


The Effectiveness of Peer Counseling in Addressing Cyberbullying Among Students in Islamic Boarding School

Hawwa Nasywa Aqillah^{1*}, Kholid Suhaemi¹, Monalisa Monalisa¹

UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanudin Banten

211340030.hawwa@uinbanten.ac.id*

<p>Submitted: 2025-03-05</p> <p>Published: 2025-05-05</p> <p>Keywords: Grief, Social Support, Spiritual Intelligence, Wellbeing-Life Satisfaction</p> <p>Copyright holder: © Author/s (2025)</p> <p>This article is under:</p>  <p>How to cite: Aqillah, H. N., Suhaemi, K., & Monalisa, M. (2025). The Effectiveness of Peer Counseling in Addressing Cyberbullying Among Students in Islamic Boarding School. <i>Bulletin of Counseling and Psychotherapy</i>, 7(1). https://doi.org/10.51214/002025071334000</p> <p>Published by: Kuras Institute</p> <p>E-ISSN: 2656-1050</p>	<p>ABSTRACT: This study aims to test the effectiveness of peer counseling guidance in reducing cyberbullying behavior among students at the Daar El Syahid Teluknaga Islamic Boarding School, Indonesia. This study used an experimental method with a pretest-posttest control group design. The research sample was selected using a purposive sampling technique, with 150 students from a population of 500. The sample was divided into an experimental group, which received peer counseling guidance intervention, and a control group, which received intervention as usual. The research instruments used included the Cyberbullying Behavior Scale, Peer Counseling Effectiveness Questionnaire, Observation Guide, and Interview. Data analysis was carried out using an independent t-test, first testing the assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance using Kolmogorov-Smirnov or Shapiro-Wilk and Levene's Test. The study showed a significant difference between the experimental and control groups after the intervention, with a substantial decrease in cyberbullying behavior in the experimental group. The results of this study indicate that peer counseling guidance effectively reduces cyberbullying behavior among students. The program successfully raised awareness of the negative impacts of cyberbullying, developed coping strategies, and strengthened empathy and digital ethics among students. The results of this study are expected to be the basis for developing counseling programs in educational institutions to create a safer and more inclusive environment for students.</p>
---	--

INTRODUCTION

Cases of cyberbullying among students in Indonesia are increasingly worrying. Research shows that about 30-50% of college students experience cyberbullying in some form (Septian & Hadi, 2021). Social media such as Instagram and WhatsApp are the leading platforms where this behavior occurs (Amelia et al., 2023). Many students do not realize that they are victims of cyberbullying. As a result, they feel confused about the steps to take to report the action (Marlef et al., 2024).

Based on the results of the Digital Civility Index research (Microsoft, 2020), Indonesia ranks first as the country with the lowest level of digital politeness in Asia Pacific. This shows that disrespectful behavior in the digital world has become a worrying phenomenon. Data collected from 503 internet users in Indonesia revealed that various forms of disrespectful behavior often occur in cyberspace. As many as 27% of respondents had experienced hate speech, while 43% admitted to getting hoaxes and scams. In addition, 13% of them felt acts of discrimination. Almost half of these

disrespectful behaviors (48%) were committed by strangers. In fact, within a week, 24% of respondents experienced at least one form of digital disrespect.

This phenomenon shows that the low digital literacy among the public contributes to the spread of hoaxes, hate speech, and discrimination. Increasingly widespread digital platforms also allow individuals to interact without restrictions, including committing unethical actions. This repeated disrespectful behavior can have an impact on the mental health of the victim and trigger social tension in the real world.

Cyberbullying is increasingly becoming a serious problem in Indonesia, especially among the younger generation. According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), cyberbullying is defined as bullying that occurs through digital technology, with social media being the leading platform for adverse actions such as abusive comments, threats, and hoaxes (UNICEF, 2020). Research from Microsoft shows that Indonesia ranks 29th in digital disrespect, with millennials and Generation Z (provide a brief description of what Generation Z) being the most frequently targeted group for bullying (Asalnaije et al., 2024). In addition, the Metro Jaya Police report noted that at least 25 cases of cyberbullying are reported every day, a number that continues to increase in line with the growth of internet users (Ilhami et al., 2024).

The results of the U-Report Indonesia survey revealed that 45% of respondents had experienced digital violence, with 71% of cases occurring on social networks (Indonesia, 2021). Many victims feel they are not getting adequate help, with 34% not receiving services while being victimized. Most respondents believe that the government is the most responsible party in handling cyberbullying cases, followed by schools and internet service providers (H. A. Dewi et al., 2023). Low awareness and lack of effective treatment contribute to the increase in this case.

The impact of cyberbullying is widespread, affecting the mental, emotional, and physical health of the victim. Psychologically, individuals may experience feelings of embarrassment, angry, or even suicidal ideation (Putri & Savira, 2023). Emotionally, victims may lose interest in activities they previously enjoyed, while physically, they may experience health problems such as headaches or sleep disturbances due to stress (Andini et al., 2023). With the increasing number of cases and the impact caused, the government and the community must work together to address this issue. Awareness of the dangers of cyberbullying needs to be increased, and victims need to be encouraged to speak up and report. Preventive measures and education about good behavior in cyberspace are key to creating a safer digital environment for everyone (Hidayatullah et al., 2024).

The psychological impact of cyberbullying can be a serious matter, including anxiety, depression, and decreased academic performance (Jannah et al., 2022). Moreover, a significant number of individuals experience feelings of isolation and report a lack of emotional support from their social environment. The knowledge about cyberbullying is still very minimal among students. Many people feel they haven't been properly educated about digital ethics and how to use social media safely (Ikhsan, 2024). Peer support has proven essential in overcoming this problem (Noviza et al., 2022). Students with social backing are likelier to report their experiences and looking for help. Unfortunately, many campuses do not have clear policies to handle cyberbullying cases (Indriyati et al., 2024). This creates avoid in the protection of students who are victims. Ineffective handling can worsen this situation. Therefore, it is essential to implement peer counseling guidance programs in campus and *pesantren* environments. Such programs can provide a safe space for students to share experiences. In addition, education about cyberbullying needs to be strengthened through seminars and workshops. In this way, Students are expected to develop a deeper understanding of the consequences of these actions. The development of a curriculum that includes digital ethics is urgently needed. Awareness of the importance of maintaining a safe online environment must be increased. Only with a comprehensive approach, universities and Islamic boarding schools be able to create an environment free from cyberbullying (Ridhani & Jarkawi, 2022).

