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The Application of Art Therapy as a Medium for Self-Expression in Managing Emotions among Grade XII MIPA 1 Students at MAN 1 Tuban

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the application of Art Therapy as a medium of self-expression in helping 12th-grade MIPA 1 students of MAN 1 Tuban manage their emotions. The research approach uses a qualitative method with an action research type that is carried out in three stages, namely planning, implementation, and reflection. The research subjects were 12th-grade MIPA 1 students who experienced difficulties in expressing and controlling emotions. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, then analyzed using reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing techniques. The results of the study indicate that the application of Art Therapy through drawing activities has a positive impact on students' abilities to recognize, express, and control emotions. Students become more open, confident, and able to channel negative feelings constructively. In addition, this activity creates a more comfortable and reflective learning atmosphere. Thus, Art Therapy is proven to be effective as an alternative medium in managing emotions and developing students' psychological well-being in the school environment.

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INTRODUCTION

Emotions are an integral part of human life (Hm, 2016) . Every individual experiences a variety of feelings, both positive and negative, which can affect their quality of life. One such group is adolescents. Adolescence is a transitional period that individuals experience as they move from childhood to adulthood. Adolescence begins at the age of 10-22 years. Managing emotions is an important skill related to a person's mental and emotional well-being. This skill allows individuals to recognize, cope with, and express their emotions in a healthy way, thereby improving interpersonal relationships and overall well-being. Managing emotions becomes even more important in a life full of stress and change, where people often feel stressed, anxious, or angry.

According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary, self-expression is a process of stating, revealing intentions, feelings, ideas or thoughts, and facial expressions that show a person's feelings(Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), 2018) . Meanwhile, self-expression is a driver for a person to express

their identity publicly. They express themselves in various ways or for various reasons, among other people as proof of their lives, to assert themselves and their place in their group in society to achieve social change (Burger, 2015) . Self-expression is an individual's act of conveying their thoughts, feelings, and identity to others. Self-expression can be done in various ways, such as through clothing, dance, writing, and other forms of art. Jang & Kim divide self-expression into two main aspects, namely positive and negative expression. Positive expression includes self-acceptance and support for others, while negative expression includes conflict with oneself and aggression towards others. Thus, self-expression is not only a means of communication, but also a reflection of a person's psychological and social dynamics (J. Jang & H. J. Kim, 2019) .

The factors contributing to the emergence of emotions are associated with four aspects. First, psychological. Second, physical. Third, social. Fourth, the environment. Psychological factors can arise due to personality, feelings of threat, anxiety, painful memories or trauma, and mental disorders such as depression or anxiety. Social factors can be closely related to friendships, family, social support, and social interaction. However, apart from the above emotional management, there are also factors caused by poor eating and drinking habits, substance abuse or alcohol abuse, prolonged stress, lack of rest, certain medical conditions, such as asthma or diabetes. Emotions often arise due to emotional development, such as age, gender, physical changes, and glands.

Emotions are one of the mental health issues that are currently in focus, especially among adolescents. This is because 29% of the world's population consists of adolescents, with 80% living in developing countries. Based on the 2005 census in Indonesia, the number of adolescents between the ages of 10 and 19 was around 41 million (20% of the total population of Indonesia in the same year). During this era of globalization, there are many challenges facing adolescents living in Indonesia's big cities and rural areas. They are required to deal with various conditions, both positive and negative, whether they come from within themselves or from their environment. Adolescence is a turbulent time. During this period, moods can change very quickly. These drastic mood swings in adolescents are often caused by their parents' expectations regarding their college education, school, social life, and other matters. They are very sensitive to the opinions of others because they consider the way others admire or criticize them to be a reflection of themselves. This assumption makes young people very concerned about themselves and their self-image.

