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Identifying The Psycho-Educational Strategies in Dealing with Aggressive Behavior from The Counselor's Perspective

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Abstract
Aggressive behavior among students disrupts learning environments and psychosocial development, necessitating effective interventions. This study uses the Nominal Group Technique (NGT) to explore counselors' perspectives on psycho-educational strategies for managing aggression. Seven counselors identified social skills training, behavioral modeling, and problem-solving techniques as highly effective in improving clients' behavior and self-management. However, challenges such as resource constraints and implementation difficulties persist. Findings suggest psycho-educational approaches are effective for long-term behavior management, culturally adaptable, and enhance client outcomes and counselor job satisfaction while highlighting the need for improved professional development and resource allocation.

Keywords: Aggressive behavior; Psycho-Education; Nominal Group Technique.

1.0 Introduction
Aggressive behavior among students has become an increasingly worrying issue in today's education system. This phenomenon disrupts the learning and teaching process and negatively affects the psychosocial development of students and the school climate overall (Sukhodolsky et al., 2016). Consequently, the psycho-educational approach has been identified as one of the effective strategies for dealing with aggressive behavior problems. It is an integrative method, drawing on psychological and educational frames, to enable students to comprehend, control, and modify the content of their behavior (Lochman et al., 2019). School counselors also have a major role in the implementation of psycho-educational approaches.

Counselors are well-positioned to identify, plan, and implement classroom interventions for students' aggression, given the knowledge and skills they have received during training in counseling and educational psychology (Goodman-Scott et al., 2020). With the idea of assessing the behavior in-depth from a psycho-educational perspective considering contextual factors, such as family factors, school environment, and social background), a counselor can develop interventions that are individualistic to the student's needs (Domitrovich et al., 2017). Therefore, psycho-educational strategies are effective then-effective in reducing aggressive behavior and enhancing students' social skills, as shown in recent studies conducted by school counselors (O'Brennan et al., 2020). This approach teaches students the origins and consequences of their violent actions and broader emotional regulation and conflict resolution skills

with respect to aggression and violence. It also teaches them to use and access those strategies. Moreover, when psycho-educational approaches target counselors, teachers, and parents, the intervention's effectiveness increases, making the environment more supportive of students' neural-psychological development (Espelage et al., 2018). According to the counselor's perspective, the study aims to evaluate and identify appropriate key strategies for psycho-educational approaches in reducing aggressive behavior among students.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Understanding Aggressive Behavior

Aggressive behavior represents a complex, multi-dimensional psychological phenomenon characterized by intentional actions designed to cause physical, psychological, or emotional harm. Contemporary research, including groundbreaking work by Waltes et al. (2016), Craig and Halton (2009), and Cupaioli et al. (2021), conceptualizes aggression as a sophisticated interplay of neurobiological, social, and environmental factors. Modern psychological theories, including social learning theory, cognitive-behavioral perspectives, and neurobiological approaches, provide nuanced frameworks for understanding the intricate mechanisms underlying aggressive tendencies. They emphasize the critical roles of learned behavioral patterns, cognitive processes, and neurochemical influences.

The typology of aggressive behavior reveals multiple manifestations, ranging from reactive and proactive aggression to relational and digital forms of interpersonal conflict. Developmental perspectives highlight the significance of early behavioral patterns in predicting future aggressive tendencies, with research by Vaughan et al. (2023), Arsenio et al. (2009), and Raine et al. (2006) demonstrating how childhood experiences, adolescent social dynamics, and neurological maturation contribute to the complex landscape of aggressive behaviors. These studies underscore the importance of understanding aggression through a holistic lens that considers individual, familial, and societal contextual factors.

Other than that, emerging research advocates for comprehensive, personalized intervention strategies that address the multi-faceted nature of aggressive behavior. Smith et al. (2012), Bradshaw et al. (2012), Sadler (2018), and Shek and Lee (2024) emphasized the importance of early identification, cognitive-behavioral interventions, social skills training, and studies of emotional regulation techniques are essential. An outstanding approach weighs in on disparate viewpoints, acknowledging that aggression is a multi-level behavioral construct influenced by advances in neuroplasticity, socio-ecological learning, and psychological processes unique to the individual. This allows practitioners to use more effective methods when it comes to understanding, preventing, and helping manage aggressive behavior across the developmental pathway with a more integrated approach.

