

THE EFFECT OF GROUP COUNSELING SERVICES USING SELF-CONTROL TECHNIQUES IN REDUCING BULLYING BEHAVIOR AMONG SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS OF SMP DAARUL MA'ARIF

¹Monica Arlita, ²Putri Rachmawati, ³Herwantoro, ⁴Putri Rahmadani, ⁵Prihantoro, ⁶Paidi Gusmuliana

^{1,2,3,4,5,6} Institut Agama Islam Negeri Curup

Correspondence E-mail: monicaarlita2018@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Introduction. This study examines the effectiveness of group counseling services using a self-control technique in reducing bullying behavior among seventh-grade students at Daarul Maarif Middle School. Bullying behavior among adolescents remains a serious educational concern that requires systematic and evidence-based intervention through school counseling services.

Research Methods. The study employed an experimental method using a one-group pre-test-post-test design. The research population consisted of 18 students from class VII A, with 7 students selected as participants through purposive sampling based on identified bullying behavior.

Data Analysis. Data were collected using a Likert-scale questionnaire measuring bullying behavior and analyzed using a paired sample t-test to compare students' behavioral scores before and after the counseling intervention.

Results. The findings revealed a substantial decrease in the average bullying behavior score, from 161.1 (high category) in the pre-test to 89.5 (low category) in the post-test. The statistical analysis yielded a t-value of 8.923, indicating a significant difference in bullying behavior before and after the treatment.

Conclusion. The results demonstrate that group counseling services employing self-control techniques are effective in reducing bullying behavior among middle school students, highlighting the importance of structured counseling interventions in addressing behavioral problems in educational settings.

Keywords: Bullying, group counseling services, self-control techniques

A. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence represents a critical developmental stage that bridges childhood and adulthood. During this period, individuals undergo significant emotional, social, physical, and psychological maturation while actively exploring and constructing their personal identity. When this process of identity formation is disrupted or

ISNUJOU: Journal of Education*Volume 1, Issue 1, (December 2025), pp. 1-12*

unsuccessful, adolescents may experience confusion and uncertainty regarding their roles and functions within society (Shidiq & Raharjo, 2018). Such conditions often manifest in maladaptive behaviors, including the misuse of power in interpersonal relationships. This misuse commonly appears in repeated verbal, physical, or social actions that inflict both psychological and physical harm on others. Consequently, adolescents may display self-centered, hostile, egocentric, degrading, and prejudiced behaviors.

In recent years, violence against children and adolescents – commonly referred to as bullying in school settings – has become increasingly prevalent. Bullying is defined as aggressive behavior carried out intentionally by one or more individuals to harm, intimidate, or disturb a victim who is perceived as weaker. Victims of bullying are at high risk of experiencing depression, diminished self-esteem, and social withdrawal, which ultimately hampers their ability to interact effectively with peers and participate in school life.

The term bullying originates from the English word bully, which denotes intimidation, harassment, or coercion. Bullying involves threats or repeated acts of dominance perpetrated by an individual or group against a victim, resulting in stress, trauma, and physical or psychological disturbances, or a combination of both. Conceptually, bullying constitutes a pattern of controlling behavior through repeated actions aimed at disturbing individuals considered vulnerable or powerless (Ahmad et al., 2025). For this reason, bullying behavior requires serious attention from educators, as it significantly affects students' psychological well-being and academic engagement.

Generally, bullying behavior emerges from a combination of internal and interpersonal factors, including victims' perceived vulnerability and perpetrators' desire for dominance and recognition. Perpetrators often exhibit arrogance, a need for admiration, and an unwillingness to respect others, which may stem from unhealthy emotional states such as jealousy and resentment toward peers perceived as rivals. Students who become victims of bullying frequently struggle to establish healthy interpersonal relationships and tend to avoid school attendance. As a result, they miss learning opportunities, experience concentration difficulties, and suffer negative physical and mental health consequences in both the short and long term (Megal Silviyalti et al., 2022).

Preliminary observations conducted in class VII A of Daarul Maarif Middle School revealed that verbal bullying is the most frequently occurring form of bullying and recurs annually. The observed impacts of verbal bullying included psychological and physical distress, manifested in low self-esteem, social withdrawal, discomfort

ISNUJOU: Journal of Education

Volume 1, Issue 1, (December 2025), pp. 1-12

within the classroom environment, and, in some cases, school refusal due to fear of peers who engaged in bullying behaviors.

To address these challenges, guidance and counseling teachers implement self-control techniques within group counseling services. This counseling approach emphasizes students' ability to regulate their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, involving both victims and perpetrators of bullying. In this process, the counselor functions as a facilitator who assists students in recognizing maladaptive responses and developing healthier behavioral patterns. Group counseling also enables participants to collectively identify problems and provide constructive feedback, thereby empowering students to manage and resolve their own difficulties.