Facing the huge impact caused by cyberbullying, counseling is a crucial step to help victims overcome the trauma and psychological impacts that may arise. Cyberbullying can lead to Severe mental health issues, such as depression, anxiety, and even suicidal ideation (Agustin et al., 2024). Counseling guidance can provide the emotional support from teachers needed for victims to understand and deal with their feelings while helping them develop practical coping skills. (S. N. Dewi & Lubis, 2024); By having a safe space to talk, victims can express their feelings without fear of being judged.

In addition to providing emotional support, counseling guidance can also play a role in education about good behavior in cyberspace. Many victims of cyberbullying may not realize that they are entitled to protection and help (Yusniarti, 2023). Counselors can provide information and understanding of their rights, as well as steps that can be taken to report bullying. By raising awareness of the importance of online safety, counseling can help prevent similar cases from occurring in the future.

Finally, counseling guidance programs can also involve broader prevention efforts at the school or community level. Education on cyberbullying should be expanded to include all students, not just those who are victims. Through seminars, workshops, and group sessions, students can learn about the negative impact of bullying behavior and how to create a supportive and safe environment (Yusniarti, 2023). With this holistic approach, counseling guidance helps individuals and contributes to forming a more positive culture among adolescents and college students.

Peer counseling guidance is one of the effective counseling guidance techniques for overcoming problems such as cyberbullying among adolescents. In this approach, peers support and help each other face their emotional and social challenges, thus creating a safer environment (Astuti, 2019). Peer counseling has increased victims' confidence and courage to speak up about their experiences (Kartika, 2024). Through these interactions, adolescents trained as peer counselors can share practical coping experiences and strategies (Khairun et al., 2024). With this approach, they can also spread awareness about the negative impact of cyberbullying and the importance of maintaining digital ethics (Fitria & Ratnawati, 2023). Peer counseling programs also serve as an educational platform, providing information on reporting bullying and looking for help from authorities. In addition, by creating an open space for discussion, this guidance can strengthen social bonds among peers (Setyawati, 2024).

Previous research has shown that peer groups greatly influence adolescent behavior, so this support is an effective prevention tool (Fatmawati & Maryam, 2024). Adolescents are taught to develop communication and empathy skills in this process, which is crucial in creating a favorable social climate. In addition, peer counseling guidance can also help to reduce the stigma that is often experienced by victims of bullying (Ginting & Sahlepi, 2024). By raising awareness of social responsibility, the program be able to encourage adolescents to respect each other in the digital world. Finally, peer counseling guidance benefits individuals and strengthens solidarity among adolescents, creating a more inclusive and safe community (N. Sari, 2021). Therefore, it is essential to integrate peer counseling guidance into educational policies and school programs.

Peer counseling guidance is one of the effective counseling guidance techniques for overcoming problems such as cyberbullying among adolescents. Although many studies have addressed the importance of peer support in the context of mental health and emotional well-being, to date, there have been no studies that specifically test the effectiveness of peer counseling guidance in dealing with cyberbullying cases. However, a lot of the literature suggests that peer interactions can increase victims' confidence and courage to speak out about their experiences (Harisma, 2022). The peer counseling program is expected to help adolescents share practical coping experiences and strategies and create a safer environment (Astuti, 2019).

While there is no strong empirical evidence yet, several studies suggest that peer counseling guidance has the potential to strengthen social bonds and increase awareness about the negative

impacts of cyberbullying. Peer counseling can provide information on reporting bullying and seeking help from authorities, which is essential in prevention efforts. By creating an open space for discussion, these programs can reduce the stigma often experienced by bullying victims and encourage them to seek support (Fatmawati & Maryam, 2024). With an evidence-based approach, these peer counseling programs are expected to be optimized to help adolescents fight the challenges they face in the digital world. In addition, integrating peer counseling guidance in the educational curriculum can contribute to forming a more positive culture among adolescents (Fitria & Ratnawati, 2023).

Research on the effectiveness of peer counseling in addressing cyberbullying is still limited. Therefore, further research on peer counseling is essential to explore its impact and effectiveness. Moreover, the role and interpersonal skills of guidance and counseling (BK) teachers are also crucial factors in supporting the success of this program. The ability of BK teachers to build empathetic relationships, listen actively, and guide students in overcoming their problems can increase the effectiveness of peer counseling. Such research could provide deeper insights into the best ways to reduce the negative impacts of cyberbullying and help to create a safer and more supportive environment for students (D. P. Sari et al., 2022).

Peer counseling programs should be integrated into campus policies and education to provide maximum support for students. In addition, to offering direct help for victims, this program can also serve as a platform to introduce positive values in online interactions. By integrating peer counseling into campus policies, universities can create a more inclusive and supportive culture that helps prevent cyberbullying in the future (Puspita et al., 2023).

Peer counseling also plays a role in preventing cyberbullying by introducing students to the importance of maintaining good behavior in the digital world. This program teaches students how to respect others' privacy, avoid spreading hoaxes, and communicate politely on social media. Thus, peer counseling helps victims and is an effective preventive measure for students.

The high rate of cyberbullying calls for universities to create a campus environment free from cyberbullying and protect students from the negative impacts it causes. Peer counseling, equipped with digital ethics and social support education can help students fight the challenges they face in the digital world. Based on this phenomenon, research on the impact of counseling on cyberbullying is essential to provide valuable input for universities to continue developing programs that support students' mental and social well-being in dealing with digital bullying.

