

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ASSERTIVE TRAINING IN IMPROVING ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOUR IN PEER COUNSELORS

Dyah Luthfia Kirana*, Riska Mutiah, Baiq Arwindy Prayona

***Correspondent Author**

Dyah Luthfia Kirana
Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram
Jalan Gajahmada No. 100 Jempong
BaruMataram
Indonesia
Email: luthfiadyah@uinmataram.ac.id

Riska Mutiah
Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram
Jalan Gajah mada No. 100 Jempong Baru
Mataram
Indonesia
Email: riskamutiah@uinmataram.ac.id

Baiq Arwindy Prayona
Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram
Jalan Gajah mada No. 100 Jempong Baru
Mataram
Indonesia
Email: baiqarwindy@uinmataram.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

The inability to express feelings, difficulty and confusion in making decisions, fear of making mistakes, and dependence on the approval of others are common challenges faced by peer counselors. This research aims to enhance the ability of peer counselors to behave assertively through assertiveness training. The research method used is pre-experimental with a one-group pretest posttest design. The study involved 14 peer counselors as research subjects. The instrument used is the Assertive Behavior Inventory, which consists of 33 statement items. The research findings indicate that assertiveness training interventions can improve assertive behavior. This is evidenced by the results of the paired sample t-test, which show that H_a is accepted and H_0 is rejected. This suggests a significant difference in assertive behavior between the pre-test and post-test results, confirming the effectiveness of assertiveness training in enhancing assertive behavior among peer counselors. This study highlights the importance of strengthening peer counselor competencies, particularly assertive behavior skills, which play a crucial role in the success of the peer counseling service process.

Keywords: assertiveness, behavior, peer counselor

INTRODUCTION

Humans are social creatures who will always interact with other individuals to meet their life needs. One of the important skills to have in establishing interaction with others is the ability to behave assertively. Assertive behavior, according to Lange and Jakubowski (Kirst, 2011), is the ability of individuals to be able to defend their personal rights and be able to convey their thoughts, emotions, and

beliefs directly, honestly, and precisely. Assertive skills are a manifestation of an individual's ability to express the content of thoughts and feelings firmly and confidently (DeVito, 2013). Individuals who have assertive abilities will be able to be assertive and confident in interpersonal relationships so that the content of their thoughts and feelings can be understood and get positive responses from others in the form of praise or warm

responses (Alberti, R., & Emmons, 2017). However, in the reality of life around us, the inability to behave assertively is still widely encountered both in the personal realm and in interpersonal relationships. Several studies as far as researchers know show that the inability to behave assertively has a negative impact such as; Individuals have dissatisfaction because they are unable to express their desires firmly, have difficulty setting boundaries with others to express their personal needs so that they feel guilty, have difficulties in making decisions because they are afraid of making mistakes and rely heavily on the approval of others, then individuals have feelings of not being appreciated because they are unable to defend their rights (Laila, 2024). Then in interpersonal relationships, the inability to behave assertively can create conflicts due to an imbalance of power because one tends to be more dominant in decision-making, there is excessive compromise and lack of ability to overcome conflicts which can then reduce the quality of relationships between individuals (Aryani, 2022). The inability to behave assertively can also cause difficulties in communicating negative feelings and behaviors that others cause to themselves (Nurendah et al., 2023) so that individuals tend to suppress and hide their feelings which can then cause stress and frustration (Laila, 2024).

Seeing the negative impact caused by the inability to act assertively as described in the previous paragraph, assertive behavior is very important for every individual, especially in peer counselors. Peer counselors provide help both individually and in groups to their peers who have problems or experience various obstacles in personality development (Erhamwilda, 2015). Peer counselors are non-professional individuals who provide assistance to their peers (Yunita, 2021).

Peer counselors are an effective strategy to improve adolescent emotional literacy (Karsih et al., 2020), which shows that the role of peer counselors is very helpful in providing education and problem solving. It is also known that a continuous coaching program to

improve the skills of peer counselors also needs to be carried out so that the program that has been prepared can be carried out properly (Triyanto et al., 2021). Other research also shows that the limited skills of peer counselors in handling student problems are an inhibiting factor in the effectiveness of peer counseling (Astiti, 2019).

