

## GROUP COUNSELING USING A BEHAVIORISTIC APPROACH TO REDUCE CYBERBULLYING IN GRADE IX C STUDENTS AT SMPN 3 TALANG IN THE 2025/2026 ACADEMIC YEAR

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### Abstract

Cyberbullying is aggressive behavior in the form of oppression, bullying, harassment, or humiliation directed at a victim through digital media with the intent to intimidate, hurt, humiliate, take revenge, or dominate the victim. This study aims to identify the level of cyberbullying before and after the provision of group counseling services using a behavioral approach, as well as to determine whether these services can reduce cyberbullying among high-risk students in Class IX C at SMPN 3 Talang. The study employed a quantitative descriptive method with a one-group pretest-posttest pre-experimental design. The population consisted of 30 ninth-grade students in Class IX C at SMPN 3 Talang. Sampling was conducted using purposive sampling, targeting 5 students in the high cyberbullying category. The results of the paired-samples t-test showed that the post-test mean score was lower at 33.20000 (indicating a decrease in cyberbullying) compared to the pre-test, yielding a t-value of 13.738. This value was then compared to the t-table using  $(df) = N - 1 = 5 - 1 = 4$ . Significance (two-tailed) =  $0.000 < 0.05$ , meaning: Since the p-value =  $0.000 < 0.05$ , the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) is accepted. This indicates a statistically significant disparity between the baseline and follow-up conditions of the study, demonstrating that the intervention was statistically proven to reduce cyberbullying.

Keywords: Cyberbullying; Group Counseling; Behaviorist Approach;

### 1 INTRODUCTION

The internet is a technology that has transformed patterns of human interaction and behavior. Through the internet, people can access information instantly, unrestricted by distance or time. However, despite the convenience it offers, the internet also carries significant risks of misuse. Adolescents generally spend an average of more than five hours per day accessing the internet on weekdays, and this figure can reach over seven hours on weekends. This intensive usage creates greater opportunities for various negative behaviors to occur in the online world. The intensity of social media use reflects the duration and frequency with which an individual accesses these platforms to present themselves, interact, collaborate, and share with other social media users. Current phenomena, such as video calls, chatting, commenting, liking, and status updates, It has now have become an essential component of individuals' everyday existence. In fact, it is not uncommon for someone who meets a social media friend in person to still ask for likes and comments on their social media posts (Sekeon, 2024).

Adolescents—which include students in lower secondary (SMP) and upper secondary (SMA) schools—are currently in a crucial stage of maturation. However, not all adolescents successfully navigate this developmental stage. Many of them face various challenges during this transition. Because their development is still in its early stages, adolescents tend to be more sensitive to their surroundings. This challenging phase of adolescence means that their functions and roles are heavily influenced by competitive pressures and the aspirations they must fulfill. Consequently, adolescents are navigating a range of development-specific responsibilities (Hartinah, 2010:59).

Adolescence is often described as a “storm and stress” period because it occupies a transitional position between childhood and adulthood, leaving it without a clear-cut definition. In their efforts to grow into independent individuals and discover their unique identities, adolescents strive to adopt adult roles. However, this process of identity formation does not always proceed smoothly. If adolescents fail to develop their identity properly, they risk experiencing confusion about the direction of their lives, much like a ship that has lost its navigational compass. Potential negative consequences include deviant behavior, involvement in criminal acts, and a tendency to withdraw from social interactions.

Adolescence is a period of high vulnerability to various forms of violence, whether occurring in the real world or in the digital realm. One form of violence increasingly experienced by adolescents in the digital space is cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is defined as aggressive behavior repeatedly carried out by an individual or group against a victim through electronic media or digital platforms, with the intent to harm, humiliate, or harass the victim. Various forms and types of cyberbullying can be observed in practice. These actions include uploading photos or creating posts intended to humiliate the victim, mocking and ridiculing the victim, and accessing others’ social media accounts to threaten the victim and spread negative rumors. The motivations of cyberbullies vary widely, ranging from mere mischief or joking around, a desire for attention, to anger, frustration, and a desire for revenge.

Cyberbullying is defined as the act of using the internet and social media to engage in behavior that harasses, harms, or degrades the dignity of others online. This behavior can affect anyone, including adolescents, including adolescents, who are one of the populations most at risk of the adverse effects of technology and social media use (Sekeon, 2024).

