseling has a positive effect on the assertive behavior of students at SMP Negeri 1 Gondangrejo, Karanganyar. However, research integrating the Shame Attacking Exercise technique into group guidance services at the junior high school level in Indonesia remains very limited. Based on the description above, this study focuses on the effectiveness of group guidance services using the Shame Attacking Exercise technique to improve students' assertive behavior at UPT SMP Negeri 27 Medan. This research is expected to provide empirical and practical contributions to the development of counseling practices in schools, particularly in strengthening students' self-confidence, courage to express opinions, and psychological well-being as part of holistic personal development.

2. METHOD

This research employs a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design featuring a non-equivalent control group. This design was chosen because field conditions did not allow randomization of research subjects, considering that class assignments in schools had been administratively determined. Therefore, the quasi-experimental approach is regarded as the most suitable method for measuring the effectiveness of treatment in the natural school context, without disrupting the learning process [14]. This design involves two groups, namely the experimental group and the control group. Both groups are first given a pretest to measure the initial condition of assertive behavior. Next, the experimental group receives treatment in the form of group guidance services, which include the application of the Shame Attacking Exercise technique, while the control group participates in regular group guidance services without this technique's intervention. After all treatment sessions are completed, both groups are given a posttest to measure changes in students' assertive behavior levels [15].

The population in this study consisted of all eighth-grade students at UPT SMP Negeri 27 Medan, totaling 98 students. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, with the criteria being students who exhibited low levels of assertive behavior, as determined by initial measurements using an assertiveness scale. Based on these criteria, 16 students were selected as research participants, who were then divided into two groups: an experimental group of eight students and a control group of eight students. This relatively small sample size was considered by taking into account the availability of participants who met the criteria and the time constraints of the study. Despite the limited number of participants, this study is intended as an exploratory study or a pilot study to assess the effectiveness of the intervention before it is applied on a larger scale.

The treatment provided to the experimental group consisted of group counseling services using the Shame Attacking Exercise technique, conducted over six sessions with a duration of 60–90 minutes per session. The implementation of the intervention was carefully designed to allow participants to understand, practice, and apply assertive behaviors through direct experience. The first session focused on group formation and orientation, which included introducing the goals, establishing norms, and strengthening mutual trust among members. The second session included an interactive discussion on the concept of assertive behavior, the differences between assertive, aggressive, and passive behaviors, as well as

reflection on students' personal experiences. In the third session, the counselor introduced the Shame Attacking Exercise technique, based on the principles of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) developed by Albert Ellis, as well as Notewantari et al., with the aim of helping students recognize irrational thoughts that cause shame and social anxiety [16].

The fourth and fifth sessions are the core of the training, where students gradually engage in activities that may induce embarrassment in a safe and supportive environment, such as speaking in front of friends with funny expressions or spontaneously asking others for help. Through these activities, students are trained to face and reduce social anxiety while building confidence in interaction. After the practice activities are completed, group reflection and feedback are given to reinforce the learning experience. In the sixth session, the activities focus on evaluation, summarizing the learning outcomes, and forming a commitment to apply assertive behavior in daily life.

Meanwhile, the control group participated only in regular group counseling activities with general topics, such as effective communication, cooperation, and social responsibility, without the application of the Shame Attacking Exercise technique. Thus, the comparison of results between the two groups can clearly demonstrate the effectiveness of the intervention provided.

The research instrument used was an assertive behavior scale developed based on assertive behavior theory and adapted from a scale developed by Eryılmaz and Altınsoy [17]. This scale consists of statements using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5). Examples of items in this scale include: "I dare to express my opinion even if it differs from my friends" and "I choose to remain silent when I disagree with others" (negative item). Validity testing revealed that out of 30 statements tested, 25 were deemed valid, with a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.361 or greater. Reliability testing using the Cronbach's Alpha method yielded a coefficient of 0.817, indicating that this instrument has high reliability and is acceptable, as it exceeds the minimum standard of 0.70.

The research data were analyzed using SPSS version 27. Before conducting hypothesis testing, the data were first examined for normality and homogeneity of variance assumptions to ensure the appropriateness of using parametric analysis. Subsequently, an independent t-test was conducted to determine the difference in assertive behavior levels between the experimental group and the control group after the treatment was administered [18].