Assertive communication needs to be used by counselors so that counselors can be aware of the reality that happens to them who can then get out of the difficulties experienced, and counselors also benefit from assertive communication carried out by counselors in the counseling process (Rukmana, 2017). Assertive behavior is urgently needed in achieving comprehensive success in the process of providing guidance and counseling services (Lianawati et al., 2021). The basic skills of peer counseling counselors such as attending skills, active listener, summarizing, questioning, empathy, acceptance, contracting, reflection and clarification, appreciating differences, and confrontation (Liqoiyahetal., 2022) urgently need assertive behavior to be implemented, because in active listening skills, peer counselors not only listen to counseling, but also need to provide honest, congruence and sincere feedback. Honest, congruence and sincere feedback are the personality characteristics of counselors which are the basic foundation in establishing relationships with counselors (Setiawan & Yaniasti, 2023). These three characteristics can only be given if the peer counselor is able to behave assertively. Then in the skills of questioning, summarizing, reflection and clarification as well as confrontation, it is also very necessary to have assertive communication skills so that counselors and counselors have honest relationships and communication by expressing appropriate feelings and thoughts without any dominance from the counselor so that the counselor is still able to express his problems, feelings and thoughts. The process of assistance in counseling becomes effective if the relationship between the counselor and the counselor is well established, A good relationship between the counselor and the

counselor is developed through verbal and non-verbal communication as the foundation (Aminah, 2018). Furthermore, according to Tindall and Gray, the implementation of peer counseling training must also contain 8 (eight) basic communication skills, namely Attending, empathizing, summarizing, questioning, genuineness, assertiveness, confrontation, and problem solving (Liqoiyahetal., 2022).

Assertive training or also known as assertive training is a technique used to train the courage of individuals to express desired behaviors, which in the end can practice assertiveness which is an activity carried out to help individuals to develop ways of interacting directly in interpersonal relationships. The pressure point in analytical training is to practice through role playing, practicing newly acquired social skills so that they are expected to be able to overcome their inability and learn to express their feelings and thoughts more openly (Azmi & Nurjannah, 2022). Assertive training is developed by relying on social skills training procedures which are also called SLA (structured learning approach) approaches (Cardenas, 2020). This training procedure is developed based on learning theory and behavior modification. The training procedures used can include: (1) modeling, (2) roleplaying, (3) feedback or feedback, and (4) transfer of training and maintenance. Lawrence (in Samfira, 2020) added that assertive training is a systematic process that includes skills, concepts, and attitudes that can be developed by training individual abilities to be able to confidently convey their thoughts, feelings, desires, and needs directly, honestly and frankly without offending others (Lawrence in Samfira, 2020). In assertive training, individuals are guided to express themselves, so that they can express their sensitivity to the rights of others, affirm what they want, without ignoring the feelings of others (Aryani, 2022).

Initial interviews with peer counselors showed that they were still often aggressive and passive, unable to express opinions, unable to resist and set boundaries. They do this to avoid conflict, hesitation and uncomfortable to speak honestly for fear of hurting the feelings of the interlocutor. The

problems expressed are related to the inability to behave assertively, this shows that peer counselors need to receive assertive training in order to be able to express their feelings, thoughts and opinions more openly. Assertive training is said to be able to help individuals who have difficulty expressing negative and positive feelings they feel, have excessive politeness and politeness, always put the interests of others ahead of themselves, have difficulty saying "no", and have the feeling of not having the right to have their own thoughts and feelings (Corey, 2017). The novelty and gap between this research and previous research related to assertive behavior are found in the selection of subjects who receive treatment. Several studies that have been conducted before provide assertiveness training to teenagers, students, and teachers. There has been no research that provides assertiveness training to peer counselors, this study sees that peer counselors need to have the ability to behave assertively as a competency that can help provide peer counseling services.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a Pre-experimental type of experimental research, with One-group Pretest-Posttest Design. The Dependent Variable of this study is assertive behavior and the independent variable is assertiveness training. The respondents in this study were 14 peer counselors who are members of the UIN Mataram Student Information and Counseling Center. The design of the implementation of this research can be seen below:

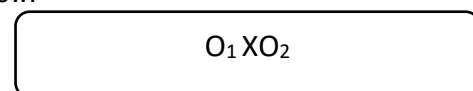


Figure 1

Pretest-posttest design assertiveness training

The research was carried out by measuring assertive behavior abilities in the pretest and posttest using an inventory of assertive behavior compiled based on the assertive behavior aspects of the theory of Alberti, R., & Emmons (2017) by Fauziah et al. (2024) consisting of aspects of the ability to do

something according to one's own ability, the ability to express feelings, the ability to defend oneself, the ability to express opinions and the ability to respect the rights of others. The instruments used have been tested for reliability and validity. The data analysis used in this study is a t-test (Paired Sample t-Test). Paired Sample T-Test which is part of a comparative hypothesis test with parametric statistical analysis. Paired Sample T-Tests is used on two paired samples, meaning that the samples are from the same subject. The basis for decision-making in the Paired Sample t-test is based on the comparison of significance values (probabilities) as follows: if the value of Sig. (2-tailed) < 0.05, then H_a is accepted and H_o is rejected.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data processing results of the distribution of the assertive behavior instruments of peer counselors, the total score of each subject was categorized into three categories, namely low, medium, and high. The total scores of 14 (fifteen) subjects showed that the pre-test results were not in the low category, then 9 (nine) people were in the medium category, and 5 (five) people were in the high category. Then intervention or treatment is carried out with assertiveness training to improve the assertive behavior ability of peer counselors. Then after the treatment is completed, the peer counselor is again given a post-test to find out if there is a change in the score before and after the intervention. Below is a table of changes in the subject's pre and posttest results.