2.2 Aggressive Behavior Among School Students

The aggressive behavior of schoolchildren is an outcome of a wide range of psychosocial and environmental factors, in which family dynamics, as well as peer relations and the school environment, strongly influence aggressive behavior. Furthermore, studies show that low parental attachment, harsh parenting styles, and poor school environments promote adolescent aggression by providing a hostile family and school context (Dou et al., 2015). Aggression is also significantly affected by peer pressure and self-esteem, wherein peer rejection and negative social influences lead to aggressive behavior among adolescents (Yavuzer & Civilidag, 2014). Correspondingly, contextual influences affect involvement in violent and non-violent behaviors, as the larger social context and peer dynamics operate together (Farrell et al., 2010). Another factor that can influence aggression is emotional regulation and peer conformity, where students with emotion regulation difficulties tend to be aggressive (Al Mahsuny & Nastiti, 2024). Besides, parenting style and peer effect are strong predictors in this study, explaining the contributory role of the homes and social environment of the students in affecting their behavior (Osiesi et al., 2023).

Subsequently, a positive school climate and healthy relationships between the teachers and the students significantly lower aggression and victimization, which justifies the need for healthy schools (Behrhorst et al., 2020). Overall, these findings highlight the need for multi-level interventions to reduce aggression and benefit children as students develop through the child as human systems and the importance of work related to individual, family-based, and school-based factors.

2.3 Significance of Counselors' Perspectives in Managing Aggressive Behavior

As individualization often leads to a need for intervention in the form of psychological assessment, counselors fill a space between the psychological assessment and practical intervention. They are, therefore, crucial in the management of aggressive behavior. Such programs are uniquely qualified to provide targeted, individualized strategies to address the causes of adversity. Other than that, peace counseling has been regarded as a strategy to provide skills for counselors in generating a peaceful frame of mind that can lead students to express less aggression by recommending an alternative, non-violent method of conflict resolution (Supriyanto & Eka Saputra, 2023). It is a more proactive approach that focuses on emotional self-regulation skills.

Similarly, Adamu (2019) explained the value of teaching children who demonstrate aggressive behaviors to acquire coping skills and problem-solving strategies. They can come in to identify these things and provide the right type of intervention to encourage the well-being of their minds whilst also preventing aggression. Such revelations highlight the counselor as an evolving agent of change, using strength-based practices to promote sustained and holistic approaches to behavior modification.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The Nominal Group Technique (NGT) is a systematic method to determine a group's consensus on a specific topic. Delbecq et al. (1975) originally described it as a participation technique for social planning scenarios, such as exploratory research, citizen involvement, interdisciplinary consultation, and proposal evaluation. Since its development, NGT has been used for a range of applications such as social science (e.g., Lomax & McLeman, 1984; O'Neil & Jackson, 1983) and education research (e.g., Lloyd-Jones et al., 1999; MacPhail, 2001) although its main area of application is health studies. It has the following four-step structure for idea generation in response to a stimulus question: generate ideas independently in writing, share them round-robin one at a time with no discussion of them, clarify and group similar ideas as well as vote on them individually (non-collaboratively) to set priorities.

As part of an NGT session, participants were asked to brainstorm strategies used to prevent and manage aggressive behavior among students so that we could identify and ultimately refine this approach. It involved individual ideas captured by the participants, which were recorded and displayed on a screen in an Excel sheet. We facilitated a discussion around these ideas, which were clarified and collapsed into similar concepts on a larger scale. A simple 5-card rating system, which minimizes complexity and shrinks the coherent process that does have the potential to generate errors, was used by the researcher to prioritize the ideas. We tackled a common challenge with extensive idea rating tasks using a color-coded card game where each participant ranked their top five ideas and ranked them using a scoring system. This approach allowed efficient prioritization so that only the highest-impact suggestions were considered, while less impactful or time-consuming/error-prone ones were avoided.

3.2 Selection of Expert Panel

A purposeful sample of seven expert counselors was used in the study to ensure a diversity of perspectives on the management of aggressive behavior among school pupils. The participants were seven counselors who have work experience of more than ten years as a counselor in counseling aggressive behavior cases, have professional certification or licensing in counseling, experience in implementing psycho-educational approaches, have regular participation in professional development related to behavioral management and experience in both individual and group counseling sessions. A non-probability sampling strategy, as put forward by Palinkas et al. (2015), known as the purposive sampling method, was used to identify participants who were able to provide a rich understanding of the phenomenon of interest.

Note that eligibility criteria comprised expertise of at least 10 years of casework working with individuals with aggressive behaviors and willingness to engage in consensus-building processes. The NGT was conducted in face-to-face mode by the researcher in the meeting room of the Penang Head of State Abdullah Fahim Mosque at Jalan Bertam, Pulau Pinang. The event was an NGT-based structured brainstorming discussion that lasted two hours and brought paradigms together. Based on the participants' shared understanding, the session was to generate ideas and solutions. The researcher calculated the data based on several specific calculations and followed the NGT framework to obtain results that fulfilled the study's aims at the end of the session.