In the implementation of this research, the researcher strictly adhered to research ethics considerations. Before the activities commenced, the researcher obtained official permission from the school principal and the educational ethics committee [19]. Additionally, student participation is voluntary and based on informed consent, which is signed by both the student and their parent or guardian. The researchers also guarantee the confidentiality of the participants' identities and ensure that all intervention activities are conducted safely, enjoyably, and without causing psychological pressure. With this systematically designed design, instruments, and procedures, the research is expected to provide an objective overview of the effectiveness of group counseling services using the

Shame Attacking Exercise **technique in** improving students' assertive behavior at UPT SMP Negeri 27 Medan.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

3.1.1. Initial Level of Students' Assertive Behavior Based on Pretest Results Before the Implementation of Group Counseling

The pretest was conducted to assess the initial condition of students' assertive behavior before they received treatment in both the experimental and control groups. This activity was conducted with all eighth-grade students at UPT SMP Negeri 27 Medan, totaling 98 students. The pretest data were then categorized into five levels of assertive behavior: very high, high, moderate, low, and very low. This grouping aimed to obtain a comprehensive picture of the distribution of students' assertive behavior levels prior to the intervention being provided. The results of the pretest on assertive behavior for the students in the experimental and control groups, conducted before the implementation of group counseling services at UPT SMP Negeri 27 Medan, are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Pretest Data of Experimental and Control Classes

No	Experimental Class	Score	Category	Control Class	Score	Category
1	APN	49	Low	NZ	53	Low
2	AM	48	Low	PZN	48	Low
3	FAI	51	Low	RH	51	Low
4	HMS	55	Low	RAR	49	Low
5	ASH	60	Low	DC	58	Low
6	AMH	51	Low	SA	54	Low
7	KNS	59	Low	KBH	52	Low
8	HS	59	Low	WR	59	Low
Total		432			424	
Mean		54			53	

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that the results of the pretest on students' assertive behavior in the experimental and control classes showed the same category, namely, low. The average score of assertive behavior in the experimental class was 54, while in the control class it was 53. Although there was a slight difference in average scores between the two groups, both remained in the low category. This indicates that, before the treatment was administered, the initial conditions of the students' assertive behavior in both groups were relatively equal and homogeneous, making them suitable as a basis for implementing group counseling interventions using the Shame Attacking Exercise technique in the experimental group.

3.1.2. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Students' Assertive Behavior Pretest Results Before Treatment in the Experimental and Control Classes

Based on Table 2, it can be seen that all students in both the experimental and control classes, totaling eight students (100%), fall into the low category for assertive behavior. There are no students in the very high, high, medium, or very low categories. This finding suggests that, in general, the level of students' assertive behavior before treatment remains low and relatively uniform across both groups.

This condition indicates that students continue to exhibit various problems in assertive behavior, such as fear and anxiety when speaking in public, being easily influenced by peer pressure, difficulty expressing feelings honestly and comfortably, as well as difficulty refusing invitations or requests from friends. Based on these results, the experimental class was then given treatment in the form of group counseling services using the Shame Attacking Exercise technique, which was carried out over four meeting sessions, whereas the control class did not receive similar treatment. After all treatment sessions were completed, a posttest was conducted on both groups to assess the changes and effectiveness of the intervention in enhancing students' assertive behavior.

Table 2. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Pretest Results

Category	Interval	Experimental Frequency	Experimental Percentage	Control Frequency	Control Percentage
Very High	109–125	0	0%	0	0%
High	88–108	0	0%	0	0%
Moderate	67–87	0	0%	0	0%
Low	46–66	8	100%	8	100%
Very Low	25–45	0	0%	0	0%

3.1.3. Improvement of Students' Assertive Behavior After Treatment in the Experimental and Control Classes

Table 3. Posttest Data in the Experimental and Control Classes

No	Experimental Class	Score	Category	Control Class	Score	Category
1	APN	100	High	NZ	89	High
2	AM	96	High	PZN	93	High
3	FAI	95	High	RH	84	Moderate
4	HMS	93	High	RAR	92	High
5	ASH	97	High	DC	82	Moderate
6	AMH	98	High	SA	91	High
7	KNS	95	High	KBH	87	Moderate
8	HS	101	High	WR	94	High
Total		775			712	
Mean		97			89	

Based on Table 3, it can be seen that after receiving treatment in the form of group counseling using the Shame Attacking Exercise technique, students in the experimental class experienced a significant increase in assertive behavior. The average score obtained by the experimental class during the posttest was 97, which falls into the high category. Meanwhile, the control class obtained an average score of 89, falling within the distribution category of high to medium. These results indicate that although both groups experienced an increase in assertive behavior compared to the pretest results, the experimental class showed a more optimal improvement. This increase suggests that the implementation of the Shame Attacking Exercise technique in group counseling has a positive effect on students' courage in expressing opinions, honestly conveying their feelings, and refusing invitations that are not in accordance with their personal values. Thus, the intervention provided was proven to be more effective in enhancing assertive behavior compared to the conventional group counseling services received by the control class.