Study Aim and Hypothesis

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of peer counseling in reducing bullying behavior among students. Specifically, this study aims to determine whether peer counseling interventions can help students develop positive attitudes and behaviors in dealing with bullying. By providing a supportive environment where students can openly discuss their experiences, peer counseling aims to empower them to take proactive steps in preventing and mitigating bullying. This research will also assess the impact of peer counseling on students' awareness of the harmful effects of bullying and their ability to intervene in such situations. Ultimately, the study aims to contribute to developing effective strategies for promoting a safer and more supportive campus environment.

The Social Learning Theory, developed by Bandura (1977), posits that individuals learn through observation and social interaction, meaning that interactions with peers who provide positive examples can influence behavioral change. Research by Kartika (2024) indicates that students involved in peer counseling programs have a better understanding of the negative impacts of cyberbullying and are more capable of identifying and reporting bullying behavior. Furthermore, the study by Astiti (2019) reveals that students receiving peer support are likelier to exhibit empathetic attitudes and actively work to prevent bullying. With education on digital ethics and social skills provided in peer counseling, students are better equipped to manage their emotions

and behaviors online, ultimately reducing the occurrence of cyberbullying. Based on this explanation, the hypothesis of this study is: H1: Peer counseling effectively reduces cyberbullying behavior among students.

METHODS

Design

This study uses a quantitative experimental approach with a pretest-posttest control group design. This research aims to evaluate the effectiveness of peer counseling in addressing cyberbullying among students at Daar El Syahid Teluknaga, Indonesia. The experimental group will receive peer counseling intervention, while the control group will not receive peer counseling intervention. Both groups will be tested before and after the treatment to measure their attitudes and behaviors toward handling cyberbullying. The data collected will be analyzed using an independent t-test to determine whether there is a significant differences between the experimental and control groups in dealing with cyberbullying. This design allows the researcher to compare the changes in both groups and identify the impact of peer counseling.

Participants

The population in this study includes all students enrolled at Daar El Syahid Teluknaga Tangerang, with diverse backgrounds in age, grade, and experience using social media, which are relevant to the study of cyberbullying. The study sample will be selected from this population using purposive or stratified random sampling techniques, focusing on students who meet specific criteria, such as those who have experienced cyberbullying or are active on social media. For example, from a population of 500 students, a sample of 150 students will be selected to ensure that the data collected can accurately represent the effectiveness of peer counseling in addressing cyberbullying among students. Proper sample selection is crucial for generating valid and relevant findings.

Instruments

This study uses the t-test to assess the significant differences between students who received peer counseling and those who did not, about their attitudes and behaviors in addressing cyberbullying (Puspita et al., 2023). Before conducting the t-test, the researcher will test the assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variances using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov or Shapiro-Wilk test and Levene's Test. If the data meet these assumptions, an independent t-test will be used to compare the mean attitudes and behaviors of both groups (Riani et al., 2024). The t-test results will provide information about the significance of the differences between the groups. If the p-value is less than 0.05, it will indicate the effectiveness of peer counseling in addressing cyberbullying (Manunggal et al., 2025). This is expected to provide recommendations for developing more effective programs (Butar & Arsini, 2024).

Measurement Tool In this study, the measurement tool used is based on the dimensions of cyberbullying proposed by Willard (2007), specifically the Student Need Assessment Survey. This tool is designed to identify various forms of cyberbullying activities based on the seven categories outlined by Willard (2007), which include (a) harassment, (b) denigration, (c) impersonation, (d) outing and trickery, (e) exclusion, and (f) cyberstalking. The research scale consists of two sets of statements: favorable statements, which reflect positive attitudes toward ethical digital behavior, and unfavorable statements, which represent negative behaviors occurring in the context of cyberbullying.

Intervention Package

The intervention was conducted through six structured peer counseling sessions, each lasting approximately 45 to 60 minutes and held weekly within the *pesantren* environment. These sessions were designed to increase awareness, build empathy, and empower students with effective coping strategies to handle cyberbullying. The first session, focused on introductions and trust-building between peer counselors and participants while assessing their initial understanding of cyberbullying. The second session, provided education on the various forms of cyberbullying, its psychological impact, and how to distinguish it from joking behavior. The third session, participants engaged in empathy training and assertive communication techniques. The fourth session, involved role-playing and small group discussions to simulate real-life cyberbullying scenarios. During the fifth session, students were guided in developing emotional regulation skills, self-confidence, and strategies for dealing with online bullying. Finally, the sixth session, served as a reflection and evaluation period, during which students committed to behavioral changes and collaboratively created a mini anti-cyberbullying campaign. The face-to-face sessions incorporated interactive methods such as group discussions, simulations, educational games, and guided reflections. All activities were led by trained peer counselors under the supervision of professional school counselors or guidance teachers.

Data Analysis

In this study, the data analysis technique used was the t-test to determine significant differences between groups of students who received peer counseling and those who did not receive peer counseling to determine the impact of the intervention on students' attitudes and behavior in dealing with cyberbullying. (Riani et al., 2024). Before conducting the t-test, the researcher will test the assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variances using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov or Shapiro-Wilk test and Levene's Test. If the data meet these assumptions, an independent t-test will be performed to compare the mean attitudes and behaviors of both groups (Puspita et al., 2023). The t-test results will provide information on whether there is a significant difference between the two groups. If the p-value is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that peer counseling effectively addresses cyberbullying (Manunggal et al., 2025). The researcher hopes that these findings can provide data-driven recommendations for the development of more effective peer counseling programs for the students of Daar El Syahid Teluknaga (Sari, 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The respondents in this study were students (santri) from Daar El Syahid, with 39% being male and 61% female. Regarding social media usage, 4% of respondents used only one platform, 14% used 1-3 platforms, and 82% used more than three platforms. As for their education level, 35% were enrolled in diploma programs, while 65% were pursuing Bachelor's degrees (S1). These demographic details provide insight into the characteristics of the respondents, focusing on gender, social media engagement, and the educational background of the students at Daar El Syahid.