Goleman explains that, in principle, basic human emotions include fear, anger, sadness, and happiness. Sutanto (2012) adds shame, guilt, and anxiety as basic human emotions. These emotions are important because they greatly influence not only current behavior but also future behavior, especially negative emotions. Anger itself is a reaction to an obstacle that causes the failure of an effort or action. Anger is often accompanied by various behavioral expressions (Al Baqi, 2015) .

Research conducted during counseling guidance sessions is related to Art Therapy. Various factors and backgrounds of the problems experienced by students are addressed by the school and the counseling guidance teachers themselves. Counselees recognize their problems through drawings or paintings. The case experienced by students in class XII MIPA 1 MAN 1 Tuban. First, the continuation of their studies, whether to choose to work or go to college. This causes them to experience pressure or even stress in managing their emotions. The reason why they choose to work could be because of inadequate family finances. Second, social problems.

Various interventions are carried out to address these issues, one of which is Art Therapy, which is very effective in helping individuals communicate and express themselves, manage their emotions, and strengthen their self-confidence. In this phenomenon, not all individuals are able to communicate or express their feelings. Art Therapy is a solution to mental health problems because individuals can express their feelings and social experiences without the need for direct communication. This can be an alternative for some individuals to talk about their feelings and experiences and can reopen old wounds.

Through Art Therapy, individuals can express all the feelings they experience that cannot be expressed through words. Art Therapy is the right way to express pent-up emotions, such as feelings of sadness, anger, insecurity, and fear of rejection. Art Therapy is also useful for relieving anxiety and depression and reducing symptoms of stress. There are many types of Art Therapy, one of which is painting. Therapy through painting is part of Art Therapy, which aims to serve as a non-verbal

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means of communication to express an individual's thoughts and feelings that are difficult to convey verbally (Haniatussa'adah, 2022) . Combining art, psychology, and therapy, this method helps individuals explore their emotions, cope with stress, and improve their mental well-being through the creative process. Art therapy can be a medium for individuals to use as a method of self-care and healthy self-expression (Mallory Braus, 2020) . Art therapy has three main principles: creative expression, self-awareness, and a therapeutic relationship that supports the healing process. Its application consists of three main stages, namely the preparation stage, the art creation stage, and the closing stage, which as a whole aim to provide a safe space for individuals to understand and manage their emotions (Ichsana Nur Asyifa, Naharus Surur, 2021) .

In this study, the researchers focused on drawing as an art therapy method. Drawing is an enjoyable activity with a counseling guidance session duration of 45 minutes. Additionally, drawing can be done by everyone, even if the individual cannot draw.

One of the guidance counselors teaching in the 12th grade uses this Art Therapy method to manage students' emotions. Art Therapy is very suitable for clients with problems such as anxiety, fear, or other forms of emotion. Through Art Therapy, clients can also reveal their problems through art, whether it be drawings or paintings that describe their feelings or circumstances.

Even so, art therapy is a unique form of therapy that helps individuals, but in reality, not many people in Indonesia know about it, and few have conducted research related to art therapy. There are also very few books that discuss art therapy. However, upon further examination, art therapy is very helpful in treating each individual's personal problems. In a study by Moss et al. (2022), art therapy has been proven effective in reducing anxiety levels in adolescents with leukemia, resulting in positive changes in their condition. Based on the background described above, the researcher is interested in applying Art Therapy as a medium for self-expression in managing emotions among students in class XII MIPA 1 at MAN 1 Tuban.

Conceptual / Theory

The term Art Therapy consists of two words: art and therapy. Art refers to authenticity, individuality, the creative process, spontaneity, the use of color, texture, graphic materials, and imagination, while therapy refers to caring, the process of listening, healing, the process of moving towards wholeness, change and development, and emphasizes understanding human beings (P. M. B., n.d.) .

The term Art Therapy is sometimes used to refer to a form of art therapy or expressive therapy in general, but it is often used to refer to a form of creative therapy that involves visual arts such as drawing or painting. Bollu mentions that Art Therapy is one of several types of expressive therapy. Expressive therapy is a therapeutic process that uses nonverbal interventions and modalities such as dance, movement, painting/drawing, and music as a medium for expression. The therapeutic process that uses drawing as the main modality is often called visual Art Therapy (Bollu, n.d.).