3.1.4. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Posttest Results of Students' Assertive Behavior in the Experimental and Control Classes

Based on Table 4, there is a significant increase in students' assertive behavior after the implementation of the treatment. All students in the experimental class (100%) fell into the high category, indicating that group counseling services utilizing the Shame Attacking Exercise technique had a positive impact on improving their assertive behavior. Meanwhile, in the control class, five students (63%) were in the high category and three students (37%) were in the medium category.

Table 4. Frequency Distribution and Percentage of Posttest Results

Category	Interval	Frequency (Experimental)	Percentage (Experimental)	Frequency (Control)	Percentage (Control)
Very High	109–125	0	0%	0	0%
High	88–108	8	100%	5	63%
Moderate	67–87	0	0%	3	37%
Low	46–66	0	0%	0	0%
Very Low	25–45	0	0%	0	0%

These findings indicate that although both groups experienced improvements compared to the pretest results, the improvement in the experimental class was far more optimal. This suggests that the application of the Shame Attacking Exercise technique in group counseling services is effective in helping students develop the ability to express themselves honestly, assertively, and confidently without violating the rights of others. Thus, this intervention has been proven to significantly contribute to the enhancement of assertive behavior among students at UPT SMP Negeri 27 Medan.

3.1.5. Comparison of Pretest and Posttest Results of Students' Assertive Behavior in the Experimental and Control Classes

Figure 1 shows a comparison of pretest and posttest results of students' assertive behavior in the experimental and control classes at UPT SMP Negeri 27 Medan. Based on

the figure, it can be seen that all students experienced an increase in assertive behavior after the intervention was implemented. Initially, students in the experimental class were in the low category in terms of assertive behavior before receiving treatment. However, after participating in group counseling services using the Shame Attacking Exercise technique, their assertive behavior increased significantly, reaching the high category at the posttest.

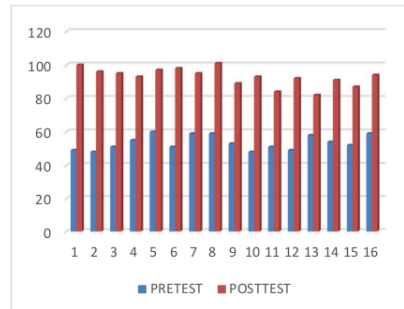


Figure 1. Results of Pretest and Posttest on Phubbing Behavior

Meanwhile, the control class, which did not receive any special treatment, also showed improvement, but the increase was not as optimal as that of the experimental class. These results reinforce the finding that the application of the Shame Attacking Exercise technique in group counseling services is effective in helping students develop courage, self-confidence, and the ability to express their opinions assertively in the school environment.

3.1.6. Normality Test of Assertive Behavior Data in the Experimental and Control Classes

The distribution of variables was assessed to ensure the validity of the data used in this study through a normality test. Suitable data for research are those that are normally distributed. The test applied was the Shapiro-Wilk test. The decision rule states that if p-value (sig) > 0.05, the data are normally distributed; if p-value (sig) < 0.05, the data are not normally distributed. The results of the normality test analysis are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Normality Test Results

Class / Test Results	Kolmogorov-Smirnov		Shapiro-Wilk	
	Statistic	df Sig.	Statistic	df Sig.
Assertive Behavior Result				
Pretest Experimental	0.231	8 .200*	0.875	8 0.168
Posttest Experimental	0.132	8 .200*	0.964	8 0.849
Pretest Control	0.150	8 .200*	0.942	8 0.627
Posttest Control	0.177	8 .200*	0.933	8 0.541

Table 5 presents the values of the normality test. The Shapiro-Wilk test of assertive behavior in the control class yielded a value of 0.627 in the pretest, with a significance value of $p > 0.05$, and 0.541 in the posttest, with a significance value of $p > 0.05$. Meanwhile, in the experimental class, the pretest significance value was 0.168, which is greater than 0.05; the posttest significance value was 0.849, also greater than 0.05. Thus, it can be concluded that the data of both the experimental and control classes are normally distributed.

