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EMOTIONAL SELF-REGULATION STRATEGIES IN MANAGING VERBAL AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR AMONG ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract

Adolescence is a transitional stage characterized by rapid growth and marked by significant physical, cognitive, and social changes. During this period, individuals aged 11–21 years tend to explore their identities and often display high levels of curiosity and emotional instability. As they interact with their surrounding environment, adolescents are particularly susceptible to external influences. One concerning behavior that frequently emerges during this stage is verbal aggression, a form of violence that can have long-term consequences for both individuals and communities. Verbal aggression, as a type of non-physical aggression, involves the use of language to intimidate, demean, or psychologically harm others. This theoretical review aims to examine the role of self-emotion regulation strategies in managing verbal aggressive behavior among adolescents. By reviewing existing literature, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the cognitive, emotional, and social factors that contribute to verbal aggression and to explore the potential of self-regulation strategies in reducing such behavior. Ultimately, this review is intended to inform the development of effective interventions and strategies to promote healthy emotional regulation and reduce verbal aggression among adolescents.

Keywords: Adolescence, Emotional Regulation, Verbal Aggression

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a transitional process from childhood to adulthood, generally occurring between the ages of 11 and 21 years. During this period, young people undergo rapid physical growth, hormonal changes, and development across various domains, including social, cognitive, and emotional aspects. Adolescents are also known for actively searching for their identity. At the same time, they begin to experience a wide range of emotions that tend to be unstable, accompanied by a high level of curiosity about the external world. Because adolescents are still in the process of self-discovery, they are highly susceptible to influences from their surrounding environment (Razi, A. D., Siregar, M., & Zulkarnain, 2018).

In general, aggressive behavior is not only expressed physically but also verbally. Verbal aggressive behavior is a form of violence carried out through swearing, mocking, insulting, or degrading others using words. This type of aggression is commonly displayed by students during

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communication within their environment. Forms of verbal aggression frequently found in schools include teasing peers, using harsh language, and verbally abusing classmates. Verbal aggression is not only directed toward peers but may also be aimed at teachers, such as arguing against teachers' instructions, mocking teachers, or using inappropriate language during disciplinary situations (Suwarno, 2021).

Several factors influence the emergence of aggressive behavior, one of which is the social environment, particularly the school environment. Schools serve as institutions that prepare students and create learning environments, with students interacting within these settings to develop academically and socially, ultimately becoming qualified individuals who contribute positively to society. Student behavior is strongly influenced by interactions between students and the school environment. Both positive and negative forms of interaction within the school context can shape subsequent student behavior.

In this context, students can learn and modify their behavior by observing how individuals or groups respond to certain stimuli, as well as by acquiring new responses through opportunities to observe others' behavior. Based on observations conducted during an internship program, students were found to be more likely to engage in verbal aggressive behavior, such as insulting, mocking, arguing, shouting, using offensive language, and displaying irritability.

Guidance and counseling play an essential role in schools by providing appropriate services tailored to students' conditions and needs, enabling them to achieve their developmental tasks optimally. One form of guidance and counseling service in schools is group guidance. One of the techniques used in group counseling is self-regulation of emotion. Self-regulation of emotion is an important skill that enables individuals to understand their emotions, control them, and apply them appropriately. The primary goal of emotional self-regulation is to help individuals reduce symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach using the library research method, also known as a literature review (Hamzah, 2020). Library research is a type of research conducted by collecting data or scientific writings that are relevant to the research object, focusing on sources of a bibliographic nature. This method involves a critical and in-depth examination of relevant literature in order to address a particular research problem.

The use of library research is justified by the researcher's need to obtain data from various literature sources, including books and previous research journals, as primary data sources to establish a theoretical foundation for the topic under investigation (Moleong, 2019). Specifically, this study seeks to explore the process of selecting brands in accordance with Islamic principles and to identify appropriate branding strategies from an Islamic perspective (Mestika, 2014). This research approach is consistent with that used by previous scholars who have employed the library research method (Zed, 2008).

