

THE EFFECT OF INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING SERVICES ON REDUCING AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR AMONG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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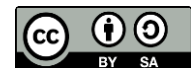
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Abstract

Aggressive behavior among elementary school students is a pressing issue that disrupts the learning environment and affects students' social-emotional development. Individual counseling services have been identified as an effective intervention to address such behaviors by targeting underlying emotional triggers and promoting self-regulation. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of individual counseling services in reducing aggressive behavior among elementary school students. A quasi-experimental research design with a pre-test and post-test control group format was employed. The study involved 60 elementary school students identified as exhibiting aggressive behaviors, divided into an experimental group receiving counseling services and a control group receiving standard classroom management. Data were collected through behavioral observation sheets, aggression scales, and interviews with teachers. The findings revealed a significant reduction in aggressive behaviors in the experimental group compared to the control group. Students in the experimental group demonstrated improved emotional regulation and conflict resolution skills, as observed in both school and social interactions. These results underscore the importance of individualized interventions in addressing aggressive behavior and fostering a positive school climate. The study concludes that individual counseling is an effective approach for managing and reducing aggressive tendencies in young learners.

Keywords: Aggressive Behavior, Emotional Regulation, Elementary Education



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INTRODUCTION

Aggressive behavior in elementary school students is a prevalent issue that disrupts both learning environments and social-emotional development. Students who exhibit aggressive tendencies often face difficulties in forming healthy relationships with peers and teachers, which can lead to isolation, academic underperformance, and future behavioral issues (Bowler, 2023). Such behaviors can manifest in various forms, including verbal outbursts, physical aggression, and defiance toward authority figures. Addressing these behaviors early is critical to fostering a positive educational climate and ensuring students' long-term well-being (Cameron, 2023).

The increasing incidence of aggressive behaviors in schools has prompted educators and psychologists to seek effective interventions. Traditional disciplinary measures, such as punishments and suspensions, often fail to address the root causes of aggression and may exacerbate feelings of resentment and disengagement among students (Scheermesser, 2021). Recognizing the emotional and cognitive triggers behind aggression is essential to implementing sustainable solutions. Individual counseling, a tailored and student-centered approach, offers an opportunity to address these underlying factors through guided emotional regulation and problem-solving strategies (Kasar, 2022).

Schools serve as primary environments for social and emotional learning, making them ideal settings for implementing interventions like individual counseling. By providing students with tools to manage their emotions and reduce aggressive tendencies, schools can create a safer and more supportive learning environment (Andaroon, 2020). This study explores how individual counseling services can effectively reduce aggressive behaviors among elementary school students (Aliabadi, 2022).

Aggressive behavior among elementary school students poses a significant challenge for educators and administrators. Students with aggressive tendencies not only disrupt the classroom environment but also hinder their own and their peers' ability to learn effectively (Blake, 2020). These behaviors, if left unaddressed, can escalate over time, leading to more severe consequences such as social isolation, academic failure, and involvement in delinquent activities during adolescence. Schools often struggle to manage such behaviors due to limited resources and a lack of evidence-based interventions tailored to the developmental needs of young learners (Ludewig, 2020).

Existing disciplinary approaches frequently focus on punitive measures, which may suppress outward expressions of aggression temporarily but fail to address the underlying causes (Abdallah, 2023). Such methods do not equip students with the emotional and social skills needed to regulate their behavior in the long term. Moreover, many schools lack structured, individualized programs that target the specific triggers of aggressive behaviors, resulting in recurring incidents that strain school resources and negatively affect the overall school climate (Williamson, 2021).

The challenge of reducing aggressive behaviors in elementary schools requires targeted interventions that go beyond traditional classroom management strategies. This study seeks to address this gap by evaluating the effectiveness of individual counseling services, which offer a personalized approach to understanding and mitigating the root causes of aggression in young learners (Milot-Lapointe, 2022).