3.1.7. Test of Homogeneity of Assertive Behavior Data in the Experimental and Control Classes

Testing whether the data distribution of the sample is normal also requires the researcher to test the equality (homogeneity) of several parts of the same sample. Homogeneity testing is particularly important if the researcher intends to generalize the study's findings, especially when the research data are obtained from separate groups originating from the same population. The results of the homogeneity test analysis are presented in Table 6 as follows:

Table 6. Homogeneity Test Results

Assertive Behavior Results	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Based on Mean	1.677	3	28	0.194
Based on Median	1.421	3	28	0.257
Based on Median and adjusted df	1.421	3	25.410	0.260
Based on Trimmed Mean	1.675	3	28	0.195

If the significance value is greater than 0.05, the data are considered homogeneous; whereas if the significance value is less than 0.05, the data are deemed non-homogeneous. The results of the analysis in the table above indicate homogeneity or equality between the posttest scores of the experimental and control classes. This is demonstrated by the significance value (Sig), which is based on the mean of 0.194, indicating that it is greater than 0.05, meaning that this study meets the assumption of homogeneity.

3.1.8. Hypothesis Testing with Paired Sample t-Test on the Effectiveness of the Shame Attacking Exercise Technique in Enhancing Students' Assertive Behavior

To verify the research hypothesis, a paired samples t-test can be applied. This test is conducted to examine the mean differences between the experimental and control classes before and after treatment, to determine the effectiveness of the intervention. If the significance score is less than the 5% significance level (significance < 0.05), then the data are considered statistically significant. SPSS was used to calculate the results of each test. The findings of the paired samples t-test for the experimental and control classes are presented in Table 7.

Paired Sample t-Test. is a testing technique carried out with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. The results found a sig value (2-tailed) of $0.000 < 0.05$. Output pair one is known to have a t-count value of 21.787 with a Sig value of 0.000 (2-tailed) < 0.05 . Meanwhile, output pair two is known to have a Sig value of 15.930 and a Sig value of 0.000. As a result, it can

be said that there is a difference in the mean assertive behavior indicators in the experimental class between pretest and posttest of $0.001 < 0.05$. Following the implementation of group guidance using the Shame Attacking Exercise technique to enhance assertive behavior skills, a significant difference was observed in the improvement between the experimental and control classes. Thus, it can be concluded that H_a is accepted and H_o is rejected, which means that group guidance services using the Shame Attacking Exercise technique are effective in Improving Students' Assertive Behavior Skills at UPT SMP Negeri 27 Medan.

Table 7. Results of the Paired Sample t-Test

		Paired Differences				T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower				Upper
Pair 1	Pretest Experiment – Posttest Experiment	-42,87500	5,56616	1,96793	-47,52843	-38,22157	21,787	7	0,001
Pair 2	Pretest Control – Posttest Control	-36,00000	6,39196	2,25990	-41,34381	-30,65619	15,930	7	0,001

3.2. Discussion

The research results indicate that, before the implementation of the intervention, the level of assertive behavior among students in both the experimental and control classes at UPT SMP Negeri 27 Medan was in the low category. The average pretest score in the experimental class was 54, while in the control class it was 53. This condition indicates that all students exhibited a low level of assertive behavior, such as a fear of speaking in public, difficulty in refusing peer invitations, and a tendency to follow others' opinions without considering their personal values. These findings underscore the need for group counseling interventions using the Shame Attacking Exercise technique to help students develop courage, self-confidence, and the ability to express their opinions honestly and assertively.

After the implementation of the intervention, there was a significant increase in students' assertive behavior. Based on the post-test results, the average score of assertive behavior in the experimental class increased to 97, categorized as high, while the control class increased to 80, categorized as moderate to high. This difference in score improvement was reinforced by the results of the paired sample t-test, which showed a significance value of $0.001 < 0.05$. Thus, the research hypothesis is accepted, namely that group counseling services using the Shame Attacking Exercise technique are effective in improving students' assertive behavior.

