

# Experimental Study of the Effectiveness of Assertive Writing Therapy on Children's Self-Acceptance in the Tangerang Juvenile Correctional Facility Facing Covid 19

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## ABSTRACT

Based on data on the website of the Directorate General of Corrections, currently there are 55 children who serve a sentence in Tangerang Juvenile Correctional Facility (LPKA). LPKA provides space for education, care, alleviation, skills training, care as well as supervision for children in difficult times facing life without direct parental assistance. Efforts to improve attitudes and behavior towards children have been carried out through teaching and learning activities education, narcotics rehabilitation and play therapy. One of the other approaches that can be applied is assistive writing therapy. Assertive writing therapy is a means to reflect on the innermost thoughts and feelings of unpleasant even traumatic events. Unfortunate events sometimes make it difficult for children to accept themselves and their environmental conditions coupled with the Covid 19 pandemic situation. The Covid 19 pandemic has prevented families from visiting children to prevent the risk of transmission. Whether assertive writing therapy is effective in the Covid-19 pandemic situation made us interested in doing this research. This research focuses on knowing alternatives for implementing child coaching programs in the Covid 19 pandemic situation. The purpose of this research is to determine how effective assertive writing therapy is for children's self-acceptance. This type of research is quasi-experimental with pretest and posttest research design without a control group design using assistive writing therapy media to 12 children in LPKA (at LPKA Tangerang) who were selected according to the criteria (purposive sampling). The pre-test and post-test knowledge measurement used an instrument in the form of a self-acceptance questionnaire with a Likert scale which was tested for validity and reliability first. Then the analysis was carried out using the Wilcoxon test because it was non-parametric and the samples (12 children) were not normally distributed. The results showed that the value of  $p = 0.02 \leq \alpha = 0.05$ , that is, assertive writing therapy is effective in increasing children's self-acceptance in LPKA Tangerang. Assertive writing therapy has a significant effect on increasing children's self-acceptance in LPKA Tangerang. Assertive writing therapy is recommended to be a practical approach to increase children's self-acceptance while in LPKA. Children will be easier to adapt and actualize, especially in this pandemic situation that requires limited face-to-face communication between humans.

**Keywords:** covid 19, assertive writing therapy, self- acceptance, children.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The current Covid 19 pandemic has an impact on all aspects of life. The survival of children in the Tangerang Juvenile Correctional Facility (LPKA) is no exception. Various policies are taken by the government, namely the Ministry of Law and Human Rights and more specifically the Directorate General of Corrections. Discipline on health protocols to minimize the spread of the Covid 19 virus by washing hands frequently, wearing masks, maintaining distance, restrictions on visits and even regulations prohibiting family visits has a negative impact on the psychology of children in LPKA. This is certainly worrying considering that from various information through interviews with Community counselors for Children in LPKA, Children have difficulty adapting and do not accept the fact that they are in LPKA which has a negative stigma and has taken away the child's independence. In addition to the results of interviews with community supervisors, there are several studies that describe the low psychological quality of children in LPKA, especially in self-acceptance, including: research by Gadjah Mada University's (UGM) students whose research results conclude that there is a feeling of inferiority in children in LPKA, especially in responding to perception and acceptance [1]. Public. Then research from Sandidi (2004), which reveals the status of prisoners has a negative impact on children's self-acceptance. Negative self-perception and feelings of shame that deepen depict the child as being worthless, destroyed and difficult to accept in society. Based on that, children in LPKA need protection. The protection of children's rights could create the perception that parental authority and family values are suppressed, and that the state abdicates its role as protector of children in favour of total freedom to a child (Human 2000 THRHR 394).

The condition of the children who are in LPKA is completely limited and allows their wishes not to be conveyed. Circumstances that are not as expected make children take actions beyond their control. Such things tend to have the potential to make children quarrel with their friends in LPKA to cover up their desires. Feelings of inferiority that arise because of the bad label from the social environment, feelings of guilt towards the family and the rules that must be obeyed in LPKA become pressure on children so that it is not easy for children with low self-acceptance to make adjustments in LPKA.

No matter how hard the conditions in LPKA, especially during this pandemic, should not diminish

the children's way of thinking to think positively and realistically. According to Hurlock, an individual despite his shortcomings and limitations can still appreciate the strengths he has and be aware of every characteristic that exists in each individual. Hurlock also revealed that the factors that influence self-acceptance are an understanding of oneself, the absence of obstacles in the environment, success with achievement and good self-adjustment and a stable self-concept [2]. Therefore, children in LPKA should be conditioned to continue to have good self-acceptance in order to sustain the children in welcoming the future.

