

The Effectiveness of Sociodrama Techniques in Group Guidance Services to Reduce Cyberbullying Behavior

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ABSTRACT

Cyberbullying has become a significant concern among adolescents due to the rapid expansion of digitally mediated communication and limited emotional awareness in online interactions. This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of sociodrama-based group guidance in reducing cyberbullying behavior among students while emphasizing the role of reflective observer participation during intervention activities. The study employed a quantitative quasi-experimental design using a non-equivalent control group design. Participants consisted of 26 tenth-grade students at Madrasah Aliyah Laboratorium Jambi, Indonesia, who demonstrated high levels of cyberbullying behavior and were assigned to experimental and control groups. The experimental group participated in eight sessions of structured sociodrama-based group guidance integrating role-playing, emotional reflection, and observer-based evaluation, whereas the control group received conventional counseling services. Data were collected using a validated cyberbullying behavior scale and analyzed using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test and Mann-Whitney U test. The findings revealed a significant reduction in cyberbullying behavior among students who participated in the sociodrama intervention. The experimental group demonstrated a mean score reduction from 62.54 to 37.92, whereas the control group showed only a modest decrease from 62.46 to 56.92. Statistical analysis indicated significant post-intervention differences between groups ($p = .001$, $r = .83$), reflecting a large intervention effect. The findings suggest that sociodrama-based group guidance promotes empathy, emotional awareness, perspective-taking, and responsible digital behavior through experiential and reflective learning processes. This study contributes to the development of school counseling interventions by highlighting the importance of reflective observer involvement in cyberbullying prevention programs.

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INTRODUCTION

Communication plays a fundamental role in human social life by facilitating interpersonal relationships, social interaction, and psychosocial development. The rapid advancement of information and communication technology has transformed communication patterns from direct face-to-face interaction into digitally mediated communication (Castells, 2009). In Indonesia, internet penetration reached 78.19% of the population in 2023, representing more than 215 million users, while active social media users accounted for approximately 191.4 million people (APJII, 2023; DataReportal, 2022). Social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok have become dominant channels of interaction among adolescents, shaping their communication patterns, social participation, and emotional expression in digital environments.

Although digital technology offers various benefits, including easier communication and broader social networking opportunities, it has also contributed to the emergence of cyberbullying. Cyberbullying refers to intentional and repetitive aggressive behavior conducted through digital media to humiliate, intimidate, threaten, or harm others (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008; Kowalski et al., 2014). Compared to traditional bullying, cyberbullying possesses unique characteristics, including anonymity (Slonje, 2008), rapid dissemination of harmful content, and unlimited audience reach, which may intensify psychological and social consequences for victims. Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to involvement in cyberbullying because adolescence is characterized by emotional instability, identity exploration, and developing social competence (Santröck, 2003). Limited emotional regulation, low empathy, and difficulties in understanding the perspectives of others may encourage aggressive online behavior and reduce adolescents' awareness of the consequences of their digital actions (Suler, 2004; Brewer & Kerlake, 2015; Ang & Goh, 2010; Runions & Bak, 2015).

Within the educational context, schools play a strategic role in preventing cyberbullying through guidance and counseling services. In accordance with the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation Number 111 of 2014 concerning Guidance and Counseling Services in Primary and Secondary Education, group guidance services are intended to facilitate students' social, emotional, and behavioral development through group dynamics. One technique frequently implemented in group guidance is sociodrama, which allows students to explore interpersonal conflicts and social situations through role-playing activities (Corey, 2016). Through dramatization and reflective interaction, sociodrama encourages students to recognize emotions and understand the perspectives of others. It also helps students evaluate the social consequences of their behavior. These processes are theoretically associated with the development of empathy, emotional awareness, perspective-taking ability, and behavioral self-control, all of which are important factors in reducing cyberbullying behavior in digital interactions.

