Token Economy Intervention as a Solution to Reduce Verbal Aggression Behavior in Elementary Schools

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Abstract:
Verbal aggression is one of the behavioral deviations commonly found in school environments and can negatively impact children's social and emotional development. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the token economy technique in reducing verbal aggression among elementary school students. This research employs the Single Subject Research (SSR) method with an A-B-A design consisting of three phases: baseline-1, intervention, and baseline-2. The research subject is a third-grade student at UPT SD Negeri 23 Gresik who exhibits verbal aggression. Data collection was conducted through observation using a behavior checklist referring to aspects of verbal aggression. The results indicate that before the intervention, the frequency of verbal aggression was high. After implementing the token economy technique, the frequency of verbal aggression gradually decreased and remained low in the baseline-2 phase, demonstrating the long-term effectiveness of this technique in reducing verbal aggression. The implications of this study suggest that applying the token economy technique can be an effective strategy for managing student behavior in elementary schools. Further research with a larger sample size is recommended to test the effectiveness of this technique in various educational contexts.

Keywords: behavior modification, elementary school, verbal aggression, token economy

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1. Pendahuluan

Education is a process that creates interaction to develop individuals in various aspects of life. Schools, as educational institutions, play an important role in shaping students' character. However, deviant behaviors that can hinder the learning process often emerge in school environments, one of which is verbal aggression. This behavior involves destructive communication that can damage an individual's self-concept, cause frustration, shame, anxiety, and anger, and potentially harm social relationships while increasing physical aggression (Yaqin & Aviani, 2021).

At UPT SD Negeri 23 Gresik, verbal aggression is a significant issue, as reported by teachers. Some students tend to use harsh words or tease each other in daily interactions. If not addressed immediately, this behavior can negatively impact children's social and emotional development in the future. Therefore, an appropriate intervention is needed to reduce verbal aggression among elementary school students.

One method that can be applied to address verbal aggression is behavior modification techniques. The token economy technique is one of the behavior modification methods proven effective in developing positive behavior and reducing unwanted behavior through a token-based reinforcement system (Purwanta, 2015). Previous research by Rahmaningrum (2020) showed that the application of the token economy technique effectively reduced verbal aggression in children, especially with support from the surrounding environment. Although some studies have examined the effectiveness of this technique, further research is needed to explore its application in elementary schools, particularly at UPT SD Negeri 23 Gresik.

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the token economy technique in reducing verbal aggression among third-grade students at UPT SD Negeri 23 Gresik. Using the Single Subject Research (SSR) method with an A-B-A design, this research seeks to provide empirical evidence of the benefits of the token economy technique in creating a more conducive learning environment. This study is significant in offering new insights into the application of token economy techniques in elementary education settings and contributing to the development of more effective behavioral intervention strategies. Therefore, this study is expected to fill the existing research gap and provide practical solutions for educators in managing verbal aggression behavior in schools.

2. Method

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the token economy technique in reducing verbal aggression among third-grade students at UPT SD Negeri 23 Gresik. The research design used is Single Subject Research (SSR) with an A-B-A design, consisting of three phases: baseline-1, intervention, and baseline-2. This approach was chosen to measure behavioral changes before, during, and after the intervention. The research subject is a third-grade student at UPT SD Negeri 23 Gresik who exhibits verbal aggression in daily interactions. The subject was selected based on teacher interviews and initial observations indicating a tendency toward verbal aggression. The research was conducted in three main stages:

- Baseline-1 (A1): Initial observations were carried out over three days to measure the frequency of verbal aggression before the intervention.
- Intervention (B): The token economy technique was applied for ten days. The subject received tokens as positive reinforcement each time they successfully reduced verbal aggression. The collected tokens could be exchanged for rewards.
- Baseline-2 (A2): Observations were conducted for three days after the intervention ceased to determine whether behavioral changes persisted.

The research instrument used was an observation method with a behavior checklist technique referring to aspects of verbal aggression based on Infante (Ritonga, 2021). The observed verbal aggression behaviors included harsh words, teasing, and derogatory comments. Data were analyzed descriptively using simple statistics to observe changes in the frequency of verbal aggression at each research phase. The results were presented in graphical form to show behavioral trends from baseline-1, intervention, to baseline-2 phases.

3. Results

This study aims to measure the effectiveness of the token economy technique in reducing verbal aggression. The following table presents the frequency of verbal aggression during the three research phases:

Table 1.
Frequency of Verbal Aggressive Behavior

Research Phase	Day	Frequency of Verbal Aggression
Baseline-1 (A1)	1	23
	2	19
	3	22
Intervention (B)	1	17
	2	14
	3	12
	4	9
	5	7
	6	5
	7	3
	8	2
	9	1
	10	1
Baseline-2 (A2)	1	1
	2	1
	3	1

The results indicate that before the intervention, the frequency of verbal aggression was high, ranging from 19 to 23 times per day. After the application of the token economy technique, the frequency of verbal aggression gradually decreased to 1 by the end of the intervention. This result remained consistent in the baseline-2 phase, demonstrating the

long-term effectiveness of the token economy technique in reducing verbal aggression.

4. Discussion

The research results indicate that the token economy technique is effective in reducing verbal aggression in subjects. A significant decrease from 23 incidents per day to only 1 incident per day demonstrates that the token system, as a form of positive reinforcement, successfully altered students' behavior gradually and remained effective even after the intervention was discontinued. This study adds empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of the token economy in addressing verbal aggression in elementary schools.

These findings align with Rahmaningrum's (2020) research, which stated that this technique can reduce verbal aggression in children, especially with environmental support. However, this study focuses more on the long-term impact after the intervention has ended. These findings have implications for schools and educators in implementing behavior modification strategies based on positive reinforcement. The implementation of a token economy can be more widely applied to address various forms of deviant behavior in school environments.

However, this study has limitations in terms of the number of subjects used, making the generalization of findings still limited. Further studies with a larger number of participants and over a longer duration are needed to confirm the effectiveness of the token economy technique in various educational contexts.

5. Conclusion

This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the token economy technique in reducing verbal aggression among third-grade students at UPT SD Negeri 23 Gresik. The findings confirm that the token economy technique is effective in significantly decreasing verbal aggression. Further research with a larger sample size and longer duration is needed to ensure the effectiveness of this technique in various educational contexts.

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