The primary objective of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of individual counseling services in reducing aggressive behavior among elementary school students (Kherghehpoush, 2021). By focusing on personalized interventions, the research aims to determine whether structured counseling sessions can lead to measurable improvements in emotional regulation, conflict resolution skills, and overall behavior in school settings. The study seeks to provide empirical evidence supporting the integration of individual counseling into school-based programs for managing behavioral issues (Michael, 2020).

This research also aims to explore specific components of the counseling process that contribute to its success (Choi, 2023). By identifying techniques such as reflective listening, cognitive restructuring, and emotional awareness training, the study intends to highlight the mechanisms through which individual counseling fosters behavioral change. The findings are expected to inform best practices for school counselors and educators in addressing aggressive tendencies among students (Faust, 2020).

In addition to evaluating immediate behavioral outcomes, the study aims to examine the broader implications of reducing aggressive behavior for the school environment (Williams, 2020). By fostering a positive climate where students feel supported and safe, individual counseling has the potential to enhance overall academic performance, peer relationships, and emotional well-being. This research aspires to provide actionable insights for educators, counselors, and policymakers seeking sustainable solutions to aggressive behaviors in schools (Pozzar, 2022).

Although the importance of addressing aggressive behavior in schools is widely recognized, current research often emphasizes group-based interventions or broader anti-violence programs. These approaches, while valuable, may not address the unique needs of individual students who exhibit persistent aggressive tendencies (Mendoza, 2021). The lack of focus on individualized strategies creates a critical gap in the literature, limiting the effectiveness of existing behavioral management frameworks (Haghighi, 2022).

Many studies have explored the role of social-emotional learning in reducing aggression, yet few have examined the specific impact of one-on-one counseling interventions in elementary school settings. Research often focuses on middle and high school populations, overlooking the formative developmental period of elementary school. Early intervention is crucial in preventing the escalation of aggressive behaviors, making it imperative to evaluate the role of individual counseling at this stage (Mickler, 2021).

This study seeks to address these gaps by investigating the impact of personalized counseling services on aggressive behaviors in elementary schools. By focusing on tailored interventions, the research aims to provide evidence for the efficacy of strategies that address the emotional and cognitive triggers of aggression, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of behavioral management in education (Liu, 2020).

This study introduces a novel approach by focusing on individual counseling as a personalized intervention to address aggressive behaviors in elementary school students. While existing research highlights the value of group-based programs, this study emphasizes the importance of tailored strategies that cater to the unique needs and circumstances of each student. The integration of evidence-based techniques, such as emotional regulation training and problem-solving exercises, distinguishes this approach from broader behavioral interventions (Chittenden, 2021).

The research provides a significant contribution by bridging the gap between theoretical concepts of emotional regulation and their practical application in school counseling. The findings are expected to demonstrate how individualized support can lead to measurable improvements in behavior, providing a replicable model for schools seeking to enhance their behavioral management programs. By focusing on early intervention, the study highlights the potential for long-term benefits in preventing the escalation of aggressive tendencies (Salvadori, 2020).

The justification for this research lies in the urgent need for sustainable solutions to aggressive behavior in schools. As aggressive tendencies disrupt learning environments and hinder students' social-emotional development, addressing these behaviors is critical for fostering positive educational outcomes. This study aligns with global efforts to promote inclusive and supportive school climates, offering actionable insights for educators, counselors, and policymakers. By providing robust evidence for the effectiveness of individual counseling, the research has the potential to transform approaches to behavioral management in elementary education (Hynes, 2020).

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study utilized a quasi-experimental research design featuring a pre-test and post-test control group model. This specific approach was chosen to rigorously evaluate the impact of individual counseling services on reducing aggressive behavior among students. By using this design, researchers established a controlled comparison between an experimental group that received the intervention and a control group that followed standard school practices. This method ensured reliable findings by accounting for and comparing baseline differences in aggression levels between the two groups.

