

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DIARY WRITING IN IMPROVING UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ASSERTIVE ATTITUDES

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Abstract: This study aimed to apply diary writing as a therapy for low-assertive students. This study employed the Core Conflictual Relationship Theme (CCRT) method developed by Lester Luborsky. The data were collected using diary as an elicitation medium and analyzed using the Garnefski Emotion-Cognitive Regulation Questionnaire (CER). The results showed that (1) student low assertiveness could be improved through expressive writing therapy using a diary as the medium; (2) diary as a therapeutic medium was effective in improving student low assertiveness because diary writing tasks can be distinguished based on CCRT and CER; (3) there was a difference between male and female assertiveness patterns; (4) subjects in the category were easier to change towards normal assertiveness with diary writing therapy compared to subjects in the LSE category. The results of the study therefore suggest that: (1) diary writing activity should be conducted in the classroom, especially in the midst of the current digital era, (2) the utilization of CCRT and CER methods through diary writing needs to be done simultaneously by lecturers during the academic advising activities.

Keywords: assertive attitude, diary, emotion, student behavior

In the midst of the 21st century era, diary writing is scarce. The digital era has affected almost all aspects of human life, including the habit of writing a diary which used to be popular especially among adolescents in the past.

In the old days, a diary used to be a loyal friend to a teenager and a student. A personal diary was used to record the teenager and student's feelings. The moments of joy, irritation, disappointment, love, including all that happen in

their life were poured into the diary. The diary thus served as a safe and complimentary means through which the adolescents "confide" their secrets. Diaries have become an effective and constructive vehicle that can help the adolescents release their emotions. Diaries have also created a positive impact in the adolescents' life.

However, the digital world has transformed everything. In addition to changes for the better,

it also leads to negative circumstances. Online public rooms are recently crammed with the news on university students' movement that leads to destructive actions and anarchism which is very detrimental to other people. Such condition certainly cannot be tolerated. All parties related to the world of education, including lecturers, parents, students, government and the community need to work together to find a way out to deal with the situation. Therefore, as mandated in Article 3, Law number 20/2013 concerning the National Education System, education must be refocused on developing students' *adi-luhung* (excellent) characters and culture.

A university is a miniature of society that depicts human diversity. Despite the differences in personality, character and behavior, the lecturers, students and staff need to get along and interact with one another almost every day as if they lived as a community with various conditions and situations. If every individual in the campus is able to accept, respect and empathize with each other as well as to live side by side to cooperate, then a harmonious and comfortable situation can be created. However, if happens otherwise, the campus's situation can be uncomfortable and in-harmonious.

Preliminary observations showed that some college students were hard to get along with each other. Inter-group fights and anarchist demonstration are mostly caused by the students' poor assertive attitudes. Assertive college students are characterized by their ability to respect others' opinions, accept diversity, collaborate with peers, adapt to the environment, be friendly to everyone, and create the atmosphere of openness, reciprocity, and tolerance.

In reality, college students' assertiveness can be divided into high and low. High-assertive students are able to accept and respects people's differences, collaborate with peers, and create the atmosphere of openness, reciprocity, and tolerance. On the other hand, low-assertive students are incapable of respecting and accepting people's differences, collaborating with others, and creating the atmosphere of openness, reciprocity, and tolerance

The poor assertiveness of these students may be related to their daily habit or their personal, family, and education background. Experiencing traumatic events, such as physical and psychological violence in the childhood and the

burden of academic tasks can also affect the students' assertive attitude. The low level of the college students' assertiveness is the underlying cause of many disputes among the adolescents that will subsequently clot into the acts of violence, anarchism, or criminal offence that can bring harms to people around them. The lack of assertiveness results in the occurrence of horizontal and vertical conflicts and antisocial acts among students, which has recently been reported by various information media.

It has been said that in the past diaries were used by adolescents as a means to express their feelings. Disappointment, anger, confusion, love, and others were poured out onto the diaries. For the author, a diary became an effective therapeutic tool to vent all his/her tempestuous feelings. For this reason, juvenile fights rarely occurred among teenagers.