In line with Bollu and Glaister's opinion that art therapy is a healing process that uses pictures or paintings as a medium to identify, explore, and change an individual's concepts, feelings, and behavior. Art therapy is used as a means to resolve emotional conflicts, increase self-awareness, develop social skills, control behavior, solve problems, reduce anxiety, and improve reality and self-esteem. Edith Kramer, a pioneer of Art Therapy, views Art Therapy as a way to integrate conflicting feelings and impulses into an aesthetically pleasing form that provides satisfaction, helping the ego to control, regulate, and synthesize these conflicts through the creative process (M. Dye, 2018) .

According to the humanistic approach, artistic activities such as drawing play an important role in developing creativity, and art therapy provides peak experiences that lead individuals to positive change. According to the behavioral approach, creative activities can be effective reinforcements for changing undesirable behavior. In its further development, Art Therapy is often based on principles of behavioral change, such as objectively identifying behaviors to be changed and designing Art Therapy programs based on its historical use as a mental health treatment facility. However, with the evolving needs of humanity, Art Therapy also serves a preventive function by fostering attitudes that enhance quality of life.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with action research. Action research was chosen because it is in line with the research objectives, namely to apply Art Therapy as a medium of self-expression to help students manage their emotions while improving counseling practices in the classroom. The research procedure was carried out in several cycles consisting of the planning, implementation, observation, and reflection stages. The research subjects were students of class XII MIPA 1 MAN 1 Tuban who were selected based on their needs and willingness to participate in Art Therapy activities. Data collection techniques were carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation, while data analysis ( ) used an interactive analysis model that included data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was obtained through triangulation of sources and techniques, so that the research results are expected to provide a realistic picture of the effectiveness of Art Therapy in managing students' emotions.

RESULTS

Art Therapy as a Medium for Self-Expression in Managing Emotions in Grade XII MIPA 1 Students at MAN 1 Tuban

Art Therapy is an approach in guidance and counseling that utilizes art as a medium for expressing emotions and feelings. This approach is highly relevant for grade XII MIPA 1 students at MAN 1 Tuban who are in the late adolescent phase. At this stage, Grade XII students face various pressures, ranging from increasingly high academic demands, social pressure from their surroundings, to confusion in determining their future, whether to continue their education to a higher level or enter the workforce. In this situation, Art Therapy becomes a medium that can help students channel their feelings through artwork, namely drawing.

The creative process in art therapy allows students to express emotions that may be difficult to put into words, thereby reducing stress, anxiety, and emotional tension. This approach also provides a safe space for students to explore their identity, boost their self-confidence, and improve their social relationships with their peers and the surrounding environment. By drawing, painting, or creating other works of art, students are given a safe space to channel their feelings without fear of being judged, making this therapy an effective method for improving their emotional well-being.

Therefore, the application of Art Therapy at MAN 1 Tuban can be an innovative solution in supporting students' mental health and helping them deal with emotional challenges in a more constructive way. Thus, Art Therapy is not only a medium for self-expression, but also a form of intervention that helps students deal with the emotional challenges they experience.

Strategies for Implementing Art Therapy as a Medium for Self-Expression in Managing Emotions in Grade XII MIPA 1 Students at MAN 1 Tuban

Before implementing Art Therapy, the researcher conducted initial interviews with the guidance counselor to obtain an overview of the emotional condition of students in class XII MIPA 1. The guidance counselor said that some students showed signs of difficulty in recognizing emotions, were easily anxious about the future, and some of them tended to withdraw when asked to express their feelings verbally. According to the counselor, "Many students actually have burdens, but they don't know how to express them. When asked directly, they just say 'it's okay', even though it is clear from their attitude that they are thinking about something." The guidance counselor also added that academic pressure, graduation preparations, and uncertainty about career choices were the dominant factors affecting their emotional stability. Based on the results of these initial interviews, the guidance counselor emphasized the need for a more flexible method that does not focus on verbal communication so that students can express themselves more comfortably, and thus Art Therapy was chosen as an alternative intervention.