According to Salmi et al. (2018), cyberbullying often occurs on social media platforms and has harmful effects on both the victims and those around them. Willard (2007) defines cyberbullying as a form of social aggression committed by one individual against another by sending or posting harmful material via the internet or other technologies. Cyberbullying is defined as negative behavior occurring in the virtual world, taking the form of electronic taunts, threats, or harassment, which can cause mental health issues such as depression in the victim (Muhlshotin, 2017).

According to Anwar (2017), cyberbullying is a form of bullying that occurs online through various platforms, such as social media, online games, and chat rooms. This behavior can occur continuously without time or location constraints, regardless of the victim’s physical presence. Among the various risks involved, one of the greatest threats is the perpetrator’s ability to hide their identity behind a digital screen, making them bolder in attacking the victim without having to witness the victim’s physical reaction directly (Fanani & Dirgayunita, 2021).

The main reason someone becomes a bully is that the perpetrator feels happy and “powerful” in front of their peers. Furthermore, encouragement in the form of laughter and support from the peer group further reinforces the bullying behavior, while simultaneously humiliating the victim even more. Take the phenomenon at SMPN 3 Talang, for example: cyberbullying is often used to gain specific advantages, and most perpetrators have a specific goal in mind when carrying out such actions. They deliberately use threats to get what they want from others—such as entertainment when bored, revenge, pocket money, better test scores, extortion, or simply to experience a sense of dominance. In fact, it is not uncommon for them to resort to violence to boost their popularity and social status within the group hierarchy. If the cyberbullying experienced by adolescents is not promptly and appropriately addressed, it has the potential to lead to negative behaviors with fatal consequences. Therefore, preventive measures must be taken immediately to tackle this problem. Prevention efforts can begin with the individual, including through increased awareness of information technology use, the development of creativity, and the instillation of a sense of wisdom from an early age.

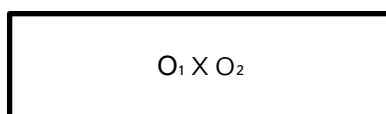
Nurihsan (2006) defines group counseling as the provision of assistance to individuals within a group setting that is both preventive and therapeutic. According to Nurihsan (Mutakin, 2018), group therapy offers both preventive and therapeutic benefits. Group therapy is preventive in the sense that it provides specific skills or roles to individuals who—despite holding a position in society—face various limitations that hinder their ability to interact effectively with others. Meanwhile, group counseling has a therapeutic nature because it provides opportunities, encouragement, and guidance for individuals to make behavioral and attitudinal changes that are more in line with the demands of their environment. This process ultimately helps individuals overcome the various problems they face.

According to Sanyata (2012), the behaviorist approach is a systematic effort to utilize theoretical and empirical knowledge obtained through experimental research in psychology to understand and address patterns of abnormal behavior. In efforts to prevent and treat abnormalities, this approach relies on the

findings of experimental studies, both descriptive and remedial in nature. The primary goal of the behavioral approach is to eliminate maladaptive (inappropriate) behavior and to shape new, more adaptive behavior.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

The present research adopted a quantitative approach utilising a one-group pretest–posttest pre-experimental design. Prior to administering the treatment, this design involves a pre-test. This approach allows for a more accurate assessment of treatment outcomes by comparing them to pre-treatment conditions. The initial phase of this study begins with a pre-test measurement conducted using a Likert scale. This measurement aims to explore the behaviors and perceptions of individuals or groups regarding a social phenomenon. Subsequently, group counseling services were provided as the treatment over a predetermined period. After the pre-test and the administration of the treatment, the study continued with a post-test using the same Likert scale.



**Figure 1.** Pre-Test and Post-Test in a One-Group Design.

Notes:

$O_1$ : Results Before Treatment (Pre-Test).

X: Group Counseling As The Treatment.

$O_2$ : Results After Treatment (Post-Test).

Sugiono (2022) states that a research instrument constitutes defined as a measurement tool used to assess empirical phenomena (both natural and social realities), which includes validity and reliability testing. Research instruments are typically developed independently by the researcher. Validity and reliability assessments are undertaken to verify the accuracy and internal consistency of the data associated with each variable.