These results are consistent with the findings of research by Fitriani et al., which show that the implementation of the Shame Attacking Exercise technique is effective in increasing students' courage to express their opinions in the school social environment [20]. Through this technique, students are encouraged to confront feelings of shame and irrational fear, enabling them to learn how to challenge negative self-beliefs. Similar results were also

found by Hasibuan et al., who asserted that ⁶²group counseling based on Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT), including Shame Attacking Exercises, can change irrational thinking patterns that hinder assertive behavior, such as the fear of being rejected or embarrassed by others [21].

Furthermore, research by Aliem et al. shows that assertive skill training combined with cognitive restructuring techniques can also significantly enhance assertive behavior [22]. This study emphasizes that changes in students' assertive behavior do not solely depend on behavioral practice, but also on changes in underlying thought patterns and beliefs. In this context, the Shame Attacking Exercise technique provides students with direct experiences to alter their perception of shame, enabling them to no longer avoid social situations that trigger anxiety, but instead face them with courage.

²⁵The findings of this study are also supported by the results of a study by Putri & Darmayanti, which demonstrated that implementing counseling with emotional coping and problem-focused coping strategies has a positive effect on improving students' assertive behavior [23]. This suggests that social support and group interaction during the counseling process ²¹play a crucial role in fostering students' courage and confidence to express themselves more openly.

Theoretically, ²¹the results of this study support the basic concept of ⁵⁹Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) proposed by Albert Ellis [24], which states that emotional and behavioral disorders are often caused by irrational beliefs that hinder a person from acting realistically and healthily. The Shame Attacking Exercise technique is designed to challenge those irrational beliefs, particularly the fear of being negatively evaluated by others. Through the direct experience of performing actions considered socially embarrassing, individuals learn that shame does not always lead to negative consequences, thereby reducing social anxiety and increasing assertive behavior [23].

In addition to REBT theory, this finding can also be explained by the Social Learning Theory of Adegoke & Idowu, which states that behavior change can occur through the processes of observation, imitation, and social reinforcement [25]. In group counseling, students observe the courage of their peers as they face stressful social situations. This then strengthens the students' self-efficacy, leading them to believe that they, too, are capable of behaving assertively. Through positive reinforcement from the counselor and other group members, students are motivated to maintain this new behavior.

Empirically, the increase in assertive behavior in this study reflects the success of interventions that combine cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects. The intervention not only focuses on understanding the concept of assertiveness but also provides opportunities for students to practice real-life situations that cause social tension. Thus, ⁷the results of this study indicate that the Shame Attacking Exercise technique is not only effective in enhancing assertive behavior but also capable of fostering self-confidence, reducing social anxiety, and strengthening students' interpersonal communication skills.

Practically, these findings provide important implications for Guidance and Counseling (GC) teachers in schools. The implementation of group counseling services using the Shame Attacking Exercise technique can be an alternative intervention strategy to address students who exhibit passive behaviors, low self-esteem, or are easily influenced by

social pressure. Group counseling activities conducted in a structured manner with this approach can help students recognize, accept, and overcome feelings of shame and fear in the school social context. Moreover, involving all group members in self-reflection and evaluation after the exercises is also an important factor in reinforcing positive behavioral changes.

Nevertheless, this study has limitations due to its relatively small sample size, which consisted of only 16 students; therefore, the results cannot yet be widely generalized. Therefore, further research with a larger number of participants, a more extended intervention period, and a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods is necessary to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of this technique in various educational contexts.

21 4. CONCLUSION

Based on research results at UPT SMP Negeri 27 Medan, group counseling services using the Shame Attacking Exercise technique have been proven effective in improving the assertive behavior of eighth-grade students. The pretest results showed that all students in both the experimental and control classes fell into the low category, with average scores of 54 and 53, respectively. After the intervention, the experimental class's posttest average increased significantly to 97 (high category) while the control class reached 89, with a distribution ranging from high to medium. Normality and homogeneity tests indicated that the data met statistical assumptions, and the paired sample t-test confirmed a significant difference between the pretest and posttest ($p = 0.001 < 0.05$); thus, the hypothesis was accepted. These findings indicate that the Shame Attacking Exercise technique is effective in helping students express themselves assertively, honestly, and confidently. This study has implications for counselors, teachers, and parents in supporting the development of students' assertive behavior. Its limitations include a small sample size, short intervention duration, and the potential influence of external variables. Future research is recommended to expand the sample, extend the intervention duration, employ a mixed-methods approach, and investigate the application of this technique to other psychological variables to enhance the generalizability and sustainability of the results.

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