Based on the elaboration of the previous problems related to self-acceptance that occurred in LPKA, it is considered appropriate if a program or therapy is implemented to create behavior changes for children in LPKA who have low self-acceptance quality.

According to Munandar, behavior change can be achieved through training and therapy [3]. Then Kanfer, suggested there are two groups of approaches that can be used to help change human behavior. These approaches are:

- Treatment Administration Model (treatment methods), where treatment is aimed directly at the symptoms and roles of small clients either therapy or training.
- Participant Model (self-management techniques), where treatment is aimed at the client's ability to help himself (temporary devices). In this approach the role of the client is big.[4]

Observing the statements of the two figures above, and relating them to the situation in children in LPKA who need an intervention program to help increase children's self-acceptance, it is appropriate to create a program to help children increase self-acceptance by providing treatment in the form of therapy. In addition, referring to the statement expressed by Kanfer regarding the approach that can be taken to help individuals in their efforts to change behavior, it is considered appropriate to use the participant model (self-management techniques). This is because the participant model (self-management techniques) puts forward the role of the client, namely the child in making changes to himself.

There are various therapeutic treatments that can improve individual self-acceptance. Basically, self-acceptance is an expression of circumstances and reality, so that it places

openness as very important. So the channeling of emotions in the process of accepting oneself needs to be used as an effort to realize the limitations and potentials which are an advantage to be developed positively.

One of the easiest and personal ways which does not require complicated equipment or instruments is by writing. Writing is a way that a person can use in communicating the emotions they feel. Pennebaker explained that the mechanism of the therapeutic process of writing emotional experiences relates to the disclosure of emotional experiences. Recognition and self-disclosure are the basic processes that arise in psychotherapy and naturally appear in social interactions which are considered to bring psychological benefits. [5]

Pennebaker also states that dealing with personal issues in depth through writing activities results in physical health, subjective well-being and adaptive behavior. In addition, writing therapy also has advantages, namely a very wide age range. It can be applied to various cultural backgrounds. Its personal nature makes it free from social feedback [5]. Therefore, assertive writing therapy can be an alternative means of coaching applied to children in LPKA. Considering that the average educational background of children is minimal, their social status is underdeveloped and is often labeled negative and facilitates them to be more easily involved in remembering. Children in LPKA tend to be disciplined and obedience to norms still really needs to be improved.

Writing therapy does not always focus solely on emotions because writing is also cognitive work. Cameron and Nichols (1998) explain that writing can facilitate adjustment to stressful events by integrating beliefs, emotions and experiences so that individuals can take lessons and identify ways to cope with them as an effort to improve survival in the future. This is what is highly expected for children in LPKA so that they turn an unpleasant experience into a lesson in order to achieve a bright future without getting stuck in the past.

Balkie and Wilhelm summarize various studies that show that writing expressively about emotional experiences will provide short-term and long-term benefits. The short-term benefits relate to reduced stress levels, while the longterm benefits relate to mood, psychological well-being and general improvement in physiological function [6]. Including self-acceptance in children in LPKA, writing involving emotional feelings will help children increase their self-acceptance in order to

improve the quality of life.

Furthermore, improving the quality of life for children is an effort for better law enforcement which emphasizes the aspects of recovery for both children in conflict and children as victims. This is also based on the awareness of children's rights, especially the role of the government in protecting every child and making policies based on the best interests of children.

Based on the description above, it can be hypothesized that assertive writing therapy has the opportunity to increase children's self-acceptance in LPKA. The researcher wanted to test by detailing how effective assertive writing therapy was in increasing children's self-acceptance in LPKA.

**2. RESEARCH METHOD**

This study uses a quantitative research type with a pre-experimental approach. According to Creswell in a pre-experimental research design, researchers observed one main group and intervened in it throughout the study. In this design, there is no control group to compare with the treated group.[7]

The pre-experimental design used was the One Group Pretest-Posttest Design. The research design chart will be described as follows : [7]

Table 1. Research Design

Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
O1	Assertive Writing Therapy (X)	O2

Information:

- O1 : Pretest measurement
- X : Treatment (Assertive Writing Therapy)
- O2 : Measurement posttest

**2.1 Research Subjects**

The subjects in this study were 12 children in the Tangerang Juvenile Correctional Facility (LPKA Tangerang). The characteristics of the subjects in this study are children who are in LPKA Tangerang, have a healthy physical condition and do not experience any medical problems, are not experts in the field of writing or champions in writing competitions, have never participated in writing therapy activities and are not taking any training or therapy during the course of the study.