Nowadays, however, diaries are barely known by the adolescents. The increasing use of gadgets has removed the habit of writing a diary. People prefer to communicate using gadgets, exchanging short messages through various sophisticated means and media that exist today. As gadgets are popular among people around the world, the habit of speaking has also changed. Parents, teenagers, and even young children now spend more time communicating and writing using cell phones. People no longer like to share their feelings by talking to each other face-to-face. Gadgets have changed the speaking and writing habits of the people, thus diminishing the sense of togetherness among them.

These symptoms become an interesting thing to study because adaptability skills are demonstrated in two conditions that are excessive inferiority and over confidence. Excessive inferiority is shown through the tendency to be detached physically from people, the tendency to become a victim of abuse, the inability to achieve optimally in academic fields, the inability to achieve, and many others. Meanwhile, over self-confidence is displayed through brutal behavior, resistance acts, bullying, hero syndromes, hostility, conflicts, and various other antisocial behaviors. Both phenomena are a form of low assertiveness in university or college students. Both must be handled professionally through planned academic supervision services. In this regard, lecturers as academic supervisors play a central role. Research on student low assertiveness can be an

empirical basis for lecturers, parents, policy makers, communities, government, and other elements responsible for education in dealing with issues that are triggered by anti-social behaviors performed by university students.

The success of the learning process is influenced by various dimensions, including the internal and external dimensions. The internal dimension exists within the individual learner, while that which is outside of an individual is called the external dimension. These two dimensions affect the dynamics of individual development. Prayitno and Amti explain four dimensions that influence the dynamics of individual development, namely the dimension of individuality, the dimension of sociality, the dimension of morality, and the dimension of religiosity. It is in these dimensions that the role of academic services is paramount, and academic advisers play a central role in fostering the development of these dimensions. (Prayitno & Emti, 2008).

As multidimensional beings, university students essentially possess these four dimensions: individuality, sociality, morality, and religiosity. These four dimensions become a standard measure or indicator for achieving an individual's level of maturity in the learning process. Someone cannot be considered an adult, both academically, psychologically, and physically, if they fail to develop all four dimensions at the expected level. Meanwhile, every individual will face different obstacles in achieving the optimal level of development. These obstacles can cause a person unable to reach all four dimensions optimally within the stipulated time. According to humanistic theory, the purpose of learning is to humanize humans. The learning process is considered successful if the individual is able to understand himself and his environment; whereas according to learning theory, learning is an attempt to understand learning behavior from the learner's point of view, instead of from the point of view of the observer. Nevertheless, the modern world refers more to humanistic learning theory. (McLeod, 2009).

Relevant to humanistic theory, it is understood that university students have problems to learn naturally. It is true that the students learn to be smart, but learning materials cannot be forced into them and must be absorbed by them according to their abilities. To achieve this goal, it is desirable to organize learning materials that suit

the students' perception. Learning is important for the students and relative to changes in the social world. The social environment requires changes, and the changes must ultimately be absorbed by students. The process of knowledge acquisition should take place naturally according to the ability of the students. There must be no compulsion in the process of achieving learning goals. There must be independence in learning (Yanti & Surya, 2017).

However, in reality the learning process is often carried out "under compulsion". Students are forced to obtain certain abilities, at certain times, and under certain conditions. Such conditions lead to various problems. On one hand, there are targets that must be obtained by students, and on the other hand there are internal obstacles that prevent the students from learning naturally. These problems will in turn cause inner conflicts, such as stress, frustration, fear, and many others that can lead to different or distorted patterns of behavior. For some students, these problems may make them aloof, timid, and even develop an inferiority complex. Conversely, for some other students, these problems can lead to overconfidence. Juvenile fights and demonstrations that almost always lead to chaos among students, for example, may represent a form of protest against the forceful learning conditions.

In his manuscript entitled "Respectful Counseling: An Integrative Multidimensional Model for Counselors", Michael D'Andrea & Judy Daniels state that respectful mind counseling services can be used to increase assertive and respectful attitudes. This counseling model emphasizes on the importance of the counselor's awareness of individuals as multidimensional beings. The perspective is built from humanistic theory saying that individual psychological development is affected by multidimensional factors (D'Andrea, Michael & Daniels, 2010).