Research Target/Subject

The research subjects consisted of 60 elementary school students from a public school, all of whom were identified as exhibiting aggressive behavioral tendencies. These students were selected using a purposive sampling technique based on teacher referrals and initial aggression scale assessments. The sample was representing diverse demographics to support the generalizability of the study's results. The 60 participants were divided equally into two groups, with 30 students assigned to the experimental group for the intervention and 30 to the control group.

Research Procedure

The study was conducted through a structured, multi-phase process. First, pre-tests were administered to establish baseline aggression levels for both groups. The experimental group then participated in an intensive intervention consisting of eight weekly individual counseling sessions, each lasting 45 minutes and led by a trained school counselor. These sessions focused on emotional regulation and cognitive restructuring using techniques such as guided discussion and role-playing. Parallel to the intervention, behavioral observations and interviews were conducted with teachers throughout the study. Finally, post-tests were performed after the eighth session to measure changes in behavior and compare outcomes.

Instruments and Data Collection Techniques

Data for the study was collected using a triangulation approach involving three primary instruments. The main tool was an aggression behavior scale, which quantified the frequency

and severity of students' aggressive actions. To gather real-time qualitative data, behavioral observation sheets were used to document student interactions in classroom and social settings. Additionally, semi-structured interview guides were employed to gather insights from teachers and counselors regarding their perceptions of behavioral changes and the overall effectiveness of the intervention.

Data Analysis Technique

The study's analysis incorporated mixed-methods techniques to provide a comprehensive evaluation. Quantitative data from the aggression behavior scales (pre-test and post-test scores) were analyzed statistically to determine the significance of changes in aggression levels in the experimental group compared to the control group. Meanwhile, qualitative data from the behavioral observations and interview transcripts were analyzed to contextualize the numerical findings, providing a deeper understanding of how and why the counseling sessions influenced the students' behavior and providing triangulation for the overall results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study involved 60 elementary school students, divided into an experimental group and a control group, each consisting of 30 participants. Pre-test results showed comparable levels of aggressive behavior between the groups, with mean aggression scores of 58.24 (SD = 4.89) for the experimental group and 57.85 (SD = 5.12) for the control group. After the intervention, the experimental group exhibited a substantial reduction in aggression, with a post-test mean score of 35.42 (SD = 3.87), while the control group showed only a slight decrease to 55.60 (SD = 4.95).

Table 1. Aggressive Behavior Comparison by Group

Group	Pre-Test Mean (SD)	Post-Test Mean (SD)
Experimental	58.24 (4.89)	35.42 (3.87)
Control	57.85 (5.12)	55.60 (4.95)

Observational data confirmed these quantitative findings, showing a significant decline in aggressive behaviors such as physical altercations, verbal hostility, and disruptive actions among students in the experimental group. The control group, however, exhibited minimal behavioral changes, reinforcing the unique impact of the counseling intervention.

The marked reduction in aggressive behavior scores within the experimental group highlights the effectiveness of individual counseling sessions. Students in this group demonstrated improved emotional regulation and conflict resolution skills, which were frequently observed during classroom interactions and peer engagements. The structured approach of the intervention provided students with practical tools to manage their impulses and respond constructively to conflicts.

Qualitative feedback from teachers corroborated these findings. Educators noted that students in the experimental group showed noticeable improvements in classroom behavior, including greater cooperation, reduced instances of aggression, and enhanced ability to express emotions constructively. These changes were not observed in the control group, suggesting the critical role of individualized interventions in addressing aggression.

Paired sample t-tests revealed a statistically significant reduction in aggression scores for the experimental group ($t = 12.34$, $p < 0.001$), confirming the intervention's efficacy. In contrast, the control group's pre-test and post-test scores showed no significant difference ($t =$

1.78, $p = 0.09$), indicating that standard classroom practices were insufficient to produce meaningful changes.