## 2.2 Data Collection

The data was collected using self-acceptance instruments. Self-acceptance instrument made based on Allport's theory of self-acceptance (in Hjelle & Zeigler, 1922, p. 191) and adaptation of the self-acceptance scale from Unzila (2012) and Galih Ismoyo (UNJ, 2013). According to Allport – individuals who want to accept themselves have the following characteristics:

1. Has a positive image of him
2. Can manage and tolerate frustration and anger
3. Can interact with other people without being hostile to them when others give criticism
4. Can regulate their emotional state

The four characteristics put forward by Alport are used as indicators for researchers which are then developed into statement items which are then tested to determine the validity and reliability of the research instrument. From the results of the validity and reliability tests, there were 24 valid items from 68 items that have been made, then the calculation of reliability using Pearson's product moment correlation technique shows the reliability coefficient.

## 2.3 Data analysis method

The statistical test used is the two-sample test, namely the Wilcoxon test.

## 2.4 Intervention

The intervention or treatment used in this study was an assertive writing therapy program. The assertive writing therapy program is compiled based on several books, journals and papers which are then adjusted to the needs of children in LPKA. The Assertive Writing Therapy Program consists of several writing processes, namely:

1. Writing down negative past experiences for the child and hoping that it will not happen again in the future on at least 1 page of paper- this stage is done twice for the child.
2. Writing down what they feel this time, both positive and negative, on at least 1 page of paper. This stage is carried out once for the child
3. Writing down what children aspire to in the future. This stage is carried out twice with conditions, the first is a span of 5 years to come, the second is 10 years from now.

After giving the intervention, it is hoped that the child will be more accepting of their own existence and social status so that the child has better self-acceptance.

## 2.5 Theory

The material in this assertive writing therapy explores the child's ability to emphasize what is on the child's mind and feelings. Assertiveness through the writing method is expected to make children more open in the context of developing self-acceptance in children. The assertive writing therapy program is guided and supervised by researchers and the Head of Development Division of LPKA Tangerang.

## 2.6 Research Procedure

This research was conducted in several stages:

1. Research preparation:
  - a. Researchers identify problems by conducting preliminary studies in order to find themes or research topics to be researched and related to actual problems in children in LPKA. Then the researchers chose the problem of self-acceptance. Then the researchers determined the selected intervention to be the treatment to be given, and then the assertive writing therapy program was selected as an intervention program that would be used to increase children's self-acceptance.
  - b. The researchers prepared a self-acceptance instrument which was then consulted with one of the psychology lecturers at UNJ and carried out expert judgment activities to the Young Community Advisor. After going through a series of consultation activities, the instrument was tried out on 30 child respondents in LPKA Tangerang.
  - c. The researchers compiled the stages of assertive writing therapy in accordance with the qualifications of children in LPKA and with the hope of exploring children's feelings.
2. Research Implementation
 

The research was conducted for 5 days, from validity and reliability tests to posttest, held from October 6, 2020 to October 10, 2020. The provision of Assertive Writing Therapy was carried out in 5 sessions divided into 3 days of implementation. Each session was held for an average of 1 hour.

Assertive Writing Therapy was carried out for children in LPKA Tangerang, which is located

at Jalan TMP. Taruna No. 29C, Tangerang, Banten.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

From the research results, the pretest and posttest results were obtained from the self-acceptance scores of 12 children. The following table compares the pretest and posttest scores for self-acceptance of 12 children:

Table 2. Scores of the pretest and posttest

No.	Indicator I		Indicator II		Indicator III		Indicator IV		Total	
	Pre Test	Post Test	Pre Test	Post Test	Pre Test	Post Test	Pre Test	Post Test	Pre Test	Post Test
1	28	27	15	16	25	25	14	18	82	86
2	23	28	18	17	29	26	22	17	92	88
3	27	25	15	15	20	23	18	18	80	81
4	27	29	16	16	29	28	19	20	91	93
5	15	24	11	14	20	20	10	14	56	72
6	23	25	15	16	24	23	17	18	79	82
7	27	26	15	17	23	25	16	17	81	85
8	22	22	13	17	20	24	13	15	68	78
9	26	24	16	18	27	27	20	21	89	90
10	26	28	13	17	24	29	18	17	81	91
11	25	27	16	17	22	21	17	18	80	83
12		24	19	19	29	29	19	21	93	93