Art Therapy is a therapeutic method that combines art and psychotherapy to help individuals express themselves, understand, and manage their emotions (Budiman, A., Sari, A. A., & Ashiddiqi, 2025) . By using art as a medium of expression, Art Therapy provides individuals with the opportunity to explore feelings that are difficult to express in words, and enables them to manage

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their emotions in a healthier and more constructive way. The implementation of Art Therapy aims to help individuals find effective ways to manage their feelings, reduce stress, and improve emotional well-being.

The community service activity for MAN 1 Tuban students was carried out through assistance in the form of Art Therapy-based guidance and counseling services conducted systematically in three main stages using a classical format approach to improve students' understanding of Art Therapy at MAN 1 Tuban. This activity aims to increase students' understanding of Art Therapy as a medium of self-expression in managing emotions. Art Therapy was conducted in 3 class meetings over 3 weeks from January 10-23, 2025.

a. Week 1 (Formation Stage: Introduction or Warm-up)

The first week's meeting of the formation stage was held on January 10, 2025, in the classroom and lasted for 45 minutes. At this stage, the main focus was to build students' basic understanding of the concept of art therapy and to create a comfortable and conducive atmosphere for subsequent activities. The activity began with an introductory session between the researcher and the students to build positive connections. Next, an explanation of Art Therapy was provided, covering its definition, benefits, and how art can be used as a medium for self-expression in managing emotions. The facilitator also explained the objectives of this activity so that students understood the importance of their involvement in each process that would take place. In addition, students were allowed to bring various tools and materials to be used in the Art Therapy session at the next meeting. This preparation aims to ensure that students can participate optimally in the art exploration process that will be carried out in the next stage.

b. Week II (Activity Stage: Artwork Creation)

The second week of the formation stage was held on January 13-17, 2025, in the classroom and lasted for 45 minutes. In the second week, the core stage of Art Therapy implementation was carried out by facilitating students to explore and create artwork as a form of self-expression. At this stage, students were given the freedom to express their feelings and experiences in visual form through free drawing. This process aimed to help them recognize and manage their emotions more deeply through their chosen medium of art. In addition, the atmosphere created in this session is open and supportive, so that students can feel comfortable expressing themselves without pressure or overly rigid restrictions. By giving students the opportunity to channel their emotions creatively, it is hoped that they can feel the therapeutic benefits of art and be better able to face emotional challenges in their daily lives.

c.Week III (Closing Stage: Discussion and Ending the Session)

The third week of the formation stage was held on January 20-23, 2025, in the classroom and lasted for 45 minutes. In the third week, the closing stage of Art Therapy was carried out with a discussion session that provided an opportunity for students to express and give meaning to the artworks they had created. Through this session, students are invited to reflect on the creative process they have undergone and explore the emotions they have poured into their artwork. This discussion also serves as a forum for students to share their experiences and understanding of the benefits of Art Therapy in managing emotions. By providing space for each student to interpret their work, this activity helps them increase their self-awareness and skills in communicating their feelings more openly. In addition, this session also allows the guidance counselor to provide constructive feedback and identify students who need further assistance. This stage is an important part of the therapy process, as it not only concludes the series of activities but also strengthens students' understanding of art as a medium of expression that can help them deal with emotional challenges in their daily lives.

After all stages of Art Therapy were completed, the guidance counselor conducted an evaluation and follow-up to see the extent to which students were able to channel their emotions through this method. With a flexible approach, Art Therapy is expected to be an effective medium in helping students manage their emotions and improve their psychological well-being. The evaluation of Art Therapy showed positive developments in students' ability to express and manage their emotions. Before participating in therapy, many students had difficulty recognizing their feelings, tended to withdraw, or showed emotional instability in social and academic interactions.