Previous studies have shown that sociodrama techniques can improve empathy and reduce aggressive or bullying behavior among students (Puspita, A. E., Hartanti, J., & Mufidah, 2023; Utari, 2023; Djamarah, 2022). However, several important aspects remain insufficiently explained. Prior research has primarily focused on the role-playing activities performed by active participants, while the contribution of observers during sociodrama sessions has received limited attention. In many studies, observers are positioned only as passive audiences, even though observational learning and reflective participation may also influence students' emotional understanding, social awareness, and behavioral evaluation processes (Bandura, 2001; Yardley et al., 2012; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015). Furthermore, previous studies rarely explain how sociodrama influences cyberbullying behavior in digitally mediated interactions. Online communication often involves anonymity and indirect social contact. These conditions may reduce empathy, emotional accountability, and awareness of the consequences of harmful online behavior.

Theoretically, the effectiveness of sociodrama in reducing cyberbullying behavior may be explained through several complementary perspectives. From the perspective of Social Learning Theory, adolescents learn social behavior not only through direct experience but also through observation, imitation, and reflective evaluation of others' actions and consequences (Bandura, 2001). In sociodrama activities, both role players and observers are exposed to interpersonal conflict situations that enable vicarious learning processes and behavioral self-evaluation. In addition, experiential learning theory emphasizes that meaningful behavioral change emerges through active participation, emotional engagement, reflection, and reconstruction of social experiences. Through dramatization and reflective discussion, students are encouraged to recognize emotional reactions, understand the perspectives of victims and perpetrators, and evaluate the consequences of harmful online behavior. Perspective-taking processes are also considered important because the anonymous and indirect nature of digital interaction frequently reduces adolescents' empathy and accountability in online

communication. Therefore, reflective observer involvement during sociodrama sessions may strengthen empathy development, emotional awareness, and social responsibility, which are theoretically associated with reductions in cyberbullying behavior.

Preliminary observations and interviews conducted in the school setting indicated that behaviors such as sending offensive messages, spreading humiliating content, and posting negative comments on social media were frequently perceived by students as jokes or ordinary online interactions. This condition reflects limited awareness regarding the harmful consequences of cyberbullying and highlights the need for preventive interventions that not only address behavior but also strengthen students' empathy, emotional awareness, and perspective-taking in digital communication contexts.

Based on these issues, this study examines the effectiveness of sociodrama-based group guidance in reducing students' cyberbullying behavior. Unlike previous studies, this research emphasizes a more structured and reflective implementation of sociodrama by explicitly integrating observer participation into the intervention process. Observers were not positioned merely as passive audiences but were encouraged to engage in reflective discussion, emotional evaluation, and behavioral analysis following role-play activities. The novelty of this study lies in three main aspects: (1) the structured involvement of reflective observers during sociodrama sessions, (2) the integration of emotional reflection, empathy development, and perspective-taking processes within digitally mediated interaction contexts, and (3) the specific application of sociodrama-based group guidance to reduce cyberbullying behavior among adolescents. This approach is expected to strengthen emotional engagement, social reflection, and students' understanding of the psychological and social consequences of harmful online behavior. The findings of this study are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of sociodrama-based counseling interventions and practically to cyberbullying prevention efforts within educational settings.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental method grounded in the positivist paradigm to examine the effectiveness of an intervention through statistical analysis (Creswell, 2014). The research design applied was a non-equivalent control group design, which is commonly used in educational research when random assignment is not fully feasible (Sharma, 2019). This design was considered appropriate for school-based interventions. Educational research frequently faces administrative and ethical constraints that limit the feasibility of full randomization.

The study involved two groups, namely an experimental group and a control group. Both groups were administered pretest and posttest measurements to assess students' cyberbullying behavior before and after the intervention. The experimental group received group guidance services using structured sociodrama techniques, whereas the control group received conventional counseling services typically implemented by school counselors, such as psychoeducational lectures, verbal explanation, and guided group discussions regarding appropriate online behavior and social interaction. The inclusion of a control group was intended to compare the effectiveness of reflective and experiential sociodrama activities with conventional counseling approaches commonly applied within school counseling services. Although this design enabled comparison between intervention conditions, the relatively small sample size and the use of participants from a single educational institution may limit the external validity and generalizability of the findings. Therefore, the results should be interpreted within the context of the participating school population. The research design is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Non-Equivalent Control Group Design