Table 1
Changes in Pretest and PostTest Score Results

Inisial	Pretest	Kategori	Posttest	Kategori
NAH	64	Sedang	97	Tinggi
SA	85	Tinggi	105	Tinggi
YA	64	Sedang	95	Tinggi
AA	63	Sedang	94	Tinggi
AMA	66	Sedang	99	Tinggi
MU	68	Tinggi	99	Tinggi
AR	65	Sedang	98	Tinggi
SAA	85	Tinggi	110	Tinggi
APR	50	Sedang	82	Tinggi
JRU	65	Sedang	95	Tinggi
IN	80	Tinggi	103	Tinggi
NOZ	90	Tinggi	117	Tinggi
SZ	61	Sedang	91	Tinggi
ADC	60	Sedang	90	Tinggi

Based on the table above, it can be seen that there is a change in the value after the intervention is given and before the intervention is given. In the pretest, there were 9 peer counselors in the medium category and 4 peer counselors in the high category. Then on the posttest score, all peer counselors experienced an increase in scores and all were in the high category. At the beginning of the pretest, which shows the medium category, it shows the need for peer counselors to be given assertivetraining because peer counselors who are in the medium category have a vulnerability in the inability to behave assertively in the aspects of the ability to express feelings, the ability to defend themselves and the ability to express opinions. This shows that peer counselors need to strengthen their assertive abilities. The difference and change in the score in table 1 shows that there is an influence that brings changes in the ability of assertive behavior as shown by the change in the score and the difference in score change that has increased significantly.

The results of the normality test using kolmogorovsmirnov based on the table above show the significance value of Asymp. Sig(2-tailed) of 0.200 is greater than 0.05 which indicates normal distributed data. The normality test is a prerequisite test in nonparametric statistics before continuing to the t-test. After the results of the normality test show normal distributed data, then the analysis of the t-test can be carried out.

Table 2
Normality Test Results

One-SampleKolmogorov-SmirnovTest	
	UnstandardizedResidual
N	14
Normal Parameters ^{a,b} Mean	.0000000
Std. Deviation	2.59512918
MostExtremeDifferences	Absolute .169
	Positive .097
	Negative -.169
TestStatistic	.169
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.200 ^{c,d}

Table 3 below shows the difference in pretest and posttest conducted. The table

shows the pretest < posttest scores, which are 68.86 < 98.21, which means that there is an average difference between the pretest and posttest scores. This means that there is a significant change between before and after the intervention.

Table 3
Difference Between Pretest and Posttest Results

PairedSamplesStatistics				
	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. ErrorMean
Pair 1 pretest	68.86	14	11.488	3.070
posttest	98.21	14	8.702	2.326

Furthermore, in table 4 of the correlation pretest and posttest shows a significance value of 0.000 < 0.05 which means that there is a relationship or correlation between the pretest and posttest values with a correlation value of 0.954 and a significance of 0.000.

Table 4
Correlation pretest and posttest

PairedSamplesCorrelations			
	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1 pretest&posttest	14	.954	.000

The results of the t-test that have been carried out show a significance value of 0.000 which is less than 0.005 (0.000<0.005) which means that Ha is accepted and H0 is rejected which is shown in table 5 above. With H0 = assertive training is not effective in improving assertive behavior. Then Ha= assertive training is effective in improving assertive behavior. Which means that in this study, Ha is accepted so that assertive training is effective in improving assertive behavior.

Table 5 shows that the results of the t-test that have been carried out show a significance value of 0.000 which is less than 0.005 (0.000 < 0.005) which means Ha is accepted and H0 is rejected. H0 = assertive training is not effective in improving assertive behavior. Then Ha = assertive training is effective in improving assertive behavior. Which means that in this study, Ha is accepted so that

assertive training is effective in improving assertive behavior.