However, after undergoing Art Therapy sessions, most students began to show changes, including being more open in communicating their feelings.

One student who participated in Art Therapy said that he found it easier to express his feelings after attending drawing sessions. The student said, "Before, I found it difficult to talk about when I was feeling depressed or confused, but after participating in Art Therapy, I feel more relieved. Through drawing, I can show what I feel without having to talk much." He also added that the activity made him more aware of the emotions he was experiencing and helped him channel the feelings he had been bottling up. According to them, Art Therapy provides a safe space to express emotions in a simple but relieving way. In addition, they also appear to be more comfortable in sharing their experiences and more reflective of their emotional state. This activity not only helps students express themselves, but also provides them with new strategies for dealing with academic and social pressures.

As a follow-up, through the artwork produced, the guidance counselor can analyze the emotions or feelings implied in the students' drawings. Thus, the guidance counselor conducts individual counseling for students whose drawings show indications of emotional or psychological problems that need further attention. Students who are identified as having problems are then called to the guidance counselor's room for more in-depth guidance and resolution. The follow-up provided varies according to the problems experienced by each student, whether in the form of additional counseling sessions, providing emotion management strategies, or referrals to more competent parties if necessary. With systematic evaluation and follow-up, Art Therapy is not only a medium for self-expression but also an effective means of helping students overcome their emotional problems.

Evaluation and Results of the Application of Art Therapy as a Medium of Self-Expression in Managing Emotions among Grade XII MIPA 1 Students at MAN 1 Tuban

Based on the results of observations conducted in class XII MIPA 1, the application of art therapy as a medium of self-expression in managing emotions showed that only 63.33% of students were able to express the problems they experienced through this approach. Of the total 35 students, 19 students were found to be able to channel their emotions well using this method. These results indicate that there are still limitations in the effectiveness of Art Therapy as a medium for self-expression in the school environment. Most students in class XII MIPA 1 did not demonstrate the ability to express their problems through art. This could be due to various factors, such as students' lack of understanding of the benefits of art therapy, psychological barriers to expressing feelings, or methods that are not suitable for their emotional needs. However, these results also indicate that the majority of students may not feel the need for or are unaware of the benefits of art therapy in managing their emotions. Therefore, a more intensive approach and more focused guidance in the application of Art Therapy is needed so that more students can feel its benefits in managing their emotions.

In evaluating the effectiveness of art therapy as a medium for self-expression, an analysis was conducted on changes in the way students expressed their emotions before and after participating in therapy sessions. Before participating in therapy, students may have shown difficulty in recognizing and expressing their emotions, such as withdrawing, having difficulty expressing their feelings verbally, or showing unstable emotional reactions. After participating in art therapy sessions, positive changes were found in the way students expressed their emotions. Some students began to be more open in expressing their feelings through art, such as drawing or painting, which helped them manage their emotions better. In addition, they showed improvement in communication skills and were able to channel negative emotions in a more constructive way and were more confident in expressing their feelings to others. These results show that art therapy can be an effective method in helping students overcome difficulties in expressing emotions and supporting their psychological well-being.

The results of applying art therapy as a medium of self-expression in managing emotions show significant changes in the participants' ability to recognize, express, and control their emotions. Based on observations and evaluations conducted during therapy sessions, participants experienced an increase in emotional openness and the ability to regulate negative feelings such as anxiety, anger,

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and sadness. In addition, art therapy has been proven to provide a safe space for participants to communicate feelings that are difficult to express in words, thereby helping them to understand themselves better.