Table 3. Graph of Posttest and Pretest Indicator I

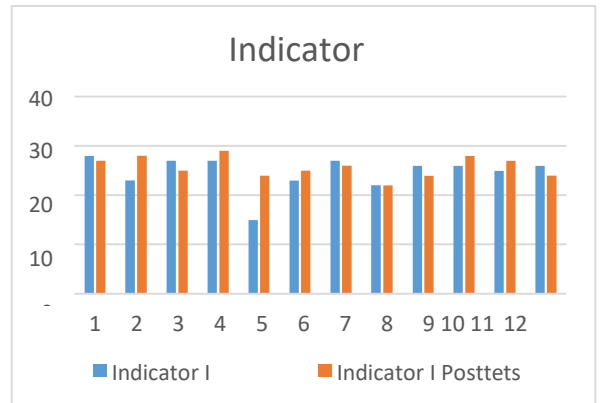


Table 4. Graph of Posttest and Pretest Indicator II

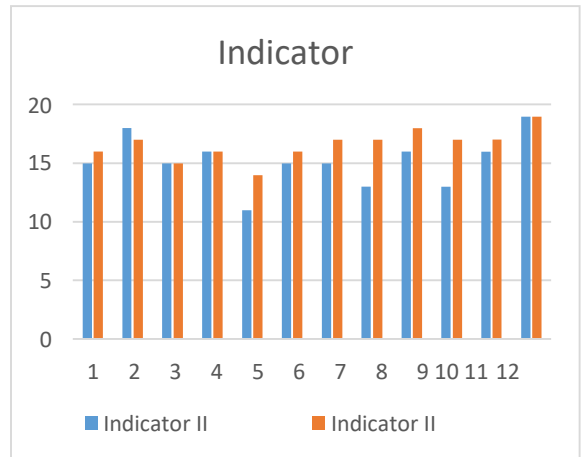


Table 5. Graph of Posttest and Pretest Indicator III

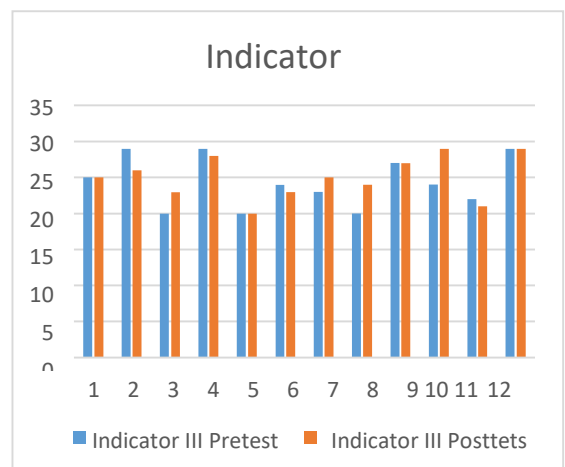


Table 6. Graph of Posttest and Pretest Indicator IV

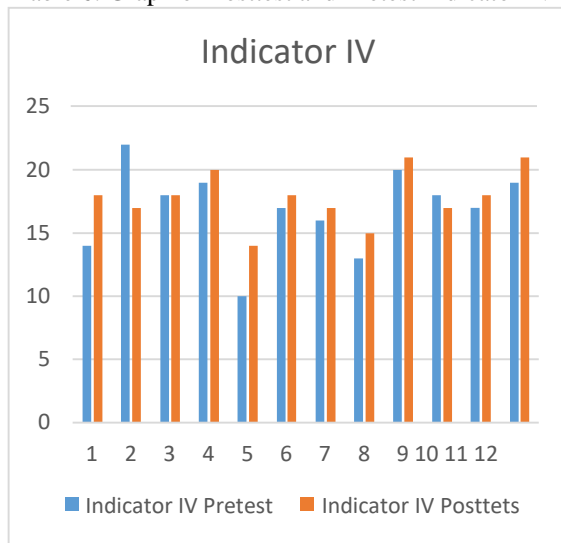
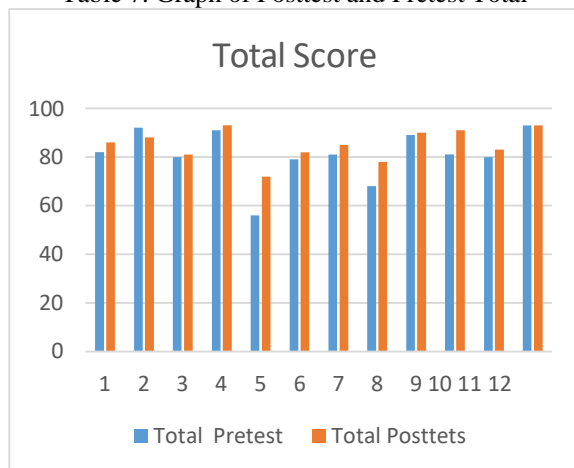


Table 7. Graph of Posttest and Pretest Total



Based on the table above, it is known that not 100% of children experience an increase in self-acceptance scores after being given treatment in the form of assertive writing therapy.