Before conducting the literature review, researchers must clearly determine the sources from which scientific information will be obtained. The sources used in this study include textbooks, scientific journals, statistical references, research findings in the form of undergraduate theses, master's theses, dissertations, internet sources, and other relevant materials.

RESULTS

A. Adolescents and Emotional Development

1. Psychological Characteristics of Adolescents

From a psychological perspective, juvenile delinquency can be understood as a manifestation of unresolved conflicts during childhood, which result in adolescents failing to navigate their psychological developmental processes effectively. In some cases, childhood and adolescence occur within a relatively short period compared to the rapid pace of physical, psychological, and emotional development. Traumatic experiences during childhood, such as exposure to violence or abuse, may disrupt healthy developmental stages (Yousda, Amiran, Ine & Arifin, 1993).

Additionally, adolescents may experience pressure related to their social environment or low socioeconomic status, which can lead to feelings of inferiority. This condition is closely associated with adolescents' limited emotional stability and their underdeveloped ability to manage emotions effectively. During this transitional phase, adolescents often face challenges related to self-control and emotional regulation. Conflict and rebellion are natural aspects of adolescents' developmental needs as they strive to become independent adults with emotional sensitivity.

2. Emotional Challenges Triggering Aggressive Behavior When Poorly Managed

The prevalence of verbal aggressive behavior identified in this study indicates a growing tendency among students to engage in verbal aggression, reflecting the increasing severity and variation of such behaviors influenced by multiple factors. These findings imply that school counselors or guidance teachers (BK teachers) must actively manage high levels of verbal aggression to prevent more severe negative outcomes. Effective interventions include individual counseling and group counseling for students who demonstrate high tendencies toward verbal aggression (Baron, R., A., & Byrne, 2005).

School counselors play a crucial role in encouraging students to develop an open mindset and understand that verbal aggression constitutes negative behavior requiring proper regulation to prevent harm to themselves and others. Through effective emotional control, students can grow into independent and well-adjusted individuals. Therefore, classical, group, and individual counseling services are essential as preventive and intervention strategies, taking into account the underlying causes of verbal aggressive behavior.

B. The Concept of Emotional Self-Regulation

1. Definition

According to James Gross

Gross (1998) defines emotional regulation (self-regulation of emotion) as the processes by which individuals influence the emotions they experience, the timing of these emotions, and how they experience or express them. Emotional regulation involves the ability to evaluate, manage, control, and express emotions appropriately to achieve emotional balance, as well as to modify emotional responses according to situational demands. This process includes strategies for either reducing or enhancing both negative and positive emotions in alignment with personal goals within social and environmental interactions.

According to Roy Baumeister

Baumeister conceptualizes self-regulation as the conscious management of thoughts, emotions, and behaviors in order to achieve specific goals. He emphasizes that self-regulation relies on limited mental resources; excessive exertion of willpower may lead to mental fatigue, known as ego depletion. Consequently, individuals must restore their mental energy to maintain effective self-regulation. Self-regulation also involves controlling impulses and emotions so that behavior aligns with long-term goals rather than immediate desires (Infante, D., A., & Wigley, 1986).

According to Zimmerman

Zimmerman defines emotional regulation as an individual's ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions in order to adapt emotional responses effectively and appropriately to different situations. Emotional regulation includes internal processes such as emotional awareness, emotional evaluation, and the application of strategies to modify the intensity and duration of emotions so they do not disrupt psychological or social functioning. Effective emotional regulation enables individuals to control emotional expression in accordance with social norms and desired goals.

2. Supporting Theories

a. James Gross's Emotion Regulation Theory

Emotional regulation variables are measured using emotion regulation scales based on Gross's theory (2007), which consists of five components: situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation.

b. Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory

Bandura's social cognitive theory explains self-regulation as a process occurring through the interaction of cognitive, behavioral, and environmental determinants. Individuals learn and regulate behavior through observation and social experiences, making this theory highly relevant in understanding how verbal aggression is learned and modified.