As a language practitioner, I assume that the respectful mind counseling model by D'Andrea & Daniels proves that respectful attitudes are actually part of language attitudes that need special attention. Even though D'Andrea & Daniels (D'Andrea, Michael & Daniels, 2010) have not yet elaborated the technical development of the respectful mind counseling model, their perspective on the model in counseling and its relationship with language attitudes learned in psycholinguistics can be identified (Kuntarto, 2017).

The concept of the respectful mind counseling services is based on two assumptions. The first assumption is that the counseling services ultimately aim to assist the personal development of individuals. The second assumption is that the framework of the counseling service model is based on the recognition of unique and complex multidimensionality of humans. Matters that have been investigated and dealt with regarding multidimensionality factors in humans include research that focuses on one's gender role, cultural/racial background, psychological development, and research on how these factors affect counseling as well as the process and outcome of the therapy. (Hasnabuana & Sawitri, 2015), (Aini & Kholis, 2018).

In line with D'Andrea & Daniels, this study assumed that assertiveness was a mindset to accept differences of opinion with an open attitude instead of with mutual suspicion. This mindset will prevent individuals from anarchism that is caused by compulsion of interests. It also invites humans to celebrate the diversity of views and at the same time present empathy for the opinions of others, even though that opinion may be different from his opinion.

In relation to this, the role of language as a means of human communication becomes relevant. Recognition of human multidimensionality is closely related to human function as a social being. Language is an absolute tool that only humans have and use to socialize with other humans. Language is used to establish relationships, maintain interaction. Language constitutes a human identity device. Through language, humans can show themselves in the dimensions of individuality, sociality, morality, and religiosity (Kuntarto, 2017).

Based on these assumptions, the learning models implemented in university should integrate attitudes and character education, for example learning to be open and honest, willing to accept oneself and others as they are, being able to respect themselves and others proportionately, and other assertive attitudes. These attitudes can only be realized and explored through the use of language as a communication tool because in fact some of the elements of attitude are hidden. However, only with language, these attitudes can be displayed.

In the form of behavior, deviations from assertiveness can be grouped into two categories,

namely low self-esteem (LSE) and over confidence (OC). The strategies that can be used to increase the ownership of assertiveness include expressing the feelings of low self-esteem (LSE) and over confidence (OC) in individuals through diary writing. Similar to poetry and prose writing, diary writing is also classified under the category of expressive writing (Susilowati & Hasanat, 2011), (Garnefski & Kraaij, 2006).

In psycholinguistics, expressive writing belongs to one of the techniques that has long been used in language therapy. Some psycholinguistic research, for example, uses expressive writing methods as one of the therapeutic or healing media to improve the language skills of children who experience language difficulties (Kuntarto, 2017).

In general, the goals of diary writing therapy include: (1) increasing understanding of oneself and others in the form of writing and other literature; (2) improving creativity, self-expression and self-esteem; (3) strengthening communication and interpersonal skills; (4) as a catharsis to express excessive emotions and reduce tension, and (5) developing the ability of individuals to deal with problems and adapt (Davis, 1990 in Fikri, 2012). Studies have shown that writing emotional experiences has great benefits as a therapeutic tool in several clinical problems. Research conducted by Aini and Kholis (Aini & Kholis, 2018) and Susilowati and Hasanat (Susilowati & Hasanat, 2011) proves that writing therapy can improve self-care for individuals who experience deep sadness because writing is used as a medium to open themselves so that they are able to care for themselves better.

The previous research findings related to the writing therapy include Susilowati & Hasanat's that used writing therapy as a means of therapy for students. The results showed that emotional writing therapy was a therapeutic process mechanism centered on self-disclosure (Susilowati & Hasanat, 2011).

This study sought to utilize diary writing activities as a therapeutic measure to improve assertiveness through LSE and OC neutralization. The appropriate model used in this study was the assertive attitude counseling model (Linden, 2006), (D'Andrea, Michael & Daniels, 2010) which basically results from the combination of psychoanalytic, behavioral, and realistic models.