The discussion of the research results regarding the application of Art Therapy as a medium of self-expression in managing emotions in grade XII MIPA 1 MAN 1 Tuban students can be divided into the following aspects:

1. The Role of Art Therapy in Facilitating Emotional Expression

The application of Art Therapy serves as a medium that provides a safe space for students to express their emotions through artwork. Through drawing activities, students can express feelings that are difficult for them to express verbally, such as anxiety, anger, fear of rejection, or feelings of pressure ahead of graduation. This finding is in line with the basic concept of art therapy, which emphasizes that the creative process can help individuals explore their emotions and channel them constructively. Art therapy also plays a role in building psychological comfort during service sessions, as students are given the opportunity to create without fear of judgment. Thus, art therapy acts as a non-verbal counseling tool that helps relieve emotional tension and provides a positive emotional regulation experience.

2. The Relationship between Art Activities and Student Emotional Regulation

The results of the study show positive changes in students after participating in Art Therapy sessions, especially in relation to their ability to manage emotions. Before participating in therapy, some students had difficulty recognizing their feelings, withdrew, or displayed unstable emotions. After participating in drawing activities and reflection sessions, some students became more open, confident, and able to channel their negative feelings in a more focused manner. This is in line with the theory that creative expression can increase self-awareness and help individuals understand their emotional dynamics. However, the data shows that only 63.33% or 19 out of 35 students were able to express their emotional problems through drawings. This finding indicates that although art therapy has the potential to help regulate emotions, most students may still need more time to feel safe and comfortable using art as a means of expression.

3. Barriers to Implementing Art Therapy

The implementation of Art Therapy at MAN 1 Tuban also faces several obstacles. The low percentage of students who can express their problems through pictures may be influenced by a lack of understanding of the benefits of art therapy, psychological barriers such as embarrassment, fear of being judged, or students not being accustomed to expressing themselves through art. In addition, the limited time available (45 minutes per session) and the large number of students in each class also affect the effectiveness of the counseling process. These obstacles indicate that the implementation of art therapy requires a more intensive and systematic approach so that students can adapt to this non-verbal method of expression.

4. Implications for Guidance and Counseling Practices in Schools

These findings have important implications for the implementation of guidance and counseling services in schools. First, art therapy can be used as an alternative service strategy to help students who have difficulty expressing their feelings directly. Second, guidance counselors can use artwork as non-verbal assessment material to identify students who are experiencing emotional problems and require further guidance. Third, schools need to support the provision of facilities, time, and training for guidance counselors so that art therapy activities can be carried out optimally. School support is very important to expand the scope of intervention, considering that some students are still unable to fully express themselves through art. With more structured integration, art therapy has the potential to be an effective method for improving students' emotional well-being in the school environment.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study conducted on the application of Art Therapy as a medium of self-expression in managing emotions among students in class XII MIPA 1 at MAN 1 Tuban, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1) The Effectiveness of Art Therapy in Emotion Management

The application of art therapy has been proven effective in helping students recognize, express, and control their emotions through drawing activities. Students become more open, confident, and able to channel negative feelings constructively after participating in the entire series of activities.

2) Positive Impact on Psychological Well-being

Art Therapy provides a safe space for students to express feelings that are difficult to express verbally. This activity creates a more comfortable and reflective learning atmosphere, thereby helping students relieve anxiety, reduce stress, and improve their emotional well-being.

3) Changes in Students' Emotional Behavior

A comparison before and after the implementation of Art Therapy shows positive changes in the way students understand and channel their emotions. Students who initially had difficulty recognizing their feelings, withdrew, or showed emotional instability began to be more able to communicate, share experiences, and express themselves through artwork.

4) Identification and Follow-up of Emotional Problems

Findings from students' artwork became the basis for guidance counselors to conduct further analysis of their emotional conditions. A total of 19 out of 35 students (63.33%) were able to express their problems through drawings, and students who were indicated to have emotional problems then received individual counseling as a follow-up.

5) Recommendations for Guidance and Counseling Practices in Schools

The application of Art Therapy needs to be continuously developed as part of guidance and counseling services in schools. Schools need to provide adequate support, both in terms of facilities and service time, so that Art Therapy can reach more students. In addition, additional training for guidance counselors on the use of art therapy is needed to improve the effectiveness of program implementation in the future.

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