Group counseling services provide students with opportunities to understand and overcome personal problems through structured group dynamics (Kulsulmalwalti, 2024). Through social interaction and mutual support within the group, individual issues are addressed collaboratively, allowing participants to gain insights not only from counselors but also from fellow group members. This process broadens the scope of problem resolution and fosters personal growth.

Furthermore, group counseling serves as a preventive and developmental intervention designed to enhance individuals' self-awareness and coping capacities within a relatively short to medium timeframe (Rahmalwalti et al., 2022). It supports personal development, strengthens adaptive behaviors, and facilitates collective problem-solving. The dynamic nature of group counseling allows for open discussion of personal concerns, enabling members to collaboratively seek solutions within a supportive environment (Halbsy et al., 2024). In this context, counselors may apply a reality-based counseling approach, which emphasizes that human behavior is fundamentally directed toward fulfilling basic psychological needs.

The effectiveness of group counseling in reducing bullying behavior is strengthened through the application of self-control techniques. Self-control refers to an individual's capacity to regulate behavior, suppress impulsive reactions, and manage emotional responses. It is a crucial emotional competence that enables students to balance emotional states and prevent excessive conflict (Salri et al., 2024).

Self-control techniques emphasize three core components: self-recording, self-evaluation, and self-reinforcement. Self-recording involves systematic monitoring of one's behavior to increase awareness of both adaptive behaviors adopted and maladaptive behaviors reduced. Self-evaluation enables individuals to assess behavioral changes based on concrete evidence, ensuring a more accurate and meaningful reflection process. Finally, self-reinforcement plays a vital role in sustaining behavioral change by providing rewards or positive reinforcement for

ISNUJOU: Journal of Education*Volume 1, Issue 1, (December 2025), pp. 1-12*

desirable behaviors that have been successfully developed (Walhyuldi & Calsmini, 2021).

B. LITERATURE REVIEW**1. Bullying**

Bullying within educational settings represents a form of behavior that violates ethical norms and undermines the values of a healthy school culture. It includes actions or harassment that intentionally harm others, either physically or psychologically. In Indonesia, bullying is not an uncommon phenomenon and continues to pose serious challenges in schools. Bullying is generally understood as harmful behavior carried out deliberately and repeatedly by individuals or groups against victims who are perceived as weaker, through verbal, physical, or social means (Didit Kurniawan et al., 2023). The primary intention of bullying is to inflict pain, fear, or discomfort on the victim.

Forms of bullying can be classified into several categories. Physical bullying involves direct actions that cause bodily harm, such as hitting, pushing, kicking, tripping, slapping, throwing objects, restraining movements, or forcing victims to perform physically exhausting tasks. Verbal bullying refers to harmful communication expressed through words or statements that demean or humiliate the victim, including mocking, insulting, name-calling, threatening, spreading rumors, or embarrassing the victim in public. Psychological or mental bullying is often considered the most subtle form because it is not always easily detected. This type targets the victim's emotional well-being through intimidation, sarcasm, humiliation, ridicule, or harassment via messages and digital communication (Dulwital et al., 2024).

Understanding the causes of bullying is essential for prevention and for creating a more supportive educational environment. Several factors contribute to the emergence of bullying behavior. Academic failure is one contributing factor, as it may stem from inadequate parental attention, inconsistent or overly permissive parenting styles, excessive harshness in discipline, or a lack of supervision at home. Dysfunctional family conditions—such as emotional detachment, lack of affection, poor communication, family conflict, and social isolation—also play a significant role in shaping aggressive behavior patterns.

Peer relationships further influence bullying behavior. School peers often form emotionally close groups that strongly affect students' social development. In some cases, the desire to gain acceptance, recognition, or status within a peer group motivates students to engage in bullying as a way of demonstrating power or conformity. Additionally, the school environment itself can contribute to bullying,

ISNUJOU: Journal of Education*Volume 1, Issue 1, (December 2025), pp. 1-12*

particularly through verbal forms that are difficult to detect. These include teasing, labeling, intimidation, humiliation, extortion, theft, and sexual harassment. Bullying in schools is generally driven not by direct conflict or economic factors, but by power imbalance, disrespectful attitudes, insecurity, jealousy, and the desire to dominate others (Pulspitarningrum & Febrianta, 2024).

2. Group Counseling Services

Group counseling is a form of counseling conducted in a group setting, where a counselor works simultaneously with several individuals and facilitates interactions among group members. Through these interactions, participants are encouraged to develop self-understanding, interpersonal awareness, and improved personal capacities (Halbsy et al., 2024). Group counseling services are commonly provided to students with the aim of helping them address personal or social problems, resolve difficulties collectively, and optimize their individual potential (Harlahap & Silvianetri, 2024). An additional benefit of group counseling is that participants can learn from the experiences and challenges faced by other group members.