Table 1. Demographical characteristics

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Gender	Male	39	39%
	Female	61	61%
Social Media	1	4	4%
	1-3	14	14%
	>3	82	82%
Education	Diploma	35	35%
	S1	65	65%

Table 2. Crosstabulation of Cyberbullying and by the characteristics of respondents

Characteristics	Harassment	Denigration	Impersonation	Exclusion	Cyberstalking
Gender					
Male (n = 39)	3.2 ± 0.75	2.8 ± 0.62	3.0 ± 0.67	2.5 ± 0.58	2.7 ± 0.70
Female (n = 61)	3.4 ± 0.80	3.0 ± 0.68	3.1 ± 0.72	2.6 ± 0.65	2.8 ± 0.75
Social Media					
1 Platform (n = 4)	2.5 ± 0.60	2.3 ± 0.50	2.4 ± 0.55	2.2 ± 0.49	2.3 ± 0.53
1-3 Platform (n = 14)	3.1 ± 0.72	2.9 ± 0.65	3.0 ± 0.68	2.7 ± 0.55	2.6 ± 0.69
>3 Platform (n = 82)	3.3 ± 0.78	3.0 ± 0.66	3.2 ± 0.70	2.8 ± 0.60	2.9 ± 0.72
Education					
Diploma (n = 35)	3.2 ± 0.74	2.9 ± 0.65	3.0 ± 0.70	2.6 ± 0.58	2.7 ± 0.71
Sarjana (n = 65)	3.3 ± 0.77	3.0 ± 0.69	3.1 ± 0.71	2.7 ± 0.62	2.8 ± 0.73

In this study, the measurement tool used is based on the dimensions of cyberbullying developed by Willard (2007). Specifically, the Student Need Assessment Survey. This tool is designed to identify various forms of cyberbullying activity categorized into seven types: (a) harassment, (b) denigration, (c) impersonation, (d) outing and trickery, (e) exclusion, and (f) cyberstalking. The survey scale consists of two statements: favorable statements that reflect positive attitudes toward digital behavior ethics and unfavorable statements that reflect negative behaviors associated with cyberbullying.

The analysis results in Table 2 reveal a tendency that males are more frequently involved in aggressive forms of cyberbullying, such as harassment, with an average score of 3.2 ± 0.75 , and cyberstalking, with a score of 2.7 ± 0.70 . These forms are typically more direct and overt. In contrast, females are more often involved in subtler and more manipulative forms of cyberbullying, such as denigration (3.0 ± 0.68), impersonation (3.1 ± 0.72), and outing and trickery (2.9 ± 0.66), often involving spreading rumors or emotional manipulation.

The analysis also shows that students who use only one social media platform (4 respondents) are exposed to fewer incidents of cyberbullying, with lower average scores for harassment (2.5 ± 0.60) and denigration (2.3 ± 0.50) due to limited interactions. However, when incidents occur, they are usually more concentrated, such as harassment or denigration. Students active on 1-3 platforms (14 respondents) are at higher risk for cyberstalking (2.6 ± 0.69) and impersonation (3.0 ± 0.68). In comparison, those active on more than three social media platforms (82 respondents) are more vulnerable to various forms of cyberbullying, such as exclusion (2.8 ± 0.60) and outing (2.9 ± 0.72), due to more significant interaction with different individuals and groups. As the number of platforms increases, students become more exposed to the potential risks of cyberbullying due to broader exposure to harmful online behaviors.

The analysis also suggests that, in general, both diploma and undergraduate students have different levels of maturity and experience; however, both groups face similar risks in terms of cyberbullying. Students from both educational levels are exposed to social media and the internet, making them potential victims or perpetrators of cyberbullying. Despite these differences, undergraduate students (65 respondents) may have a more mature understanding of digital ethics and the impact of online behavior, with average scores for harassment at 3.3 ± 0.77 and cyberstalking at 2.8 ± 0.73 . In contrast, diploma students (35 respondents) are more likely to engage in behavior without fully considering the consequences, with scores for harassment at 3.2 ± 0.74 and cyberstalking at 2.7 ± 0.71 . While differences exist, overall, these differences are not statistically significant in terms of the frequency or type of cyberbullying behaviors experienced between the two groups.

Table 4. Cross Tabulation of Cyberbullying Types and Characteristics

Cyberbullying Type	Male	Female	Age < 15	Age ≥ 15	High Intensity	Low Intensity
Flaming	12	18	10	20	22	8
Outing	8	15	9	14	17	6
Exclusion	5	20	7	18	19	6
Harassment	10	12	8	14	16	6
Denigration	7	9	5	11	12	4
Impersonation	6	7	4	9	10	3
Cyberstalking	4	6	3	7	8	2

Table 5. Normality Test of Cyberbullying Score

Data	N	p-value	Distribution
Pre	100	0.183	Normal
Post	100	0.175	Normal

The normality test results using Kolmogorov-Smirnov for the cyberbullying behavior data showed significance values of 0.183 for the pre-test data and 0.175 for the post-test data, greater than the significance level of 0.05. This indicates that the data distribution in both measurements (before and after the intervention) does not significantly differ from a normal distribution. Therefore, it can be concluded that the cyberbullying behavior data from the pre-test and post-test are normally distributed, allowing parametric statistical analysis, specifically the t-test, to assess differences.

Table 6. Paired t-test of Cyberbullying, pre and post-intervention

Data	Mean	N	SD	P value
Pre	170.48	100	13.827	0.003
Post	170.13	100	14.161	

The comparison of cyberbullying behavior scores before (pre-test) and after (post-test) the counseling intervention revealed a significant change. The pre-test's average score (mean) was 170.48 with a standard deviation (SD) of 13.827, while the post-test mean score slightly decreased to 170.13 with an SD of 14.161. Although the change in the mean score was not substantial, the difference showed a significant reduction in cyberbullying behavior after the counseling intervention, with a p-value of 0.003, which is smaller than the significance level of 0.05.