C. Verbal Aggressive Behavior

Aggression generally refers to intentional behavior aimed at harming others. Aggressive behavior may take the form of physical or verbal violence (Baron & Byrne, 2005). According to Baron and Byrne, aggression is supported by several theoretical perspectives, including: (1) Drive Theory, which states that aggression arises from external conditions that generate motives to harm others; and (2) Modern Aggression Theory, which suggests that aggression results from learned behaviors influenced by cognitive, affective, and arousal processes (Anderson, C., A., &Huesman, 2003).

a. Aspects of Verbal Aggression

According to Infante (1986), verbal aggression includes several dimensions:

1. Character Attacks: verbal attempts to damage another person's character or physical traits.
2. Competence Attacks: demeaning others' abilities through verbal expressions.
3. Insults: mocking or ridiculing others' weaknesses verbally.
4. Maledictions: deliberately using curses or wishing harm upon others.
5. Teasing: intentional sarcastic or mocking remarks.

6. Ridicule: laughing at or making fun of others' mistakes or shortcomings.
7. Profanity: using obscene or impolite language intended to hurt others.

Meanwhile, Anderson and Huesmann (2003) identify additional aspects of verbal aggression, including mocking, shouting, arguing, boasting, threatening, spreading rumors, and deceiving others through verbal manipulation.

b. Causes and Impacts

According to Davidoff (1991), anger is an emotional state characterized by heightened physiological arousal and intense feelings of displeasure, often triggered by perceived wrongdoing. Anger frequently generates impulses to attack or destroy, and when expressed outwardly, it results in aggressive behavior. Disappointment, physical pain, humiliation, and threats commonly provoke anger and subsequently aggression.

Among adolescents, verbal aggression often begins with mild teasing during social interactions and may escalate into prolonged verbal conflicts involving insults, profanity, and heightened emotional tension.

Research Implications

The findings of this literature review highlight the importance of emotional self-regulation strategies in managing verbal aggressive behavior among adolescents. Verbal aggression often emerges from poor emotional regulation, environmental pressure, and traumatic past experiences. Adolescents who lack emotional control tend to display behaviors such as insulting, mocking, arguing, shouting, using vulgar language, and displaying irritability toward peers and teachers.

The social environment particularly the school setting plays a significant role in shaping adolescents' verbal aggression. Unhealthy school interactions can exacerbate aggressive tendencies. Therefore, the role of school counselors is critical in providing individual and group guidance services to help students regulate verbal aggression. Group counseling interventions based on emotional self-regulation strategies have been shown to be effective in reducing verbal aggression among students.

Emotional self-regulation enables adolescents to recognize, understand, and manage emotions effectively, allowing them to adjust emotional responses adaptively. Supported by Gross's emotion regulation theory, Baumeister's self-regulation framework, and Bandura's social cognitive theory, emotional self-regulation is a key mechanism in preventing and reducing verbal aggressive behavior in adolescents.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of this literature review, it can be concluded that adolescence is a developmental stage that is highly vulnerable to the emergence of verbal aggressive behavior due to emotional instability, environmental pressures, and adverse past experiences. Adolescents who lack adequate emotional regulation skills tend to express feelings of anger, frustration, and disappointment through verbal aggression, such as mocking, insulting, shouting, arguing, and using offensive language toward peers and teachers. The social environment, particularly the school setting, plays a significant role in shaping and reinforcing these behaviors through daily patterns of interaction.

Emotional self-regulation strategies play a crucial role in managing and reducing verbal aggressive behavior among adolescents. The ability to recognize, understand, and control emotions enables adolescents to respond more adaptively to challenging situations. Theoretical frameworks proposed by James Gross, Roy Baumeister, and Albert Bandura support the view that verbal aggressive behavior is not only learned but can also be modified through effective self-regulation processes.

Therefore, the role of school counselors and guidance teachers is essential in providing individual, group, and classroom-based counseling services that focus on developing emotional self-regulation skills. Interventions based on emotional self-regulation are expected to promote healthy emotional management, reduce verbal aggression, and foster positive and adaptive development among adolescents.

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