Research on assertiveness is based on the following theoretical references. First, human

behavior is not completely formed in humans as an innate quality from birth. Behavior results from a reciprocal interaction between man and his world. Humans are reactive creatures whose behavior is controlled by external factors. Humans begin their lives by reacting to the world and their environment, and this interaction produces behavioral patterns that shape personality. Second, humans are shaped and conditioned by deterministic sociocultural aspects. Behavior is seen as a result of learning and conditioning. Behavior as a result of learning and conditioning means that behavior is shaped through the laws of learning and is conditioned by manipulating and creating the conditions of its formation. The laws of learning in relation to behavior include the laws of habituation and imitation. The behavioristic approach views that every human being has the same positive and negative tendencies (Kuntarto, 2017).

Third, humans have the right to express, feel and act to be themselves, and to express feelings freely. Some experts suggest that in their relationships or interactions with others, three basic forms of quality individual patterns of behavior can be identified: assertive, aggressive and passive (Zastrow, 2017), (Alberti, R.E & Emmons, 2002).

METHOD

This study was an experimental study. It employed a randomized pretest-posttest control group design. Data collection was performed using the Cognitive Emotion Regulation (CER) technique. The subjects of the study were asked to write diary entries for four weeks. The diary had been compiled specifically by the researcher.

The subjects consisted of 84 students who were randomly selected based on visible non-assertive symptoms. The criteria included frequently showing deviant behavior and involved in conflicts, low academic records, being bullied by other students, and other symptoms classified into LSE (low self esteem) and OC (over confidence) phenomena. The data were obtained from academic advisers who gave recommendations on student identity.

There were 43 males (Group A) and 41 females (Group B) participating in this study. The data were collected using the techniques suggested by Luborsky. (Luborsky, Popp, Luborsky,

Mark, & Core, 2010), (McLeod, 2009). Out of the 8 writing themes developed by Luborsky, seven were used in this study; they covered the themes of (1) resistance (T-Men), (2) agreement (T-Per), (3) sadness (T-Sed), (4) happiness (T-Gem), (5) critical (T-Kri), (6) asking for help (T-Ban), and (7) intimacy (T-Int). The themes of business was not used since it was not suitable with the subjects' need. The seven themes were written by the subjects in the form of diary entries.

The experiment was carried out for 7 (seven) weeks. Every week, the subjects were given a task to compile a diary in groups and with different themes. At the end of compiling one theme, they were asked to fill out a questionnaire to uncover 8 types of non-assertive behavior, namely: (1) being highly unassertive and allowing other people to take advantage of him/her; (2) having a hard time saying NO; (3) being unable to express anger or irritation; (4) feeling that they had no rights to communicate his/her feelings and thoughts; (5) harboring feelings of disappointment, anger, and revenge, and venting them in the form of disruptive actions; (6) being overly responsive and reactive; (7) being likely to exhibit anti-social behavior; (8) having a hard time to express respect, affection, and other positive responses. The researcher asked the help of the academic advisers to identify the students in the 8 attitude categories.

The questionnaire data were analyzed using a linguistic-behavioral approach, that was Cognitive Emotion Regulation (CER). Meanwhile, the diary writing data were analyzed using The Core Conflictual Relationship Theme (CCRT) techniques adapted from Luborsky's The Core Conflictual Relationship Theme theory (Luborsky et al., 2010). Both techniques were common among psycholinguistics research.

The CER techniques consisted of nine indicators of behavior revealed through the questionnaire; they included: (1) self-blaming; (2) blaming others and the environment; (3) rumination (sometimes thinking about the feelings associated with negative events); (4) catastrophe (thoughts focused on the perceived terror); (5) being unable to organize perspectives; (6) being unable to concentrate on positive things; (7) lacking in the ability to evaluate the existence of positive things; (8) lacking in the ability to accept the current situation; (9) lacking in the ability to arrange

a plan. In this study, CER was modified to adjust the research objectives.