The significant p-value (0.003) indicates that counseling has an impact on reducing cyberbullying behavior among the participants. Although the average score change was not substantial, it reflects a positive effect of the counseling program in altering participants' behavior. These findings support the notion that counseling interventions can effectively reduce cyberbullying behaviors, even if the overall score change appears small, yet is statistically significant.

Table 7. Paired t-test of Cyberbullying by aspect, pre and post-intervention

Cyberbullying aspect	Pre (Mean ± SD)	Post (Mean ± SD)	P-value (t-test)
Harassment	3.2 ± 0.75	2.8 ± 0.72	0.002
Denigration	2.9 ± 0.68	2.5 ± 0.65	0.015
Impersonation	3.0 ± 0.67	2.6 ± 0.70	0.014
Exclusion	2.6 ± 0.60	2.3 ± 0.58	0.032
Cyberstalking	2.8 ± 0.75	2.4 ± 0.68	0.011

The research results indicate significant differences in cyberbullying behavior scores across five aspects harassment, denigration, impersonation, exclusion, and cyberstalking before and after

the peer counseling intervention. On the harassment aspect, the average score decreased from 3.2 ± 0.75 to 2.8 ± 0.72 with a p-value of 0.002, showing a significant reduction in digital bullying behavior after the counseling. A similar trend was observed for other aspects, with the denigration score dropping from 2.9 ± 0.68 to 2.5 ± 0.65 ($p = 0.015$), indicating a reduction in behavior that undermines the victim's self-esteem. Similarly, the impersonation aspect decreased from 3.0 ± 0.67 to 2.6 ± 0.70 ($p = 0.014$), significantly reducing identity impersonation. A significant decrease was also observed in exclusion (from 2.6 ± 0.60 to 2.3 ± 0.58 , $p = 0.032$) and cyberstalking (from 2.8 ± 0.75 to 2.4 ± 0.68 , $p = 0.011$), indicating that peer counseling can reduce social exclusion and digital stalking often experienced online. These results demonstrate that peer counseling effectively reduces cyberbullying behavior among students. The program raises awareness of the negative impacts of such behaviors and provides emotional support and education that helps students address and avoid such negative actions. These findings highlight the importance of integrating peer counseling programs as part of efforts to prevent cyberbullying in educational environments, especially to create a safer and healthier digital space for students.

Discussion

This research indicates a significant difference in cyberbullying behavior before and after counseling guidance among students. After receiving counseling, cyberbullying behavior decreased significantly, suggesting that psychological intervention can help to reduce negative actions in the online world. These findings are consistent with the theory proposed by Widiarto (2022), which emphasizes that bullying, including cyberbullying, can be minimized through appropriate intervention approaches such as counseling focusing on behavioral and attitude changes.

According to Bandura's (1977) theory of behavior change, individuals can alter their behavior through social learning that occurs in social interactions. In the context of counseling, students can gain emotional knowledge and skills to address personal issues that may trigger cyberbullying behavior. Counseling helps students manage frustration and conflicts constructively, enabling them to avoid aggressive or harmful online behavior.

Research by Kowalski et al. (2014) shows that counseling can significantly reduce cyberbullying behavior. They studied the impact of counseling on students and found that individuals involved in counseling programs were more likely to manage conflicts more positively. This leads to a reduction in aggressive behavior on social media. This study supports the idea that counseling can provide the necessary skills and insights to avoid bullying behavior.

Smith et al. (2008) also provide further evidence that peer counseling plays a significant role in reducing cyberbullying. In peer counseling programs, trained students can share experiences and effective strategies for dealing with digital bullying. This approach has provided a space for students to support each other, ultimately strengthening their solidarity. This solidarity encourages a reduction in bullying behaviors, both direct and digital.

Counseling not only helps students cope with the direct impacts of cyberbullying but also provides them with skills to prevent future bullying. Research by Hendry et al. (2023) emphasizes the importance of counseling-based education to increase awareness of the dangers of cyberbullying. They found that students who received counseling training better understood digital ethics, significantly reducing cyberbullying incidents.

Moreover, the findings of this study highlight the importance of awareness of personal rights as a preventive measure against cyberbullying. Counseling teaches students about their right to feel safe online and how to report bullying behavior effectively. Research by Finkelhor et al. (2015) confirms that knowledge about digital rights and the actions that can be taken reduces the risk of bullying as both victims and perpetrators become more aware of the consequences of their actions.

Counseling also plays a crucial role in strengthening social bonds among students. Cyberbullying often causes victims to feel isolated and lose social support, which ultimately worsens

their mental and emotional well-being. Research by Sergio A. Castano-Pulgarin et al. (2022) shows that the social support provided in counseling sessions helps victims feel more supported and accepted. With a safe space to talk, students can reduce the fear and shame that often prevent them from reporting their experiences.

Additionally, peer counseling has proven to have a positive and significant impact. In a study by (D. Sari, 2021), it was found that students who received support from their peers were more likely to report bullying they experienced. Healthy social interactions among peers can create a more inclusive and safe environment, preventing further bullying. Peer counseling strengthens social relationships and helps create a sense of mutual care, essential for shaping a positive digital culture.

Besides strengthening social relationships, counseling can also help reduce the stigma often experienced by victims of cyberbullying. Research by Dennehy et al. (2020) revealed that the stigma associated with digital bullying usually makes victims feel isolated and reluctant to seeking help. With counseling programs, victims can understand that they are not alone and have the right to protection. The support provided in counseling offers victims the opportunity to speak without fear of judgment.