Before being distributed to research participants, the questionnaire instrument must first undergo a pilot test (try-out). The researcher conducts this pilot test on the prepared questionnaire items in order to evaluate the appropriateness and efficacy of the questionnaire as an instrument for data collection. Within the present study, the statistical analyses required for the validity and reliability assessments were performed using SPSS version 25 as an analytical tool. After these tests were conducted, the validated statement items were used for the actual study.

The measurement instrument for the variables in the pre-test phase used a questionnaire scale. This pre-test aimed to identify the level of cyberbullying behavior before the intervention. Measurements were taken using a Likert-scale instrument with a value range of 1–5, consisting of 25 items. The scores obtained are then grouped into three distinct levels: high, moderate, and low. The formula for categorizing cyberbullying behavior is presented in the following table:

**Table 1.** Categorization Formula

|        |                         |
|--------|-------------------------|
| High   | $X > M + 1SD$           |
| Medium | $M - 1SD < X < M + 1SD$ |
| Low    | $X < M - 1SD$           |

### 3 RESULTS

#### 3.1 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Each category has its own value range. The low category includes scores below 58.33 ( $X < 58.33$ ), the moderate category includes scores in the interval  $58.33 \leq X \leq 91.67$ , while the high category includes scores above 91.67 ( $X > 91.67$ ).

**Table 2.** Pre-Test Categories

|       |        | KATEGORI  |         |               |                    |
|-------|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
|       |        | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | LOW    | 9         | 30.0    | 30.0          | 30.0               |
|       | MEDIUM | 16        | 53.3    | 53.3          | 83.3               |
|       | HIGH   | 5         | 16.7    | 16.7          | 100.0              |
|       | Total  | 30        | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

In accordance with the categorization above, the respondents selected as the sample were those who scored high on the pre-test and exhibited characteristics consistent with the research problem. The participants in this study consisted of 5 ninth-grade students from Class IX C. Not all respondents were included in the sample due to the limitations of the research problem.

**Table 3.** Post-Test Categories

|       |        | KATEGORI  |         |               |                    |
|-------|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
|       |        | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | LOW    | 2         | 40.0    | 40.0          | 40.0               |
|       | MEDIUM | 3         | 60.0    | 60.0          | 100.0              |
|       | Total  | 5         | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

Based on the post-test category frequency table for the study sample (N = 5 ninth-grade C students). After receiving treatment using behaviorist-based group counseling, the post-test results indicated that of the five students who were subjects, 2 of them (40%) fell into the low category, while 3 students (60%) fell into the moderate category. No students achieved the high category.

#### 3.2 Sub-subsection: Guidelines for Abbreviations and Acronyms

This study used SPSS version 25 for Windows as a data analysis tool. The analysis technique applied was a parametric statistical method using the Paired T-Test. This choice of analysis technique was motivated by the relatively small sample size —only 5 students out of a total population of 30. Thus, the Paired T-Test was expected to reveal the extent of the influence of behaviorist group counseling in reducing cyberbullying behavior.

**Table 4.** Paired Samples Statistics

|        |           | Paired Samples Statistics |   |                |                 |
|--------|-----------|---------------------------|---|----------------|-----------------|
|        |           | Mean                      | N | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
| Pair 1 | PRE TEST  | 94.2000                   | 5 | 2.48998        | 1.11355         |
|        | POST TEST | 61.0000                   | 5 | 7.61577        | 3.40588         |

The data above are descriptive statistics. The mean pre-test score is 94.2000, while the mean post-test score is 61.0000. The number of subjects (N) is 5 people.

**Table 5. Paired Samples Test**

|        |                      | Paired Samples Test |                |                 |                                                    |
|--------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------|
|        |                      | Paired Differences  |                |                 |                                                    |
|        |                      | Mean                | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference<br>Lower |
| Pair 1 | PRE TEST - POST TEST | 33.20000            | 5.40370        | 2.41661         | 26.49042                                           |

The statistical analysis presented, The analysis revealed a mean difference of 33.20000 between pre-test and post-test scores, demonstrating a statistically significant change across the two measurement occasions.

### 3.3 Prerequisite Tests for Analysis

#### 1. Normality Test

A normality test is used to verify that the data to be analyzed meets the assumption of normality. According to parametric statistics, the data for each variable must be normally distributed (Sugiono, 2021:209). Since the sample size is less than fifty, The researchers applied the Shapiro-Wilk test as a procedure for testing the normality of the data, whereby the data are classified as normally distributed if  $p > 0.05$ , while  $p < 0.05$  indicates that the data do not follow a normal distribution.