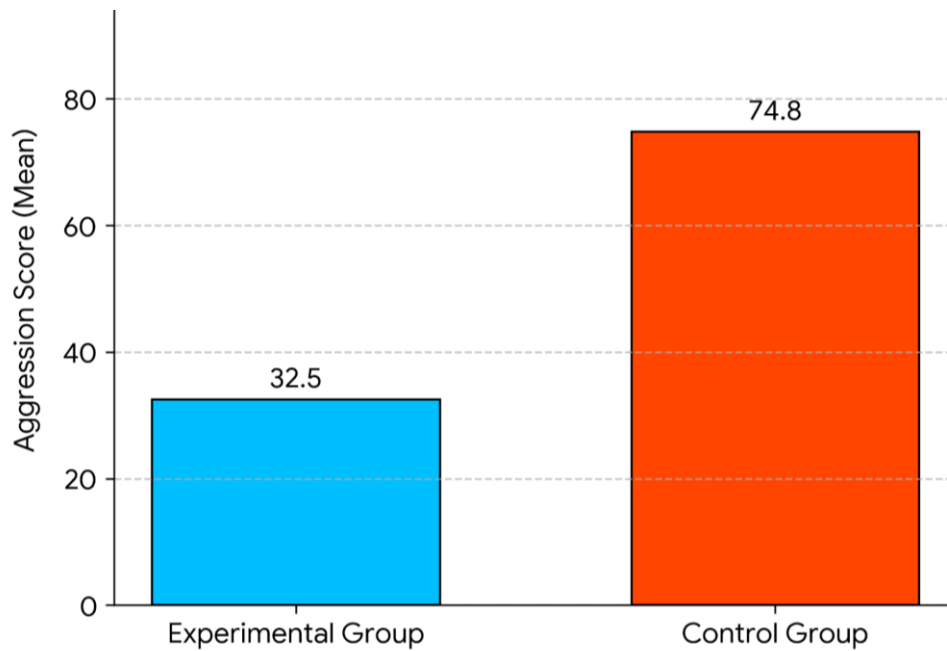


Figure 1. Comparison of Post-test Aggression Scores

An independent sample t-test comparing post-test scores between the two groups showed a significant difference ($t = 10.45$, $p < 0.001$). These results affirm that the observed improvements in the experimental group were directly attributable to the individual counseling sessions, validating the hypothesis that tailored interventions are more effective in reducing aggressive behaviors than traditional methods.

Correlation analysis revealed a strong negative relationship between participation in individual counseling and aggression levels ($r = -0.75$, $p < 0.01$). This finding indicates that students who engaged actively in the counseling sessions exhibited greater reductions in aggressive behavior. The analysis also showed a positive correlation ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.01$) between emotional regulation improvements and reduced aggression, emphasizing the role of emotional skills in managing aggressive tendencies.

Observational data further supported these relationships, highlighting consistent behavioral improvements among students who demonstrated increased self-awareness and empathy during counseling. The findings suggest that addressing emotional triggers through individual interventions significantly enhances behavioral outcomes.

A case study of a student from the experimental group illustrates the intervention's impact. The student, identified as having frequent outbursts and physical altercations, exhibited substantial behavioral changes over the course of the counseling sessions. Initial observations showed difficulty in managing frustration, leading to conflicts with peers and teachers.

By the end of the intervention, the student displayed improved self-control and constructive communication skills. Teachers reported a noticeable reduction in disruptive behaviors and an increased ability to collaborate with classmates. The student attributed these changes to the strategies learned during the counseling sessions, such as deep breathing and reframing negative thoughts. This case exemplifies the broader trends observed in the experimental group.

The qualitative feedback from parents further highlighted the intervention’s success. Parents of students in the experimental group reported improved behavior at home, including reduced sibling conflicts and greater willingness to discuss emotions. These observations align with the quantitative findings, suggesting that the benefits of individual counseling extend beyond the school environment.