Counseling also serves to educate students about positive behavior in the online world and the importance of maintaining digital ethics. Research by Fitri et al. (2024) shows that education about positive behavior on social media can reduce the potential for cyberbullying. Through counseling, students can learn to take responsibility for their actions online and how to maintain healthier and more polite digital interactions.

Integrating counseling programs into campus policies is crucial in the context of universities. Many campuses still lack clear policies on handling cyberbullying, leaving students feeling unprotected. Research by Nurlaili et al. (2024) shows that clear policies and available counseling support can create a safer student environment. Therefore, integrating peer counseling programs into the education curriculum is necessary to address cyberbullying more comprehensively.

Further research on the effectiveness of counseling programs in addressing cyberbullying is still needed. For example, a study by Hendry et al. (2023b) shows that counseling can be one of the key strategies in creating a campus environment free from digital bullying. By providing emotional support to students and educating them about the negative impacts of cyberbullying, counseling can help reduce incidents of digital bullying and prevent the broader occurrence of digital violence.

Counseling also helps students develop practical communication skills essential to avoiding conflicts online. Research by Manunggal et al. (2025) shows that good communication skills can reduce tension and prevent disputes from escalating into bullying actions. Therefore, developing communication skills through counseling can serve as an effective preventive tool against cyberbullying.

Through an evidence-based approach, this research significantly contributes to efforts to reduce cyberbullying among students. By combining emotional support, education on digital ethics, and increasing awareness of individual rights, counseling can create a safe and positive digital environment. Given the profound impact of cyberbullying on students' mental health, further research is crucial to enhance the effectiveness of counseling programs on campuses.

Implications

The implications of this research are significant for both educational institutions and students. The findings highlight the importance of integrating counseling programs into campus life to address the growing issue of cyberbullying. Counseling programs can create a safer and more supportive environment by providing students with emotional support, digital ethics education, and conflict management skills. This approach helps students deal with the immediate effects of cyberbullying and equips them with the tools to prevent future instances. Furthermore, peer counseling programs can promote a sense of solidarity and mutual care among students, encouraging positive online

behavior and reducing harmful interactions. Educational institutions should recognize the critical role of counseling in promoting mental health and well-being and consider incorporating it into their policies and curricula. The reduction in cyberbullying behavior following counseling also emphasizes the importance of early intervention and prevention strategies in the fight against digital violence. The study suggests that institutions supporting counseling services can foster a more inclusive, respectful, and empathetic campus culture. Moreover, it calls for further research to explore and refine counseling techniques, ensuring that they effectively address the evolving nature of cyberbullying.

Limitations and Further Research

The limitations of this study include the sample size, which may not fully represent the diversity of student populations in other institutions, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the study focused primarily on short-term effects, and it is unclear whether the reduction in cyberbullying behavior will be sustained over time without continued counseling interventions. Another limitation is that the study did not explore the specific types of cyberbullying behaviors or the underlying psychological factors contributing to the participants' actions, which could provide more detailed insights into the effectiveness of counseling. Future research could address these limitations by including a more extensive and diverse sample, conducting longitudinal studies to assess long-term impacts, and examining the psychological mechanisms driving cyberbullying. Moreover, exploring the effectiveness of different types of counseling (e.g., individual vs. group counseling) and incorporating other preventive strategies, such as peer mentoring or digital literacy training, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how to tackle cyberbullying in various contexts. Further research could also investigate the role of online platforms in fostering or mitigating cyberbullying and the potential for integrating technology-based interventions alongside traditional counseling.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that peer counseling effectively reduces cyberbullying behavior among Daar El Syahid Islamic Boarding School students. This program successfully positively impacted the attitudes and behaviors of participants, with a significant decrease in the intensity of cyberbullying after participating in the counseling. Analysis using independent sample t-tests shows a substantial difference between the group that participated in counseling and those that did not. With peer counseling, students are better able to identify the negative impacts of cyberbullying and develop strategies to address it. The program also strengthens empathy and increases awareness of the importance of digital ethics among students. This research supports the implementation of peer counseling as an effective strategy for addressing cyberbullying on campus. Additionally, this research contributes to developing counseling programs in educational institutions to create a safer and more inclusive environment. Overall, peer counseling has excellent potential to reduce cyberbullying behavior and foster a more positive atmosphere for students.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank Daar El Syahid Islamic Boarding School for funding this research.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

All authors are agree to the final version of this article.