Group	Pretest	Treatment	Posttest
Experimental Group	O ₁	X	O ₂
Control Group	O ₃	-	O ₄

Note:

X = Group guidance services using sociodrama techniques

O₁ and O₃ = Pretest scores of cyberbullying behavior

O₂ and O₄ = Posttest scores of cyberbullying behavior

Participants and Sampling Technique

The population of this study consisted of all tenth-grade students at Madrasah Aliyah Laboratorium Jambi, Indonesia, totaling 75 students. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants based on specific inclusion criteria. The criteria included students who demonstrated high levels of cyberbullying behavior based on the preliminary assessment and were willing to participate voluntarily in the research process. Based on the results of the initial screening using the cyberbullying scale, 26 students were identified as having high levels of cyberbullying behavior. To reduce substantial differences between groups, participant assignment was conducted proportionally. The procedure considered pretest scores, gender composition, and classroom distribution. The assignment process was conducted collaboratively with the school counselor to ensure relatively comparable baseline characteristics between groups.

To further minimize baseline differences between groups, a pre-intervention equivalence analysis was conducted using the Mann-Whitney U test on pretest cyberbullying scores. The analysis indicated no statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups prior to the intervention ($p > .05$), suggesting that both groups had relatively comparable initial levels of cyberbullying behavior. Although full randomization was not feasible due to school administrative considerations, these procedures were intended to strengthen internal validity and reduce potential selection bias.

These participants were subsequently divided into two groups: an experimental group consisting of 13 students and a control group consisting of 13 students. However, because the assignment procedure did not involve full randomization, potential selection bias could not be entirely eliminated. In addition, the relatively small sample size and single-school sampling procedure may reduce the generalizability of the findings to broader adolescent populations. Nevertheless, the selected participants were considered appropriate for examining the initial effectiveness of sociodrama-based interventions in school counseling settings.

Variables and Research Instrument

The independent variable in this study was group guidance services using sociodrama techniques, while the dependent variable was students' cyberbullying behavior. Operationally, cyberbullying behavior referred to aggressive actions conducted through digital media with the intention of harming, humiliating, intimidating, or socially excluding others. The measured dimensions of cyberbullying behavior included flaming, harassment, denigration, impersonation, outing, trickery, exclusion, and cyberstalking. The instrument used in this study was adapted from a cyberbullying instrument previously developed and tested by Sylvi Marini. The instrument consisted of 20 statement items designed to measure students' cyberbullying behavior in digital environments. The instrument blueprint was developed based on several dimensions of cyberbullying behavior and operationalized into measurable behavioral indicators. A detailed instrument blueprint is presented in Appendix 1.

The questionnaire employed a four-point Likert scale adapted from Sugiyono (2016), consisting of the following response categories: Always (4), Often (3), Rarely (2), and Never (1). Higher scores indicated higher levels of cyberbullying behavior. Examples of questionnaire

items included: "I have posted insulting comments toward someone through social media," and "I intentionally excluded someone from online group interactions." Prior to implementation, the instrument underwent validity and reliability testing. Item validity was analyzed using product-moment correlation analysis. The validity testing results indicated that all 20 items were valid because each item's correlation coefficient exceeded the minimum required *r*-table value of 0.235. The reliability analysis demonstrated excellent internal consistency reliability, with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.934. Therefore, the instrument was considered valid and reliable for data collection purposes.

To facilitate interpretation, cyberbullying behavior scores were categorized into three classifications: low, moderate, and high. The score categorization procedure was calculated as follows: (1) maximum ideal score = $20 \times 4 = 80$; (2) minimum ideal score = $20 \times 1 = 20$; (3) score range = $80 - 20 = 60$; and (4) interval score = $60 \div 3 = 20$. Based on these calculations, scores ranging from 61 – 80 were categorized as high, scores between 41 – 60 as moderate, and scores between 20 – 40 as low levels of cyberbullying behavior. Because the instrument relied primarily on self-report responses, the possibility of social desirability bias may have influenced participants' answers. Some students may have underreported their cyberbullying behavior due to social expectations or concerns regarding negative judgment. To minimize this possibility, participants were informed that all responses would remain confidential and used solely for research purposes.