As a collective counseling process, group counseling emphasizes openness, mutual respect, tolerance, and emotional closeness among participants. The counselor's role is to foster meaningful interaction and create a supportive atmosphere that encourages active participation. Overall, group counseling can be understood as a guidance and counseling approach designed to address specific problems through group dynamics, enabling students to make informed decisions and develop adaptive behaviors.

The primary purpose of group counseling is to enhance students' socialization skills, particularly communication abilities. Through structured group activities and counseling techniques, barriers to effective communication and social interaction can be identified and addressed, allowing students to develop these skills more optimally (Febrianti & Setyawati, 2022). Group counseling objectives generally include correcting maladaptive behavior patterns, facilitating decision-making skills, and preventing the emergence of future problems. Corrective efforts focus on transforming unhealthy or problematic behaviors into adaptive and psychologically healthy ones. Decision-making skills are developed as an integral part of the counseling process, while preventive efforts aim to reduce the likelihood of recurring or escalating problems.

The group counseling process typically consists of several stages: formation, transition, activity, and termination (Pratiwi et al., 2024). The formation stage focuses on orientation, clarification of goals, explanation of counseling procedures, and the

ISNUJOU: Journal of Education*Volume 1, Issue 1, (December 2025), pp. 1-12*

development of trust among group members. The transition stage involves strengthening group cohesion, addressing initial resistance, and preparing members to engage more deeply in the counseling process. During the activity stage, group members openly express personal problems, select issues to be discussed, and collaboratively explore solutions through structured discussion and counseling activities. The final stage emphasizes evaluation, reflection on behavioral changes, discussion of follow-up actions, expression of impressions, and formal closure of the counseling process.

3. Self-Control Techniques

Self-control refers to an individual's capacity to regulate personal behavior, thoughts, and emotional responses. It involves the ability to monitor one's own actions, recognize mistakes, and make corrective adjustments in response to situational demands (Almaliawati et al., 2022). Berk defines self-control as the ability to restrain impulses that may lead to behavior conflicting with moral or social standards.

Self-control encompasses behavioral control, which relates to managing actions; cognitive control, which involves regulating thoughts and information processing; and decisional control, which refers to the ability to choose actions based on personal beliefs and values. Levels of self-control can be categorized into three forms. Under-control reflects impulsive behavior without sufficient consideration of consequences. Appropriate control represents balanced self-regulation, where individuals manage impulses effectively. Over-control occurs when self-regulation is excessive, leading individuals to suppress responses excessively and limit adaptive emotional expression (Almandal et al., 2025).

C. METHOD

This research uses an experimental qualitative approach. The research design used is a one-group pre-test post-test design, with the sample consisting of the experimental group. Before the treatment was given, the experimental group underwent a pre-test to assess the condition of the treatment. After that, the experimental group was given a pre-test, namely group counseling with self-control techniques. After the treatment was completed, a post-test was conducted to evaluate the results.

The population in this study was 18 students from grade VII AL SMP Daarul Maarif. The sample was selected using a purposive sampling technique, with certain criteria relevant to the study. Based on this technique, 7 students were obtained as samples. This sample selection was carried out to validate the research subjects in

ISNUJOU: Journal of Education*Volume 1, Issue 1, (December 2025), pp. 1-12*

accordance with the research objectives and in fact represent the characteristics of the population.

Data in this study were collected using a non-test method, namely through a questionnaire. The questionnaire instrument was used to examine the behavior of student bullying. Before being validated, the questionnaire was validated to verify the relevance of each item. The validation process was conducted using SPSS application. Of the total 50 questionnaire items, 40 items were validated after the validation. Furthermore, the reliability test of the instrument showed a Cronbach's ALPHA value of 0.830, which is greater than the minimum value of 0.6, so that this instrument is considered to have a level of reliability that is inversely related to bullying behavior.

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**1. Categorization of Bullying Behavior Before Treatment**

Bullying behavior was categorized using a trend scale based on hypothetical mean and standard deviation values. The analysis showed that the ideal bullying behavior score was 120, while the actual average score of students in the experimental group before treatment was 143.6, which was higher than the ideal score. This indicates that bullying behavior among students is in the high category, thus requiring intervention in the form of group counseling services with self-control techniques to reduce this behavior. The results of the bullying behavior questionnaire before treatment are summarized in Table 1 below:

Tabel 1. Results of the Bullying Behavior Questionnaire Before Treatment

Experimental Group	Total Score	Categorization
AMZ	157	Tall
MLL	165	Tall
TTA	155	Tall
BNF	161	Tall
YP	167	Tall
PPF	154	Tall
AWL	169	Tall
Amount	1128	Tall
Average	161,1	Tall

The results in Table 1 show that the experimental group's bullying behavior was in the high category. This indicates that the experimental group requires group counseling services to reduce bullying behavior.