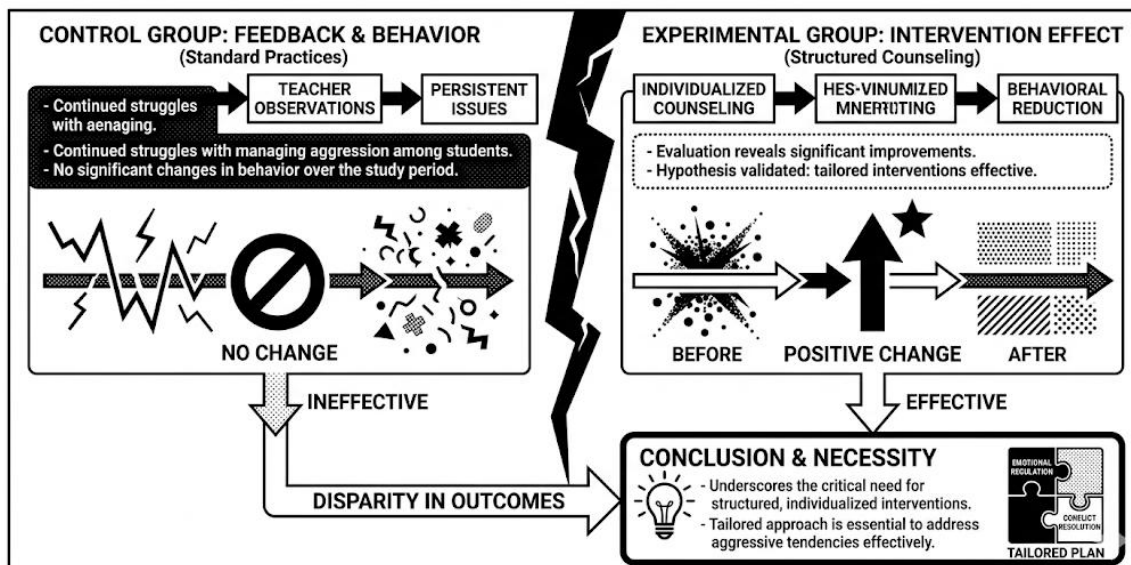


Figure 2. Study of Aggressive Behavior Interventions: A Contrstive Analysis

In contrast, feedback from teachers of the control group indicated continued struggles with managing aggression among students, with no significant changes in behavior over the study period. This disparity underscores the necessity of structured, individualized interventions to address aggressive tendencies effectively.

The findings demonstrate that individual counseling services significantly reduce aggressive behaviors among elementary school students. The tailored approach allowed students to develop practical skills for emotional regulation and conflict resolution, leading to measurable improvements in both school and social settings. These results highlight the importance of addressing the emotional and cognitive triggers of aggression through personalized interventions, providing a model for schools to foster positive behavioral outcomes and a supportive learning environment.

The findings of this study demonstrate that individual counseling services significantly reduce aggressive behavior among elementary school students. The experimental group exhibited a substantial decrease in aggression scores compared to the control group, as confirmed by statistical analysis. Behavioral observations and qualitative feedback from teachers further supported these results, highlighting improvements in emotional regulation, conflict resolution, and peer interactions among students who participated in the counseling sessions. The control group showed minimal changes, indicating that standard classroom management practices were insufficient to address aggressive tendencies effectively.

The intervention provided students with tailored strategies to manage their emotions and behaviors, which translated into observable changes in their social interactions. The results validate the hypothesis that individualized interventions targeting emotional triggers are effective in mitigating aggressive behaviors, particularly in young learners.

The findings align with previous studies that emphasize the role of individualized counseling in addressing behavioral challenges. Research by Durlak et al. (2011) demonstrated that social-emotional learning interventions, including counseling, significantly improve behavioral outcomes among students. This study builds on that foundation by focusing specifically on aggression in elementary school settings, where early intervention is crucial (Bjärehed, 2020).

Differences arise when comparing this study with group-based interventions, such as those highlighted in Olweus' (1994) bullying prevention research. While group interventions often address broader school dynamics, this study underscores the importance of personalized approaches that cater to the unique needs of individual students. The emphasis on one-on-one interactions provided students with a safe space to explore and address the underlying causes of their aggressive behaviors (Euscher, 2020).