Intervention Procedure

Sociodrama techniques were selected because they promote experiential learning, emotional expression, empathy development, and perspective-taking skills through structured role-playing activities. These processes are considered important in helping adolescents understand the psychological and social consequences of cyberbullying behavior and develop more adaptive interpersonal responses. The intervention procedure was conducted over eight sessions within eight weeks using a structured sociodrama-based group guidance model. The intervention was facilitated by the school counselor acting as the group leader. The implementation procedure was adapted from operational guidelines for school counseling services and consisted of four stages: formation, transition, activity, and termination stages.

Pre-Experimental Stage

Prior to administering the intervention, the researcher distributed the cyberbullying scale to all research participants consisting of 75 tenth-grade students. This preliminary assessment aimed to identify students' levels of cyberbullying behavior. The results indicated that 26 students (35%) were categorized as having high levels of cyberbullying behavior, 6 students (8%) were categorized as moderate, and 43 students (57%) were classified as low. Following the screening process, the selected participants were assigned to the experimental and control groups. The assignment procedure was conducted proportionally based on participants' pretest scores and demographic characteristics to ensure relatively balanced baseline conditions between groups. Both groups completed pretest measurements before the intervention was implemented.

Experimental Group Procedure

The experimental group participated in structured group guidance services using sociodrama techniques during eight intervention sessions.

Formation Stage: The formation stage focused on establishing trust, group cohesion, emotional readiness, and participant understanding of the intervention process. During this stage, the counselor introduced the objectives of the program, group procedures, participation expectations, confidentiality principles, and group rules. Participants were encouraged to share initial experiences related to cyberbullying behavior in digital environments to facilitate emotional openness and active group interaction.

Activity Stage: The activity stage consisted of six structured sessions integrating psychoeducation, discussion, question-and-answer activities, role-playing, and reflective learning processes. The first session focused on psychoeducation regarding cyberbullying, including its forms, contributing factors, psychological impacts, and social consequences. This session also introduced empathy development, emotional awareness, and responsible digital interaction as preventive components against cyberbullying behavior. During the second and third sessions, participants were divided into smaller groups and collaboratively developed sociodrama scenarios related to cyberbullying situations commonly encountered in school and social media environments. The themes included negative online comments and the spread of false information through digital platforms. Participants independently developed role-play scripts based on their social experiences under counselor supervision.

The fourth and fifth sessions involved sociodrama performances conducted by each group. Following each performance, the counselor facilitated reflective group discussions to encourage empathy development, emotional awareness, perspective-taking abilities, and critical evaluation of cyberbullying behavior. Observer participants were actively involved in reflective evaluation activities. They identified emotional reactions, interpersonal conflicts, and alternative behavioral responses observed during the role-playing performances. The sixth session focused on evaluating students' understanding of the consequences of cyberbullying from both victim and perpetrator perspectives. Participants discussed adaptive strategies to avoid involvement in harmful online behavior. The seventh session introduced legal and ethical perspectives related to cyberbullying, including the Indonesian Electronic Information and Transactions Law (ITE Law), to strengthen students' awareness regarding the legal consequences of harmful digital behavior.

Control Group Procedure

The control group received conventional counseling services conducted by the school counselor over the same eight-week period. The counseling sessions consisted of psychoeducational lectures, verbal explanations, classroom discussion, and question-and-answer activities concerning responsible internet use, social interaction, and the negative consequences of cyberbullying behavior. Unlike the experimental group, the control-group intervention did not involve sociodrama performances, role-playing activities, structured reflective observation, or experiential learning processes. The counseling activities primarily emphasized information delivery and verbal discussion facilitated by the counselor.