The CER questionnaire used the following Likert's five point scales: 5 (almost never), 4 (seldom), 3 (sometimes), 2 (often), and 1 (almost always). The CCRT was comprised of seven themes, including: (1) resistance theme (T-Men), (2) agreement theme (T-Per), (3) sadness theme (T-Sed), (4) happiness theme (T-Gem), (5) critical theme (T-Kri), (6) asking for help theme (T-Ban), and (7) intimate theme (T-Int). The seven themes were evaluated using the Likert's five point scales: (1) very certain, (2) certain, (3) hesitant, (4) uncertain, and (5) very uncertain. The data triangulation was examined using the following methods: (1) triangulation, (2) inter-rater triangulation, (3) triangulation of source of data, and (4) theory triangulation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The CER and CCRT analyses showed unique patterns of behavior in the male subjects (A) and female subjects (B). The pattern used by every individual was identified as assertive attitudes. The subjects from group A were likely to exhibit low assertive attitudes, proven by the low scores in CER items number (2), (3), (6), (7), and (8). On the other hand, the subjects from group B were likely to obtain low scores in CER items number (1), (3), (4), (5), (6), (7), (8), and (9). These find-

ings indicated that the male subjects demonstrated fewer non-assertive attitudes compared to the female subjects (Table 2).

The result of the questionnaire analysis was summarized in the Level of Student Assertive Attitude table (Table 1). In addition, based on the questionnaire analysis, the subjects were classified into two categories, Low Self-Esteem (LSE) and Overconfidence (OC). Every week, these subjects were assigned to write one theme among the following themes: (1) T-Men, (2) T-Per, (3) T-Sed, (4) T-Gem, (5) T-Kri, (6) T-Ban, and (7) T-Int (Table 3).

The diary writing activity was assessed based on the behavioral change occurring in the subjects. If the observation showed a high score (≥ 3), the subjects were deemed to have experienced an assertive behavioral change, while if the score was low (< 3), the subjects were considered to have not experienced an assertive behavioral change. The assessment was conducted by the evaluation team at the end of every session (from session 1 to session 7). The analysis of the diary writing activity was presented in Table 4.

Table 1. Level of Student Assertive Attitude

Score	Score Description	Assertive Level
5	Almost never	HIGH
4	Seldom	HIGH
3	Sometimes	MEDIUM
2	Often	LOW
1	Almost always	LOW

Table 2. Category of the Subjects' Non-Assertive Attitude Patterns

No.	Issues Associated with the Subjects' Non-Assertive Attitudes	Pattern Used	
		A (male)	B (female)
1.	Self-blaming	No	Yes
2.	Blaming others and the environment	Yes	No
3.	Rumination (sometimes thinking about the feelings associated with negative events)	Yes	Yes
4.	Catastrophe (thoughts focused on the perceived terror)	No	Yes
5.	Being unable to organize perspectives	No	Yes
6.	Being unable to concentrate on positive things	Yes	Yes
7.	Lacking in the ability to evaluate the existence of positive things	Yes	Yes
8.	Lacking in the ability to accept the current situation	Yes	Yes
9.	Lacking in the ability to arrange a plan	No	Yes

Table 3. Analysis of Student Non-Assertive Attitudes

No.	Non-Assertive Attitude Indicators	Category	Group and Total Number		
			A	B	Σ
1.	Being highly unassertive and allowing other people to take advantage of him/her	LSE	3	7	10
2.	Having a hard time saying <i>NO</i>	LSE	2	5	7
3.	Being unable to express anger or irritation	LSE	7	13	20
4.	Feeling no rights to communicate his/her feelings and thoughts	LSE	7	9	16
Sub-total			19	34	53
5.	Harboring feelings of disappointment, anger, and revenge, and venting them in the form of disruptive actions	OC	10	4	14
6.	Being overly responsive and reactive	OC	10	3	13
7.	Being likely to exhibit anti-social behavior	OC	2	0	2
8.	Having a hard time to express respect, affection, and other positive responses	OC	2	0	2
Sub-total			24	7	31
Total			43	41	84

Table 4. Diary Analysis

No.	Observed Attitude	Category	Number of Subjects		Level of Change after 7 Sessions of Therapy			
			A	B	A	%	B	%
1.	Being highly unassertive and allowing other people to take advantage of him/her	LSE	3	7	3	100	4	57
2.	Having a hard time saying <i>NO</i>	LSE	2	5	2	100	3	60
3.	Being unable to express anger or irritation	LSE	7	13	6	87	7	54
4.	Feeling no rights to communicate his/her feelings and thoughts	LSE	7	9	6	86	6	67
Sub-total			19	34	17	89%	20	58%
1.	Harboring feelings of disappointment, anger, and revenge, and venting them in the form of disruptive actions	OC	10	4	10	100	4	100
2.	Being overly responsive and reactive	OC	10	3	7	70	3	100
3.	Being likely to exhibit anti-social behavior	OC	2	0	2	100	0	0
4.	Having a hard time to express respect, affection, and other positive responses	OC	2	0	2	100	0	0
Sub-total			24	7	21	87	7	100
Total			43	41	38	95%	27	65%