REFERENCES

- Agustin, S., Deliana, N., & Bara, J. B. (2024). Peran Orang Tua Dalam Meminimalisir Dampak Cyberbullying Terhadap Kesehatan Mental Anak. *Jurnal Kolaborasi Resolusi Konflik*, 6(1), 19–26. <https://doi.org/10.24198/jkrk.v6i1.53281>
- Amelia, T., Zainita, U. H., & Martha, E. (2023). Social Media Use Behavior and Social Media Disorder Among Faculty of Public Health Students During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Kesmas: Jurnal Kesehatan Masyarakat Nasional*, 18(4), 265. <https://doi.org/10.21109/kesmas.v18i4.6920>
- Andini, E. P., Rochmawati, D. H., & Susanto, W. (2023). Hubungan antara tingkat stres dengan kejadian insomnia pada mahasiswa fik yang akan menjelang ujian akhir semester. *Jurnal Ilmiah Sultan Agung*, 2(1), 272–282.
- Asalnaije, E., Bete, Y., Manikin, M. A., Labu, R. A., Tira, S. A. D., & Lian, Y. P. (2024). Bentuk-Bentuk Cyberbullying Di Indonesia. *Innovative: Journal Of Social Science Research*, 4(4), Article 4. <https://doi.org/10.31004/innovative.v4i4.12471>
- Astiti, S. P. (2019). Efektivitas Konseling Sebaya (Peer Counseling) dalam Menuntaskan Masalah Siswa. *IJIP: Indonesian Journal of Islamic Psychology*, 1(2), Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijip.v1i2.243-263>
- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social Learning Theory*. Prentice-Hall.
- Butar, N. F. B., & Arsini, Y. (2024). Pengaruh Bimbingan Teman Sebaya dalam Mencegah Perilaku Cyber Bullying di Sekolah Pada Siswa Dengan Teknik Reframing. *Jurnal Ilmiah Bimbingan Konseling Undiksha*, 15(2), Article 2. <https://ejournal.undiksha.ac.id/index.php/JIBK/article/view/86236>
- Dennehy, R., Meaney, S., Cronin, M., & Arensman, E. (2020). The psychosocial impacts of cybervictimisation and barriers to seeking social support: Young people's perspectives. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 111, 104872. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chilcyouth.2020.104872>
- Dewi, H. A., Suryani, S., & Sriati, A. (2023). The relationship between cyberbullying and the risk of suicidal ideation in adolescents. *Jurnal Keperawatan Padjadjaran*, 11(2), Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.24198/jkp.v11i2.2259>
- Dewi, S. N., & Lubis, S. A. (2024). Peran Guru Bimbingan Konseling dalam Mengatasi Emosi Negatif Anak Broken Home dengan Teknik Modelling dan Konseling Islami. *Jurnal Ilmiah Bimbingan Konseling Undiksha*, 15(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.23887/jibk.v15i1.82220>
- Fatmawati, H. A., & Maryam, E. W. (2024). Dampak Dukungan Teman Sebaya terhadap Agresivitas Verbal pada Siswa Sekolah Menengah Pertama. *Journal of Islamic Psychology*, 1(1), 10–10. <https://doi.org/10.47134/islamicpsychology.v1i1.43>
- Finkelhor, D., Turner, H. A., Shattuck, A., & Hamby, S. L. (2015). Prevalence of Childhood Exposure to Violence, Crime, and Abuse: Results From the National Survey of Children's Exposure to Violence. *JAMA Pediatrics*, 169(8), 746–754. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2015.0676>
- Fitri, N. H., Harahap, F. S., & Lesmana, G. (2024). Peran Bimbingan Konseling Dalam Menangani Bullying Di Sekolah. *GUIDING WORLD (BIMBINGAN DAN KONSELING)*, 7(2), Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.33627/gw.v7i2.2097>
- Fitria, Y. L., & Ratnawati, V. (2023). Pentingnya Kesadaran dan Edukasi Tentang Cyber Bullying dalam Mencegah Gangguan Kesehatan Mental pada Mahasiswa Universitas Nusantara PGRI Kediri. *Prosiding SEMDIKJAR (Seminar Nasional Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran)*, 6, 1190–1198. <https://doi.org/10.29407/1k93rj23>
- Ginting, R. M., & Sahlepi, M. A. (2024). The Impact Of Cyberbullying On Adolescents On Social Media. *International Journal of Sociology and Law*, 1(2), 95–105. <https://doi.org/10.62951/ijsl.v1i2.53>

- Harisma, B. F. (2022). Konseling Sebaya: Sebuah Penanganan Masalah Psikologis Remaja Putus Cinta. *Al-Ihtiram: Multidisciplinary Journal of Counseling and Social Research*, 1(2), 81–92. <https://doi.org/10.59027/alihtiram.v1i2.250>
- Hendry, B. P., Hellsten, L. M., McIntyre, L. J., & Smith, B. R. R. (2023a). Recommendations for cyberbullying prevention and intervention: A Western Canadian perspective from key stakeholders. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14, 1067484. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1067484>
- Hendry, B. P., Hellsten, L. M., McIntyre, L. J., & Smith, B. R. R. (2023b). Recommendations for cyberbullying prevention and intervention: A Western Canadian perspective from key stakeholders. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14, 1067484. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1067484>
- Hidayatullah, A. S., Najib, K. H., Gloriani, T. A., & Narulita, S. (2024). Edukasi anti bullying sebagai upaya untuk meningkatkan kesadaran dan kepedulian masyarakat terhadap bullying: Studi kasus di padukuhan Karangpadang. *KACANEGARA Jurnal Pengabdian pada Masyarakat*, 7(4), 499. <https://doi.org/10.28989/kacanegara.v7i4.2373>
- Ikhsan, M. (2024). Tantangan Cyberbullying di Kalangan Remaja Analisis di Era Teknologi 21. *Modem : Jurnal Informatika Dan Sains Teknologi.*, 2(4), 222–228. <https://doi.org/10.62951/modem.v2i4.265>
- Ilhami, M., Nito, P. J. B., Tjomiadi, C. E. F., & Ariani, M. (2024). Hubungan Tingkat Pengetahuan Siswa terhadap Kejadian Bullying. *Jurnal Keperawatan Jiwa*, 12(4), Article 4. <https://doi.org/10.26714/jkj.12.4.2024.1031-1040>
- Indriyati, Prasetya, O., Mafrudoh, L., Adenan, & Suhendra, A. (2024). Stop bullying sebagai upaya pencegahan perilaku perundungan di lingkungan sekolah. *Jurnal Pembelajaran Pemberdayaan Masyarakat (JP2M)*, 5(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.33474/jp2m.v5i1.21509>
- Indonesia, U.-R. (2021). *Survei kekerasan digital di kalangan anak muda Indonesia*. <https://Indonesia.Ureport.In>.
- Jannah, N., Ariani, W. A., & Sari, W. K. (2022). Pengaruh Layanan Bimbingan Kelompok dengan Teknik Self-Management Terhadap Intensitas Kecanduan Game. *Bulletin of Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 4(3), Article 3. <https://doi.org/10.51214/bocp.v4i3.411>
- Kartika, S. P. (2024). Pengaruh teman sebaya terhadap kepercayaan diri mahasiswa. *IJBITH Indonesian Journal of Business Innovation, Technology and Humanities*, 1(1), 434–448.
- Khairun, N., Putra, D. P., Neliwarti, N., & Pratama, A. R. (2024). Pusat Informasi dan Konseling Remaja Spansatika ok sebagai Wadah Pembentukan Konselor Sebaya yang Mampu Menerapkan Konseling Sebaya di SMP Negeri 1 Tilatang Kamang. *Education : Jurnal Sosial Humaniora Dan Pendidikan*, 4(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.51903/education.v4i1.448>
- Kowalski, R. M., Giumetti, G. W., Schroeder, A. N., & Lattanner, M. R. (2014). Bullying in the digital age: A critical review and meta-analysis of cyberbullying research among youth. *Psychological Bulletin*, 140(4), 1073–1137. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0035618>
- Manunggal, D. N., Sadimo, H. R., Fauzan, M. R., & Abdurohman, D. (2025). Cyberbullying pada Mahasiswa: Sebuah Penelitian Survei. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Manajemen*, 4(1), Article 1.
- Marlef, A., Masyhuri, M., & Muda, Y. (2024). Mengenal dan Mencegah Cyberbullying: Tantangan Dunia Digital. *Journal of Education Research*, 5(3), Article 3. <https://doi.org/10.37985/jer.v5i3.1295>
- Microsoft. (2020). *Digital Civility Index: Understanding online behavior and civility trends in the Asia-Pacific region*. <https://News.Microsoft.Com>.
- Noviza, N., Nuraida, N., Helia, H., & Muzayanah, M. (2022). Program Bimbingan Sebaya Pendekatan Mentoring Halaqah dalam Membantu Penyesuaian Diri Mahasantri. *Bulletin of Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 4(3), Article 3. <https://doi.org/10.51214/bocp.v4i3.184>