Termination and Evaluation Stage

The eighth session served as the termination and evaluation stage of the intervention program. During this session, participants reflected on their experiences throughout the sociodrama activities and discussed perceived emotional and behavioral changes after participating in the intervention. At the conclusion of the intervention, a posttest using the cyberbullying scale was administered to both the experimental and control groups to evaluate changes in students' cyberbullying behavior and determine the effectiveness of the sociodrama-based group guidance services.

Data Analysis

The Shapiro-Wilk test was selected because it is appropriate for studies involving relatively small sample sizes ($n < 50$). Since the data did not meet parametric assumptions, nonparametric statistical analysis was employed. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test was used to examine differences between pretest and posttest scores within the experimental group, while descriptive comparison was used to examine score changes in the control group. The Mann-Whitney U test was used to examine differences in posttest scores between the experimental and control groups.

Ethical Considerations

To ensure ethical research procedures, participation in this study was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Participants were informed regarding the objectives of the study, confidentiality procedures, and their right to withdraw from the research process at any stage without academic consequences. Participants' identities and responses were kept confidential and used solely for research purposes. Because the intervention involved discussion of cyberbullying experiences and emotional reactions, the counselor continuously monitored students' emotional well-being throughout the intervention process to ensure educational safety and psychological comfort. The intervention activities were conducted with consideration for students' emotional well-being and educational safety throughout the research process.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics of Cyberbullying Behavior

A preliminary assessment of cyberbullying behavior was conducted among 75 tenth-grade students at Madrasah Aliyah Laboratorium Jambi using a standardized cyberbullying scale. The results indicated variation in students' cyberbullying levels across three categories: high, moderate, and low. The distribution is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Cyberbullying Scale Classification

Category	Score Interval	Frequency	Percentage
High	61-80	26	35%
Moderate	41-60	6	8%
Low	20-40	43	57%
Total		75	100%

As shown in Table 2, the majority of students were categorized in the low level (57%), followed by the high level (35%), and the moderate level (8%). Based on these results, students with high cyberbullying scores were selected as participants for the intervention phase.

Baseline Equivalence Between Groups

Prior to the intervention, both the experimental group ($M = 62.54$) and the control group ($M = 62.46$) demonstrated relatively comparable levels of cyberbullying behavior based on pretest scores. This similarity suggests that the two groups had relatively comparable baseline conditions before the intervention was implemented.

Pretest Results of the Experimental Group

The pretest was administered to 13 students in the experimental group prior to the intervention. The descriptive statistics are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Pretest Scores of the Experimental Group

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Category
Cyberbullying Behavior	62	64	62.54	High

All participants were categorized within the high cyberbullying level, with scores ranging from 62 to 64 ($M = 62.54$), indicating a relatively homogeneous baseline condition prior to treatment.

Posttest Results of the Experimental Group

Following the implementation of sociodrama-based group guidance, posttest measurements were conducted. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Posttest Scores of the Experimental Group

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Category
Cyberbullying Behavior	30	52	37.92	Low

The findings indicate a substantial reduction in cyberbullying behavior. The mean score decreased from 62.54 at pretest to 37.92 at posttest, indicating a reduction of 24.62 points. Most participants shifted from the high to the low category, suggesting a consistent behavioral improvement following the intervention.

Comparison of Pretest and Posttest Scores in the Experimental Group

To illustrate the pattern of change more clearly, Figure 1 presents the comparison between pretest and posttest scores.

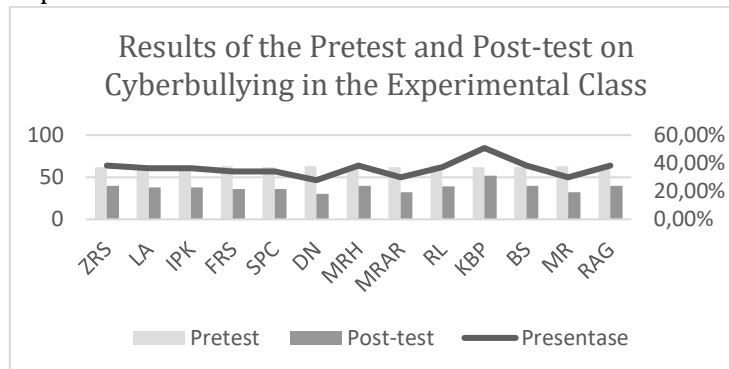


Figure 1. Comparison of pretest and posttest scores in the experimental group

The figure shows a consistent decline in cyberbullying scores across all participants following the intervention.