3.3 Data Analysis

This study identified five broad constructs: Understanding and Use of Psycho-Educational Approaches, Educational Psycho Techniques, Effectiveness of Psycho-educational Approach, Challenges and Improvements, and Perception of Long-Term Effectiveness. Each of the constructs has five items and is measured on a three-point Likert scale: 1-disagree, 2-neutral, and 3-agree. Consequently, respondents considered and discussed the constructs and items in groups, after which they voted on them, reflecting their views. We converted the data into percentages and analyzed the data collected from the votes above. Vote results were quantitatively evaluated in an ideas ranking exercise.

For the purpose of the analysis, the percentage of agreement for each item should be over 70%, known as the acceptance range of NGT-based assessments. This percentage represents the agreement among the respondents, which guarantees the applicability of the measured components. Correspondingly, the items that met or exceeded a predetermined threshold were ranked based on their total scores, which organized how the various items fit into the study. It helps map results to expert ratings and ensures a systematic representation of the constructs.

4.0 Research Findings

The results of this study are presented after the completion of the NGT process. Table 1 displays the constructs and items discussed by counselors in managing aggressive behavior in this study.

Table 1: Constructs and items (strategies) for managing aggressive behavior.

Items / Elements	Voter1	Voter2	Voter3	Voter4	Voter5	Voter6	Voter7	Total item score	Percentage	Rank Priority	Voter Consensus
Understanding and Use of Psycho-Educational Approaches	2	3	3	2	3	3	3	19	90.48	3	Suitable
1. I understand the basic concept of the psycho-educational approach.	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	20	95.24	2	Suitable
2. I often use a psycho-educational approach in counseling sessions.	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	20	95.24	2	Suitable

Item								Total	%	Rank	Decision
3. Psycho-educational approaches are effective in dealing with aggressive behavior.	2	3	3	2	3	3	3	19	90.48	3	Suitable
4. I have received adequate training in the use of psycho-educational approaches.	2	2	3	2	3	2	3	17	80.95	5	Suitable
5. I am confident in my ability to apply a psycho-educational approach.	2	2	3	2	3	3	3	18	85.71	4	Suitable
Educational Psycho Techniques	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	19	90.48	3	Suitable
1. I use emotional management techniques in dealing with aggressive behavior.	2	3	3	2	2	3	3	18	85.71	4	Suitable
2. I teach problem-solving skills to clients with aggressive behavior.	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	19	90.48	3	Suitable
3. I use behavioral modeling techniques in counseling sessions.	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	20	95.24	2	Suitable
4. I apply social skills training in my psycho-educational approach.	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	21	100	1	Suitable
5. I use positive reinforcement techniques to encourage desired behaviors.	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	20	95.24	2	Suitable
Effectiveness of Psycho-educational Approach	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	20	95.24	2	Suitable
1. My client showed a reduction in aggressive behavior after attending psycho-educational sessions.	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	20	95.24	2	Suitable
2. The psycho-educational approach helps to increase the self-awareness of the client.	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	20	95.24	2	Suitable
3. Clients can apply the skills learned in their daily lives.	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	20	95.24	2	Suitable
4. I noticed an improvement in the client's communication skills after using the psycho-educational approach.	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	20	95.24	2	Suitable
5. The psycho-educational approach helps clients manage anger more effectively.	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	19	90.48	3	Suitable
Challenges and Improvements	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	20	95.24	2	Suitable
1. I faced challenges in implementing a psycho-educational approach.	2	3	3	1	2	1	2	14	66.67	7	Not Suitable
2. I need more resources to apply the psycho-educational approach effectively.	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	20	95.24	2	Suitable
3. The psycho-educational approach takes a long time to show results.	1	3	3	2	2	1	3	15	71.43	6	Suitable
4. I believe that the psycho-educational approach needs to be adapted according to the local culture.	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	20	95.24	2	Suitable
5. I am interested in deepening my knowledge about psycho-educational approaches.	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	20	95.24	2	Suitable
Perception of Long-Term Effectiveness	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	21	100	1	Suitable
1. Psycho-educational approaches have a long-term effect in reducing aggressive behavior.	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	20	95.24	2	Suitable
2. Clients who participated in psycho-educational sessions showed improvement in self-management.	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	20	95.24	2	Suitable
3. The psycho-educational approach helps in the prevention of aggressive behavior in the future.	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	21	100	1	Suitable
4. I believe the psycho-educational approach is more effective than the traditional approach in dealing with aggressive behavior.	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	20	95.24	2	Suitable
5. The use of psycho-educational approaches increases my job satisfaction as a counselor.	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	20	95.24	2	Suitable

The data analysis highlights a generally positive perception of psycho-educational approaches among voters, with high ratings across various aspects. The participants strongly explained and applied these mechanism approaches, where most exhibited a clear understanding of these approaches, as indicated by all scores ranging from 85.71% to 95.24%. Social skills training emerged as the top-ranked technique, scoring 100%, while other top scorers are behavioral modeling and positive reinforcement. The need for psycho-educational techniques was generally accepted, and all participants were in consensus that these approaches were beneficial in terms of reducing aggression, improving communication, and facilitating long-term behavior change.