According to the CCRT analysis, 38 out of 43 individuals (95%) from Group A (male) experienced a change into normal assertive attitudes after going through seven sessions of the diary writing therapy. On the other hand, 27 out of 41

individuals (65%) from Group B were identified to have experienced a change into normal assertive attitudes. In the LSE category, 37 out of 53 individuals (69.81%) experienced an assertive behavioral change, while in the OC category, 28

out of 34 individuals (82.35%) experienced an assertive behavioral change. The development of the diary writing therapy process from week 1 to week 7 was depicted in figure 1.

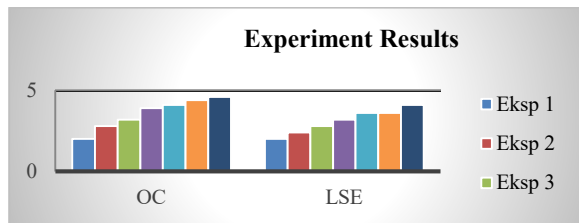


Figure 1. The Result of Diary Writing Experiment on OC and LSE Groups

The results of the analyses showed that, compared to the LSE subjects, the subjects from the OC category were more likely to change into normal assertive attitudes through writing a diary. In addition, the male subjects (95%) from Group A were more likely to exhibit such change compared to the female subjects (65%) from Group B. Based on the criteria, overall the method of writing a diary could change the low assertiveness back to the normal level of 80%. This suggests that diaries were effective in improving university students' assertive attitudes.

Table 5. The Criteria of Diary Effectiveness as a Therapy Medium to Increase Student Assertive Attitude

No.	Percentage	Effectiveness
1.	90-100 %	Highly effective
2.	80-89%	Effective
3.	70-79%	Fairly effective
4.	60-69%	Less effective
5.	<60%	Not effective

These analyses also showed that the CCRT and CER techniques were effective in analyzing the phenomena of university students' assertive attitudes because the diary writing tasks were able to constantly distinguish each of the CCRT and CER items.

Discussion

According to humanistic learning theory, the aim of learning is to humanize humans. The learning process is considered successful if the student is able to understand himself and his environment (McLeod, 2009). However, in reality, students are often forced to obtain certain abilities, at certain times, and under certain conditions.

Such coercion can be a cause of the emergence of antisocial attitudes among students (Zulkaida, 2005). Something like that also happens to university students. The results of interviews with the subjects of this study proved that the root problem of the students' non-assertive attitudes was the stress caused by the heavy academic burden. The students' writing in this study revealed that a lot of resentment, disappointment, and anger were hidden in the students due to the heavy burden of academic tasks. The emergence of over-confidence and low self-esteem behavior, in addition to the potentials brought about since they were in middle school, was also caused by the attitude of protest against compelling learning conditions. In this connection, the results of this study urge every university to consider changing the learning model into a more humane form.

The findings of this study were also corroborated with D'Andrea & Daniels's (D'Andrea & Daniels, tt) theory of "respectful mind". According to D'Andrea & Daniels, humans are creatures that are created in a unique and complex form of multidimensionality. An important consideration in the multidimensionality of a person is that gender, cultural/racial background, psychological and physical factors play a role in the psychological development of an individual. Therefore, to avoid deviations from assertiveness, the development of learning models must pay attention to these things. Face-to-face learning activities that tend to be classic in nature should be changed to online learning that is more individual. At the very least, the two learning models can be integrated to generate learning activities that better value the multidimensional aspects of an individual.

In addition, this study indicates that the academic advising activity that is carried out by academic advisors should not only focus on academic issues. Instead, individual issues and the background to academic aspects should also be a concern of the academic advising activity. This—according to the researcher—is rarely noticed by the academic advisors. The flurry and low rewards obtained by academic advisors are often a reason to isolate non-academic problems experienced by students.