Pretest Results of the Control Group

The control group also showed homogeneous baseline characteristics prior to intervention. Descriptive statistics are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Pretest Scores of the Control Group

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Category
Cyberbullying Behavior	62	64	62.46	High

All participants were categorized in the high level of cyberbullying behavior (M = 62.46), indicating comparability with the experimental group at baseline.

Posttest Results of the Control Group

Posttest measurements were conducted after the intervention period. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Posttest Scores of the Control Group

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Category
Cyberbullying Behavior	50	61	56.92	Moderate

A slight reduction in cyberbullying behavior was observed, with the mean score decreasing from 62.46 to 56.92 (a reduction of 5.54 points). However, most participants remained within the moderate category, indicating limited behavioral change compared to the experimental group.

Comparison of Pretest and Posttest Scores in the Control Group

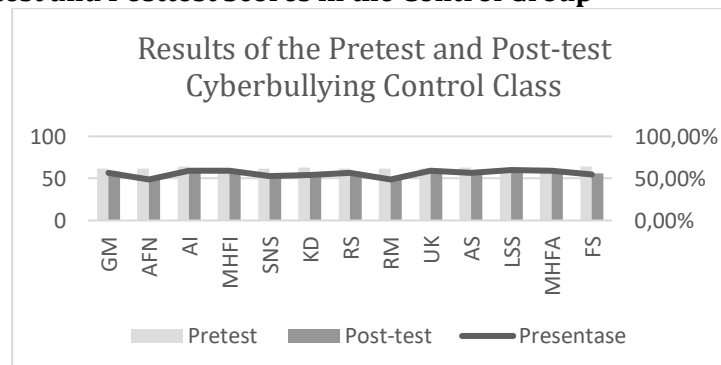


Figure 2. Comparison of pretest and posttest scores in the control group

Although a small decrease was observed, the overall change remained minimal compared to the experimental group.

Normality Test and Statistical Assumption Testing

Normality was tested using the Shapiro–Wilk test. This test was selected due to the relatively small sample size ($n < 50$).

Table 7. Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test Results

Variable	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pretest Control Group	0.638	13	0.000
Posttest Control Group	0.857	13	0.035
Pretest Experimental Group	0.750	13	0.002
Posttest Experimental Group	0.863	13	0.043

The results indicate that all significance values were below 0.05, suggesting that the data were not normally distributed. Therefore, nonparametric statistical tests were applied.

Mann-Whitney U Test

The Mann–Whitney U test was conducted to examine differences between the experimental and control groups after intervention.

Table 8. Mann-Whitney U Test Results

Statistic	Value
Mann-Whitney U	2.00
Z	-4.25
P	.001
Effect Size (r)	.83

The Mann–Whitney U test revealed a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups following the intervention, $U = 2.00$, $Z = -4.25$, $p < .001$, $r = .83$. This effect size indicates a large practical effect based on Cohen’s criteria. The effect size indicated a strong intervention effect, suggesting that sociodrama-based group guidance contributed substantially to the reduction of cyberbullying behavior among students.

Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test for the Experimental Group

The Wilcoxon signed-rank test was used to examine differences between pretest and posttest scores in the experimental group.

Table 9. Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results for the Experimental Group

Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test	Value
Comparison	Pretest Experimental Group vs Posttest Experimental Group
N	13
Z	-3.185
P	.001

The analysis showed a significant difference ($Z = -3.185$, $p = 0.001$), suggesting that cyberbullying scores were substantially lower following the intervention.

Descriptive Statistics Supporting Inferential Results

To complement inferential analysis, descriptive statistics are presented in Table 10.