However, challenges like insufficient training, cultural adaptation, and limited resources had lower ratings, especially the last one for implementation challenges, with just 66.67%. These results indicate that although psycho-educational approaches are regarded as effective and valuable, some challenges and gaps remain for psycho-educational approaches, and addressing them with additional training and provision of adequate resources could help overcome barriers to lasting change sustainability within the counseling practice.

5.0 Discussion

Psycho-educational approaches are among the most effective approaches to counseling, with evidence of positive effects on behavior, emotional regulation, and social skills. This paper reviewed the relevance of social skills training to improve interpersonal competence. It contributed to the findings that structured psycho-education is necessary to improve emotional competence and, thereby, additional behavioral outcomes (Hussin et al., 2020). Similarly, psychodynamic counseling and cognitive-behavioral techniques have been proven

to support behavioral change and self-awareness in students, demonstrating the broad utility of psycho-educational strategies (Odhiambo et al., 2019).

Psycho-educational approaches are effective, but their implementation contains challenges like cultural adaptation, resource-poor settings, etc. Research has shown that these barriers need to be addressed if psycho-educational interventions are to maximize the benefit of such interventions. For example, this includes providing culturally relevant approaches and sufficient training resources to ensure counselors implement psycho-educational strategies in diverse settings (Topping, 2022). This aligns with research emphasizing that resource constraints and inadequate professional development hinder the scalability and sustainability of these interventions (Dahiya & Lata, 2024).

These psycho-educational approaches should be supported by continuous professional training and allocation of resources that are crucial for long-term improvement and sustainability. Alternatively, Talling et al. (2020) suggest that experiential and cooperative learning models enhance counselor competencies, which has been identified as an area of concern. Psycho-education embedded in more comprehensive educational curricula can generate system-level support and sustainable change. In summary, even though psycho-educational strategies are powerful in promoting behavior change and social skills, tackling issues of training, cultural adaptation, and resource provision can further improve their effectiveness and sustainability.

6.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

As demonstrated in this study, psycho-educational strategies like social skills training, behavioral modeling, and problem-solving techniques also effectively reduce students' aggressive behavior. Counselor perspectives highlighted major behavioral changes and improved self-management in clients. Nonetheless, many obstacles exist, such as limited resources and the necessity of cultural adaptations to using these strategies, indicating areas of opportunity to improve the implementation of these strategies. The main constraints of psycho-educational techniques are implementation issues and resource requirements. These approaches necessitate a large time commitment and ongoing engagement, frequently challenging available resources in educational and clinical contexts. Individual variances in age, cognitive development, and personal circumstances cause significant variation in efficacy across children, demanding extensive customization. Furthermore, success is strongly dependent on regular application across many environments (family, school, community), as well as educated specialists who understand both educational and psychological components. Another key set of restrictions includes systemic and measurement issues. The success of these programs is strongly dependent on active participation from parents, teachers, and other stakeholders, which can be difficult to maintain continuously. Environmental factors are important because children who return to triggering circumstances may see limited long-term effects despite intervention. Furthermore, evaluating progress and establishing obvious cause-and-effect links pose substantial hurdles, making long-term success difficult to assess and verify. These constraints highlight the necessity for flexible, adaptable approaches that incorporate numerous intervention modalities, as well as constant assessment and strong support networks involving all stakeholders in the child's development. Tackling these barriers is essential for maximizing the benefits of these interventions in the long term and increasing their overall effectiveness.

Given these findings, future research should focus on developing culturally adapted psycho-educational modules that cater to diverse student populations. Additionally, exploring the role of digital tools in delivering these interventions can help overcome resource limitations and improve accessibility. Research should also investigate the longitudinal effects of psycho-educational approaches on behavior and mental health outcomes, ensuring sustained student benefits.

Overall, advancing the field requires a multi-faceted approach that includes professional development for counselors, integration of innovative technologies, and continued refinement of intervention strategies. These efforts will support the broader adoption of effective psycho-educational practices and contribute to the holistic development of students in educational settings.

Acknowledgment

Paper Contribution to Related Field of Study

The study fills critical knowledge and practical gaps in psycho-educational interventions and counselling approaches to managing aggressive behaviour. The starting point of this study is to identify appropriate strategies to support clients or students who exhibit aggressive behavior when faced with psychological stress. Therefore, the perspective gained from these findings should be used as a first step in any attempt to explore new constructs, new samples, and the construction of new models or modules to enhance the counselor's ability to improve knowledge and skills to support clients or students with aggressive behavior problems in practice, especially in the school setting. At the end of reading this paper, the results help to expand some initial findings for the field. Even if you criticize some of the wording or the way the argument is constructed, do not doubt what you will find in the paper and why the author says you need to know it. The potential contribution is clear. The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest in relation to this article.

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