Table 8. Self-Acceptance Score

Subject	Score Pretest	Score Posttest	Difference Score
1	82	86	4
2	92	88	-4
3	80	81	1
4	91	93	2
5	56	72	16
6	79	82	3
7	81	85	4
8	68	78	10
9	89	90	1
10	81	91	10
11	80	83	3
12	93	93	0

Total	972	1022	50
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Based on the description of the table above, it is known that the highest score for self-acceptance in subject 5 is 16 points, followed by subject 8 and subject 10 with 10 points. Of the 12 children, there was 1 child who experienced a decline and 1 child who remained unchanged, while 10 other children experienced an increase in their self-acceptance score.

Table 9. Z Score and Significance of the Wilcoxon Test

Pretest Score - Posttest Score

Z	-2.320a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.02

Based on the table above, the z value = -2.320; p = 0.02. Then by comparing the p-value table and p count (p = 0.02 < 0.05), the conclusion in this experiment is that Ho is rejected, and based on this conclusion it is known that the research on the effectiveness of assertive writing therapy to increase self-acceptance in children in LPKA Tangerang, has shown significant results.

Then to see the difference in the level of self-acceptance in children who undergo a prison term in LPKA, it can be seen by the comparison table of the average score between the pretest score and the posttest score.

Table 10. Comparison of Average Self-Acceptance Scores

Measurement	Average (Mean)
Pretest	81
Posttest	85.17
Difference in pretest and posttest scores	4.17

The table above shows that there was a decrease in the score or level of self-acceptance between before being given treatment (pretest) and after (posttest) being given self-management training. The difference between the pretest and posttest scores is 4.17 points.

The results showed that assertive writing therapy can be a method that helps children in LPKA to make behavioral changes in themselves, in this case the behavioral change is an increase in self-acceptance. The results of this study are also supported by theories expressed by several figures including Karen Baikie and Katherina Amelia Heriawan. Karen Baikie- a psychologist from the University of New South Wales, suggests that writing about stressful, emotional, and traumatic events can restore physical and mental health [8]. In addition, Katherina Amelia Heriawan, who is also a psychologist, revealed that writing is a good therapy for psychological recovery in an effort to change behavior. Paying attention to the statements expressed by the two experts above, the researcher got a picture of increasing self-acceptance and various psychological problems in children in LPKA. The writing therapy method could be used. This is what makes the basis of the hypothesis that assertive writing therapy will be effective in increasing self-acceptance of LPKA children, especially when in abnormal conditions such as this pandemic, so the law process in correctional system, which now emphasizes recovery efforts, could be achieved.

Then the results of the description obtained were based on an assertive written process that was expressed by 12 children at least facilitating the rights of the child in expressing opinions as freedom of thought. In addition, the description above can be used as qualitative data which certainly needs further studies.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the overall analysis, it can be concluded that assertive writing therapy is effective in increasing children's self-acceptance in LPKA Tangerang in the face of the Covid 19 pandemic. Assertive writing therapy that has been given to children can be a coaching option that can be given to children so that children have a positive picture of themselves. With this therapy, children have the means to convey their feelings, thoughts and hopes in the past, at present, and in the future.

In addition, assertive writing therapy also provides space for children to express themselves. Children can express their most personal state of self even without judgment from the outside environment. Therefore, it can be said that assertive writing therapy can be a solution in reducing children's problems in LPKA, namely related to self-acceptance.

Referring to the research results and conclusions that have been described, the following suggestions can be made:

1. Children in LPKA who are indicated to have problems with self-acceptance are advised to use writing media as an effort to express feelings in order to recover psychologically, especially in accepting circumstances and reality as part of accommodating children's rights in freedom of thought, expressing opinions and education.
2. For LPKA, assertive writing therapy can be used as a method or even a periodic program in an effort to increase children's self-acceptance. This can be implemented in real terms by recommending assertive writing therapy in correctional research on early coaching for children made by Probation Officer. In addition, it is also possible to carry out at every stage of coaching up to aftercare in the guidance and supervision by the Probation Office to ensure the balance of the child's self-acceptance to return to the community. This therapy program is easy to implement at minimal cost. Writing therapy as an alternative program aims to create recovery for children in conflict with the law so that legal certainty for the community, especially for children, can be maximized.
3. The next researchers who want to continue this research are expected to pay attention to the following matters, including: first, develop instruments so that they can better identify the conditions of children in LPKA that

are more in accordance with reality or make sure the children fill out the instruments properly according to the direction of the researcher. Second, it would be better if there was a control group so that there was a comparison of the results against groups that were not given treatment or therapy. Third, the number of children who were included in the study was multiplied so that the data were normally distributed.

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