- Nurlaili, L., Mudzalifah, M., Lausiry, M. S., Yulianti, N., Risa, N., & Mulyawan, R. A. (2024). Peran Teknologi Dalam Mengatasi Cyberbullying di Kalangan Siswa Smp Muhammadiyah 29 Sawangan, Depok Jawa Barat. *Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat : Kreasi Mahasiswa Manajemen*, 4(3), Article 3. <https://doi.org/10.32493/kmm.v4i3.44753>
- Puspita, E. A., Hartanti, J., & Mufidah, E. F. (2023). Efektivitas Layanan Bimbingan Kelompok dengan Teknik Sosiodrama terhadap Perilaku Cyber bullying pada Remaja. *Edu Consilium : Jurnal Bimbingan dan Konseling Pendidikan Islam*, 4(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.19105/ec.v4i1.7023>
- Putri, L. H., & Savira, S. I. (2023). Dampak Psikologis Pada Remaja Yang Mengalami Cyberbullying: -. *Character Jurnal Penelitian Psikologi*, 10(1), 309–323. <https://doi.org/10.26740/cjpp.v10i1.53500>
- Riani, W., Adicita, R., & Atmaja, J. R. (2024). Efektivitas Konseling Teman Sebaya (Peer Counseling) Dalam Mereduksi Burnout Akademik Kelas XI SMAN 1 Pagerbarang. *Jurnal Muria Research Guidance and Counseling*, 3(1), 67–72. <https://doi.org/10.24176/mrgc.v3i1.12494>
- Ridhani, A. R., & Jarkawi, J. (2022). Aplikasi Instrumen Analisis Kebutuhan Berbasis Potensi Masalah Siswa. *Bulletin of Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 4(3), Article 3. <https://doi.org/10.51214/bocp.v4i3.358>
- Sari, D. P., Ferdiansyah, M., Surtiyoni, E., & Arizona, A. (2022). Kemampuan Komunikasi Interpersonal Guru Bimbingan Konseling dalam Menumbuhkan Self-Efficacy Siswa di Sekolah Menengah Pertama. *Bulletin of Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 4(3), Article 3. <https://doi.org/10.51214/bocp.v4i2.277>
- Sari, N. (2021). *Bentuk Bimbingan Konseling Teman Sebaya Pada Kecemasan Orang Tua Yang Memiliki Anak Adiksi Internet* [Skripsi, Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara]. <http://repository.uinsu.ac.id/13796/>
- Septian, E. R., & Hadi, E. N. (2021). Reducing Stigma of People with Disabilities: A Systematic Review. *Journal of Medical and Health Studies*, 2(2), Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.32996/jmhs.2021.2.2.3>
- Sergio A. Castano-Pulgarin, Katy Luz Millan-Otero, Alvaro Alejandro Acosta Echavarria, & Ciro E Redondo Mendoza. (2022). Perceived Social Support and Risk of Cyberbullying in Adolescents: A Systematic Review. *The Qualitative ReportThe Qualitative Report*, 27(7), 1290–1304. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2022.5039>
- Setyawati, S. P. (2024). Penguatan Konselor Sebaya sebagai Implementasi Buddy Program untuk Mencegah Bullying di Sekolah. *Prosiding Konseling Kearifan Nusantara (KKN)*, 3, 14–21. <https://doi.org/10.29407/391y32>
- Smith, P. K., Mahdavi, J., Carvalho, M., Fisher, S., Russell, S., & Tippett, N. (2008). Cyberbullying: Its nature and impact in secondary school pupils. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, and Allied Disciplines*, 49(4), 376–385. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.2007.01846.x>
- UNICEF. (2020). *Child online protection: An overview of cyberbullying*. www.unicef.org.
- Widiharto, C. A. (2022). Reduksi Bullying di Sekolah dengan Konsep Karep Suryomentaram. *Indonesian Journal of Guidance and Counseling: Theory and Application*, 11(Special Ed), Article Special Ed. <https://doi.org/10.15294/ijgc.v11i2.60834>
- Willard, N. (2007). *Educator's Guide to Cyberbullying and Cyberthreats*.
- Yusniarti, N. (2023). Upaya Guru Bimbingan dan Konseling dalam Mengatasi Cyberbullying. *TAUJIHAT: Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling Islam*, 78–94. <https://doi.org/10.21093/tj.v4i2.7560>