Table 10. Descriptive Analysis of Pretest and Posttest Scores in the Experimental Group

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest of the experimental group	13	62	64	62.54	0.660
Posttest of the experimental group	13	30	52	37.92	5.454
Valid N (listwise)	13				

The results confirm a clear reduction in cyberbullying scores after intervention, consistent with the inferential findings.

Descriptive Comparison of Pretest and Posttest Scores in the Control Group

The control group did not receive sociodrama-based group guidance services and instead participated in conventional counseling activities conducted by the school counselor during the study period. Therefore, the analysis for the control group was limited to descriptive comparison between pretest and posttest scores to identify general patterns of change over time.

Table 11. presents the descriptive statistics of cyberbullying behavior in the control group before and after the intervention period.

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest Control Group	13	62	64	62.46	0.776
Posttest Control Group	13	50	61	56.92	3.842

The descriptive results indicate a slight decrease in cyberbullying behavior scores in the control group. The mean score decreased from 62.46 at pretest to 56.92 at posttest. However, the magnitude of change remained substantially smaller than that observed in the experimental group, suggesting that conventional counseling services produced only limited behavioral improvement during the study period. This modest reduction may have been influenced by increased awareness following repeated questionnaire exposure, participation in routine counseling activities, or broader school guidance processes occurring during the research period. Nevertheless, the findings primarily serve as a comparative baseline for understanding the stronger behavioral changes observed in the experimental group following sociodrama-based intervention.

Comparison of Gain Magnitude Between Groups

The comparison of mean score reductions demonstrated that the experimental group experienced substantially greater improvement than the control group following the intervention process.

Table 12. Comparison of Mean Score Reduction Between Groups

Group	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Mean Reduction
Experimental Group	62.54	37.92	24.62
Control Group	62.46	56.92	5.54

The experimental group demonstrated a substantially greater reduction in cyberbullying scores than the control group. This finding suggests that the sociodrama-based intervention was associated with greater reductions in cyberbullying scores than conventional counseling.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that group guidance services using sociodrama techniques showed promising effectiveness in reducing students' cyberbullying behavior. The experimental group demonstrated a substantial decrease in cyberbullying scores after participating in the intervention, while the control group showed only a modest reduction following conventional counseling services. In addition, the Mann-Whitney U test demonstrated a significant difference between the experimental and control groups after the intervention. These findings suggest that sociodrama-based group guidance provided stronger behavioral influence than conventional psychoeducational counseling approaches in addressing cyberbullying behavior among adolescents. The reduction in cyberbullying behavior observed in the experimental group may be explained by the experiential and reflective characteristics of sociodrama activities. Unlike conventional counseling approaches that mainly rely on verbal explanation and information delivery, sociodrama actively engages students in role-playing, emotional expression, and interpersonal interaction. Through dramatization of cyberbullying situations, participants were encouraged to understand the emotional experiences of victims, perpetrators, and observers simultaneously. This process likely strengthened empathy, emotional awareness, and perspective-taking abilities, which are considered important protective factors against aggressive online behavior. These findings support previous studies reporting that sociodrama techniques contribute to reductions in bullying behavior and improvement of students' social-emotional competencies (Puspita, A. E., Hartanti, J., & Mufidah, 2023; Utari, 2023; Djamarah, 2022).

The present study also extends previous research by emphasizing the active role of observer participants during sociodrama sessions. In this intervention, observers were not positioned merely as passive audiences but were encouraged to engage in reflective discussion, emotional evaluation, and behavioral analysis following role-play performances. This finding aligns with Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which proposes that individuals learn social behavior through observation, modeling, and evaluation of consequences experienced by others (Albert Bandura, 1977). Recent studies also demonstrate that observational learning contributes significantly to social behavioral adaptation and interpersonal response formation among adolescents and young adults (Rodriguez Buritica et al., 2024; Schultner et al., 2024). An additional interpretation emerging from this study concerns the mechanism through which sociodrama may influence cyberbullying behavior more effectively than conventional counseling approaches. Cyberbullying often occurs within digitally mediated environments characterized by reduced social cues, physical distance, and diminished immediate emotional feedback. Under such conditions, adolescents may cognitively understand that cyberbullying is harmful while remaining emotionally detached from its consequences. Sociodrama may help reduce this emotional distance by reconstructing online conflict situations into direct interpersonal experiences involving emotional expression, victim perspective simulation, and reflective evaluation. Through this process, participants may become more aware of the psychological impact of harmful digital behavior, thereby strengthening emotional accountability during online interaction.