Table 5
T-test Results

PairedSamplesTest						
	PairedDifferences		95% Confidence Interval		t	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Lower	Upper	df	
Pair 1 pretest - posttest	-4.106	1.097	-31.728	-26.986	13	.000

The results of the study that show that assertive training techniques are effective in improving assertive behavior can be seen from the results of the analysis of differences in assertive behavior scores before and after the intervention as well as the significance value in the t-test carried out. In Table 1, the change in the score of the pretest and posttest results shows an increase in categorization that occurs. The pretest showed that 9 peer counselors were in the medium category and 4 people were in the high category. Although peer counselors have an average assertive behavior in the pretest, in terms of the ability to express feelings, the ability to defend themselves and the ability to express the opinions of peer counselors still encounter obstacles. This is a concern during assertive training interventions so that during the provision of assertive training, peer counselors are invited to express themselves by filling out a worksheet of non-assertive behaviors that have been done, role-playing and giving feedback after role-playing so that peer counselors practice expressing their feelings and opinions. In the feedback, it was also emphasized that expressing opinions and feelings is not wrong for peer counselors to do.

The provision of reinforcement on the ability to express feelings, the ability to defend oneself and the ability to express opinions has

changed as shown from the results of the posttest with an increase in scores so that all peer counselors are in the high category. The results of this study have similarities with the Gallasi & Gallasi research (Speedetal., 2018) which shows the effectiveness of assertive skills training procedures stating that assertiveness training programs include very important aspects in improving assertive behavior: modeling, behavior repetition and feedback. The results of this study are also in line with the next research which shows the development of assertive communication skills in assertive training participants (Argesty et al., 2022).

There are four basic methods in social skills training (in this case, assertive behavior), namely: instruction, modeling, role playing, warm-up exercises, reinforcement, and homework (Cardenas, 2020). Other experts argue that to develop assertive skills, it can be done by practicing the ability to distinguish assertive, passive, and aggressive behaviors (Aryani, 2022). In this study, several techniques were used in assertive training that were carried out, namely distinguishing assertive, passive, and aggressive behaviors, self-disclosure, roleplaying, and giving feedback.

In the first session, assertive training was carried out to provide an understanding of the differences between assertive, passive and aggressive communication of peer counselors. Then the peer counselor fills out a worksheet to make negative self-disclosure due to the inability to behave assertively. Assertive Training focuses on the counselor's negative self-disclosure, self-destructive beliefs and erroneous thinking (Aryani, 2022). Negative counselors' self-disclosure can be seen in the worksheet of non-assertive behavior expressed by each peer counselor. The Role Playing method is given by choosing the role card that has been provided. Peer counselors will play roles according to the role cards obtained. In role-playing, individuals will act with the imagination of the situation in a role-playing card whose purpose is to contribute to self-understanding, improve

skills, analyze behavior, or show others how to act (Arifin, 2020).

Feedback on performance is given after the peer counselor plays the role. In this session, peer counselors were given information on how well they had performed their roles in role playing. Then feedback is given in the form of encouragement, suggestions, approval, direction and positive criticism to improve and strengthen the learning results. In the feedback session, peer counselors are also allowed to express feelings, and thoughts during the role and why the peer counselor chooses an action in the role. This is also done to strengthen the skills to express oneself and be honest with one's feelings and thoughts.

The results of this study are in line with the research of Argestya et al. (2022) and Nurendah et al. (2023) which showed that there was a change in communication skills in junior high school students after being given assertive communication training. Assertive behavior skills give the courage to refuse and express uncomfortable feelings, express requests when they need help, express positive and negative feelings, be able to defend their own rights while still being concerned about the rights of others, and increase self-esteem (Anghel & Jitaru, 2019).

The results of this study provide a perspective on the importance of assertive behavior skills in peer counselors and the limited skills of peer counselors which are inhibiting factors in the implementation of peer counseling can be minimized by strengthening peer counseling skills in the form of assertive training.

Assertive Training can be implemented through information services, classical guidance and group guidance. Peer counselors who are able to demonstrate assertive behavior skills can provide more effective services with the ability to express their thoughts, ideas, ideas and feelings to counselors so that they can provide better alternative problem solving.

Assertive Training can also be provided in the field of social personal counseling services to individuals who do not dare to

express their feelings honestly, lack confidence in getting along, and adolescents who are unable to refuse their friends' invitations that lead to negative things. Having assertive behavior skills can help individuals to build healthy social and communication relationships.

CONCLUSION

This study provides evidence that assertive training is able to increase assertive behavior in peer counselors. The more often assertive training is carried out, the better the assertive behavior of peer counselors. The usefulness of the results of this study is that it can be a reference and add knowledge insight for Guidance and Counseling teachers to improve the basic skills of peer counseling counselors, one of which is with assertive behavior skills that can help the process of counseling guidance services in schools through assertive training. Training the assertive behavior of peer counselors plays an important role, namely to increase knowledge for the development of counseling skills in order to provide effective assistance.

In addition, assertive training is also used for students who are unable to express their thoughts, feelings and ideas, are not confident and have difficulty making decisions because they have to get approval from others and students who have difficulty building social relationships.

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