**Table 6. Test of Normality**

| Tests of Normality |                                 |    |       |              |    |      |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|----|-------|--------------|----|------|
|                    | Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup> |    |       | Shapiro-Wilk |    |      |
|                    | Statistic                       | df | Sig.  | Statistic    | df | Sig. |
| PRE-TEST           | .212                            | 5  | .200* | .895         | 5  | .384 |
| POST-TEST          | .352                            | 5  | .042  | .818         | 5  | .113 |

As indicated by the results presented in the table above, the obtained probability (p) values were 0.384 for the pre-test data and 0.113 for the post-test data. Since both values exceed the conventional significance threshold of 0.05, which means that the assumption of normality is met for all the data analyzed.

#### 2. Homogeneity Test

A homogeneity of variance test is performed to evaluate whether the variances across two or more groups of data are equivalent. At the conventional 5% significance level, homogeneity is confirmed when the obtained p-value exceeds 0.05; conversely, a p-value below this threshold indicates that the variances are heterogeneous.

**Table 7. Test of Homogeneity of Variances**

|       |                                      | Test of Homogeneity of Variances |     |       |      |
|-------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----|-------|------|
|       |                                      | Levene Statistic                 | df1 | df2   | Sig. |
| HASIL | Based on Mean                        | 2.157                            | 1   | 8     | .180 |
|       | Based on Median                      | .824                             | 1   | 8     | .390 |
|       | Based on Median and with adjusted df | .824                             | 1   | 4.452 | .410 |
|       | Based on trimmed mean                | 1.744                            | 1   | 8     | .223 |

Based on the data presented in the table above, a probability value of 0.180 was obtained. Since this p-value exceeds the significance level of 0.05, the variances across groups are considered equivalent (homogeneous).

### 3. Hypothesis Testing

In order to examine whether a statistically significant difference exists between the means of two related samples, the present study employed the Paired Samples t-Test. This procedure is appropriate when the data are obtained from the same participants measured on two separate occasions or under two distinct conditions, and it presupposes that the normality assumption has been satisfied. The decision rules applied to interpret the significance of the results are outlined below:

- 1) When the two-tailed p-value falls below the 0.05 significance threshold, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a statistically significant difference between the pre- and post-treatment scores and thereby confirming that the intervention exerted a meaningful effect.
- 2) Conversely, when the two-tailed p-value exceeds 0.05, the null hypothesis is retained, indicating the absence of a statistically significant difference and thus suggesting that the treatment did not produce a meaningful effect.

**Table 8.** Paired Samples Test

| Paired Samples Test                       |                      |          |        |    |                 |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------|--------|----|-----------------|
| Paired Differences                        |                      |          |        |    |                 |
| 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference |                      |          |        |    |                 |
|                                           |                      | Upper    | t      | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| Pair 1                                    | PRE TEST - POST TEST | 39.90958 | 13.738 | 4  | .000            |

The analysis yielded a significance value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ), thereby confirming a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores, suggesting that the treatment administered had a significant impact on the observed variable.

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

The level of adolescent misbehavior in the form of cyberbullying before using behaviorist-based group counseling services fell into three categories: high, moderate, and low. Of the participants, five students (16.7%) were assigned to the high category, sixteen students (53.3%) to the moderate category, and nine students (30.0%) to the low category, after using the behaviorist-based group counseling service in the study sample ( $N = 5$  ninth-grade students from Class IX C). The post-intervention measurement results revealed that of the total 5 subjects, 2 students (40%) were classified into the low category and 3 students (60%) into the moderate category. No students were classified into the high category (0%).

Behavioral group counseling services can reduce cyberbullying. This is demonstrated by the results of the paired t-test, which show that the mean post-test score decreased by 33.20000 from the mean pre-test score. The calculated t-value is 13.738 with  $df = 4$ , and the significance level (two-tailed) is 0.000, which falls below the 0.05 threshold. Given that  $p < 0.05$ , the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ), confirming the presence of a highly significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores. These findings indicate that the intervention administered can statistically reduce cyberbullying in the study sample group.

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