An important aspect which is implied from this study is the writing activity among university students. At present, the tradition of writing among students in Indonesia can be considered

fairly poor. This is evidenced by the low productivity of Indonesian students in publishing scientific papers. List of scientific publications published by the Asia Pacific Nature Publishing Index in 2015 (the body of scientific journals throughout Asia Pacific) mentioned Indonesia in the 12th place out of 20 countries in the Asia Pacific. This shows that the majority of Indonesian students have poor writing performance. One possible reason is the lack of expressive writing activities conducted in the classroom. Today, writing is frequently associated with heavy and coercive academic writing, yet expressive writing activities are almost gone from the higher education curriculum (Nature Index 2015 Asia-Pacific, 2015).

Research by Khaerunnisa that discussed the assertive attitudes among students in UNJ showed that 15% of the students had high assertive attitudes, the rest (73%) were in the medium category, and 12% exhibited low assertiveness (Khaerunnisa, 2010). Khaerunnisa's findings are also in line with other research findings (see (Zulkaida, 2005), (Tatus, 2018), (Fitri & Rakhmawati, 2013), (Hasse. J., 2012), (Aini & Kholis, 2018)). The results of these study revealed that assertive behavior had become a chronic problem among adolescents and students. The relevance of these studies to the current study is that non-academic expressive writing activities such as writing a diary are one of the most effective ways to increase student assertiveness. Lecturers need to provide broad opportunities for students to express their expressions through writing, for example by promoting more short-story, poetry, and criticism writing activities that are integrated with college assignments. Thus, the symptoms of over confidence and low self-esteem among students can be minimized. It is also hoped that the exploration of non-assertive attitudes which are often shown in the form of anarchic demonstrations or low academic achievement can be avoided.

A study by Rosa Imani Khan (Khan, 2012) on the relationship between assertiveness, self-esteem and depression tendency involving 119 adolescents aged 18-21 years showed a negative correlation between assertive behavior and depression tendencies. The higher the assertiveness, the lower the tendency for depression would be. Conversely the lower the assertiveness, the higher the tendency for depression would be. Khan also found a negative correlation between self-esteem

and the level of depression tendencies. Higher self-esteem resulted in lower tendency for depression and vice versa. The results of the current study reinforce Khan's research findings in some ways. In this study, the OC subjects demonstrated a higher tendency to recover from non-assertive attitudes, while the LSE subjects were more difficult to change their assertiveness into a normal one. This confirms that the OC subjects whose nature is confident are more easily transformed into assertive individuals.

In relation to Khan's (Khan, 2012) findings, the effort to improve student low assertiveness through diary writing becomes increasingly important. Diary therapy is effective in improving student assertiveness because higher assertiveness results in lower tendency for depression. Thus, it is expected that the university students concerned will achieve better in academic.

CONCLUSION

This study showed that (1) student low assertiveness could be improved through expressing writing therapy; (2) diary writing was effective in increasing student low assertiveness because the diary writing tasks were able to constantly distinguish each of the CCRT and CER items; (3) there was a tendency that males and females developed unique and different patterns of assertiveness; (4) compared to the subjects in the low self-esteem (LSE) category, the overconfidence (OC) subjects were more easily transformed into normal assertiveness by writing a diary.

Based on these conclusions the following suggestions were made. First, lectures in tertiary institutions need to be developed by paying attention to students as multidimensional individuals. This indicates that individual differences including individuality, sociality, morality, and religiosity dimensions need to be considered in the development of higher education curricula because student low assertiveness is mostly caused by a heavy academic burden. Secondly, expressive writing activity needs to be maintained in today's digital era. It can be done by combining it with lecture activities. Students need to be given enough space to express themselves so that the problems they encounter can be channeled on the right path. Third, lecturers and academic advisers need to apply expressive writing therapy if they find their guidance students experiencing OC or

LSE conditions as a form of low assertiveness. Lecturers also need to integrate attitude and character education into the classroom so that educa-

tion becomes an appropriate vehicle in humanizing humans. Fourth, research on student language attitudes and behavior needs to be continuously developed.

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