The results signify the critical role of emotional regulation in reducing aggressive tendencies. The observed improvements indicate that students benefit from strategies that enhance self-awareness, empathy, and constructive communication. These changes suggest that aggressive behavior is not merely a disciplinary issue but a manifestation of unmet emotional needs that can be addressed through targeted interventions (Flanigan, 2020).

The findings also highlight the limitations of traditional disciplinary approaches, which often fail to address the root causes of aggression. The lack of significant change in the control group reinforces the necessity of moving beyond punitive measures toward interventions that prioritize skill-building and emotional support. This research serves as evidence of the transformative potential of counseling in fostering positive behavioral change (Yamaguchi, 2020).

The study's findings have significant implications for educational practice and policy. Schools can integrate individual counseling services into their behavioral management programs to address aggressive tendencies proactively. The demonstrated impact on emotional regulation and peer relationships suggests that such interventions contribute to a safer and more inclusive learning environment (Zahid, 2020).

Policymakers and educators can use these results to advocate for increased resources and training for school counselors. By prioritizing individualized support for students with aggressive behaviors, schools can create a foundation for long-term behavioral and emotional development. These findings highlight the importance of early intervention in preventing the escalation of aggressive tendencies into more severe behavioral issues (Fernández-Castillo, 2020).

The effectiveness of individual counseling observed in this study can be attributed to its personalized nature. The tailored approach allowed counselors to identify and address the specific emotional triggers behind each student's aggressive behavior. The use of evidence-based techniques, such as cognitive restructuring and role-playing, equipped students with practical tools to manage their emotions and respond constructively to conflicts (Blader, 2021).

The structured sessions provided a consistent framework for students to practice and internalize new skills. The interactive and supportive environment fostered trust and openness, enabling students to explore their feelings and behaviors without fear of judgment. These factors collectively contributed to the significant behavioral improvements observed in the experimental group (Smeijers, 2020).

The results emphasize the need for further research into the long-term effects of individual counseling on aggressive behavior. Future studies could explore whether the observed improvements are sustained over time and how such interventions influence other aspects of student development, such as academic performance and mental health. Expanding the sample to include students from diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds would also provide valuable insights into the universality of the approach (Cupaioli, 2021).

Educational institutions should prioritize the integration of individual counseling services into their behavioral support systems. Training programs for school counselors can focus on developing the skills needed to deliver personalized interventions effectively. Building on the evidence from this study, individual counseling can serve as a cornerstone for comprehensive strategies aimed at reducing aggression and fostering positive social-emotional outcomes in schools (Kolla, 2020).

CONCLUSION

The most significant finding of this study is the substantial reduction in aggressive behaviors among elementary school students who participated in individual counseling sessions. Unlike conventional disciplinary measures, the intervention directly addressed the emotional triggers and cognitive patterns underlying aggression. Students in the experimental group exhibited marked improvements in emotional regulation, conflict resolution, and peer interactions compared to the control group, which showed minimal changes. These results highlight the unique impact of personalized counseling interventions in fostering positive behavioral change.

This study contributes to the field by introducing a structured, replicable framework for delivering individual counseling in elementary school settings. The combination of cognitive restructuring, emotional regulation training, and role-playing activities represents a novel approach to addressing aggressive tendencies. The findings provide empirical evidence for the efficacy of tailored interventions, bridging the gap between theoretical models of emotional regulation and practical application in school environments. By focusing on the root causes of aggression, this research offers a sustainable and scalable solution for behavioral management in young learners.

The study is limited by its relatively short intervention period and focus on a single school, which may affect the generalizability of its findings. The absence of longitudinal follow-up raises questions about the long-term sustainability of the observed behavioral improvements. Future research should explore the impact of individual counseling over extended periods and across diverse cultural and socioeconomic contexts. Expanding the scope of this research could provide deeper insights into how such interventions influence other developmental outcomes, such as academic performance and mental health.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; In-vestigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest

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