2. Categorization of Bullying Behavior After Treatment

ISNUJOU: Journal of Education

Volume 1, Issue 1, (December 2025), pp. 1-12

After the experimental group received group counseling services using self-control techniques, the post-test questionnaire results showed significant differences. The measurement results are presented in Table 2 below:

Tabel 2. Results of the Bullying Behavior Questionnaire Before Treatment

Experimental Group	Total Score	Categorization
AMZ	85	Low
MLL	97	Low
TTA	84	Low
BNF	91	Low
YP	88	Low
PPF	95	Low
AWL	87	Low
Amount	627	Low
Average	89,5	Low

The results in Table 2 show a significant decrease in bullying behavior, falling into the low category. This decrease demonstrates the success of group counseling services with self-control techniques in reducing bullying. Students are beginning to gain control over their behavior, such as building healthy relationships, daring to confront peers who start acting aggressively, and avoiding behaviors that lead to bullying.

3. Statistical Test

To determine whether group counseling services using self-control techniques significantly reduce bullying behavior, a statistical hypothesis test was conducted. The analysis compared students' bullying behavior scores obtained before the intervention (pre-test) and after the intervention (post-test). A t-test was applied to examine whether the observed difference between the two measurements was statistically significant. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 3.

Tabel 3. Result of the t-test

Independent Samples Test		
Pre-test - Post-test	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
	8,923	,000

The t-test results indicate a t-value of 8.923 with a significance level (Sig. 2-tailed) of 0.000, which is lower than the conventional threshold of 0.05 ($p < 0.05$). This finding demonstrates a statistically significant difference between students' bullying behavior scores before and after the implementation of the group counseling intervention. Therefore, it can be concluded that group counseling services incorporating self-

ISNUJOU: Journal of Education*Volume 1, Issue 1, (December 2025), pp. 1-12*

control techniques have a significant and positive effect in reducing bullying behavior among students.

4. Discussion

The results of this study indicate that group counseling services using self-control techniques are effective in reducing bullying behavior in students. The decrease in the average bullying score in the experimental group from 161.1 (high category) to 89.5 (low category) demonstrates that group counseling services using self-control techniques can significantly change behavior. Furthermore, by implementing self-control techniques, students are trained to control their thoughts, emotions, and actions to reduce the tendency for aggressive behavior towards peers.

Self-control techniques in group counseling work through several stages: self-awareness, self-observation, self-evaluation, and self-empowerment. Through group services, students are encouraged to become aware of situations or conditions that trigger negative behavior and then identify more adaptive alternative actions. This aligns with research Salri et al., (2024) this study demonstrates that group counseling services using self-control techniques effectively provide students with opportunities to learn self-control in a supportive environment. Through group discussions, students can identify triggers for negative behavior and practice self-control strategies with peer support. This approach encourages students to be more motivated to demonstrate positive behavior.

Self-control also has a close relationship with students' ability to regulate emotions. Pralstyalal & ALstulti (2022) in his research, he explained that students with high self-control have the ability to direct and regulate their behavior positively, try to seek information before making decisions, and consider the possible consequences. Conversely, students with low self-control are less able to direct and regulate their behavior positively and do not consider the possible consequences of their behavior, so they tend to act aggressively, get angry easily, and cannot avoid doing actions that harm their friends.

The findings of this study are in line with ALhmalid et al., (2025) in his research group counseling using self-control techniques aims to help students control their own behavior and reduce bullying. Through group counseling, students are taught to recognize and understand their feelings, as well as the impact of bullying on themselves and others. In this study, students begin to be able to control their behavior, such as building healthy relationships, daring to reprimand friends who start to act rudely, and avoiding behavior that leads to bullying.

ISNUJOU: Journal of Education*Volume 1, Issue 1, (December 2025), pp. 1-12*

Thus, the decrease in bullying scores not only demonstrates the statistical success of the intervention but also demonstrates internal changes in students' self-regulation. These behavioral changes also indicate that self-control techniques can facilitate the development of prosocial behaviors such as empathy, cooperation, and the ability to resolve conflicts without violence. These results demonstrate that group counseling services using self-control techniques are an effective and relevant approach to be implemented in schools as a long-term effort to prevent and address bullying.

E. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings that have been conducted by the researcher, conclusions can be drawn. First, the bullying behavior of students before being given group counseling with self-control techniques is classified as high. Second, the bullying behavior of students after being given group counseling with self-control techniques is classified as low. Third, the influence of group counseling with self-control techniques on the bullying behavior of students in grade VII AL SMP Daarul Maarif.

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ISNUJOU: Journal of Education

Volume 1, Issue 1, (December 2025), pp. 1-12

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