Reflective observation during sociodrama activities may have strengthened students' awareness regarding the emotional and social consequences of cyberbullying behavior in digital interactions. Another important finding concerns the relevance of sociodrama for cyberbullying prevention within digitally mediated communication contexts. Cyberbullying frequently occurs in online environments characterized by indirect interaction, reduced accountability, and anonymity, which may weaken empathy and emotional sensitivity toward others. Through role-playing activities, participants were encouraged to reconstruct realistic online conflict situations and evaluate the consequences of harmful digital behavior. This experiential learning process may help students recognize that online actions produce real psychological and social consequences for victims. Therefore, the intervention appears to function not only as behavioral control but also as a reflective learning process promoting responsible digital interaction.

Although the control group demonstrated slight reductions in cyberbullying scores, the magnitude of improvement remained considerably smaller than that observed in the experimental group. This finding suggests that conventional counseling services involving psychoeducational lectures and verbal discussion may still contribute to increased awareness regarding cyberbullying behavior, although the effect may be relatively limited when compared to experiential approaches such as sociodrama. The descriptive reduction observed in the control group may also reflect participants' increased awareness after repeated measurement exposure or ongoing school counseling activities during the research period. Several contextual factors should also be considered when interpreting these findings. First, the intervention was implemented within a relatively small sample involving students from a single educational institution, which may limit the generalizability of the results to broader adolescent populations. Second, the study relied on self-report questionnaires, which may have been influenced by social desirability bias despite confidentiality procedures. Third, because the research employed a quasi-experimental design without full randomization, the possibility of uncontrolled external influences and selection bias cannot be completely eliminated. Nevertheless, the consistent reduction observed across participants in the experimental group indicates that sociodrama-based group guidance demonstrated meaningful potential as a school counseling intervention for reducing cyberbullying behavior.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings also extend Social Learning Theory and experiential learning perspectives within the context of digital behavior intervention. The study demonstrates that observational participation and reflective evaluation may function not merely as supplementary activities but as active mechanisms facilitating empathy development, behavioral self-awareness, and social responsibility. This suggests that observer-based reflective learning may represent an important component in counseling interventions designed to address cyberbullying behavior among adolescents.

Overall, the findings suggest that structured sociodrama activities integrating role-playing, emotional reflection, and observer participation may provide a promising preventive approach for addressing cyberbullying behavior among adolescents. The study contributes to the development of counseling interventions by demonstrating that experiential and reflective learning processes may strengthen students' empathy, social awareness, and responsible behavior within digital communication environments.

Research Limitations

Several limitations should be acknowledged in this study. First, the research involved a relatively small sample size consisting of students from a single educational institution, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to broader adolescent populations. Second, the study employed a quasi-experimental design without full randomization, meaning that potential selection bias and uncontrolled external variables could not be entirely eliminated. Third, the measurement of cyberbullying behavior relied on self-report questionnaires, which may have been influenced by social desirability bias or participants' reluctance to disclose negative online behavior honestly. Fourth, the study focused primarily on short-term intervention outcomes and did not examine the long-term sustainability of behavioral changes following the intervention program.

Future studies are therefore encouraged to involve larger and more diverse samples, apply randomized experimental procedures where feasible, and incorporate longitudinal follow-up measurements to examine the long-term effectiveness of sociodrama-based interventions. Additional qualitative exploration may also provide deeper understanding regarding students' emotional experiences and behavioral changes during sociodrama activities.

Research Implication

The findings of this study provide both theoretical and practical implications for counseling and educational practice. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of school counseling interventions by demonstrating that experiential and reflective learning approaches such as sociodrama may effectively reduce cyberbullying behavior among adolescents. The study also highlights the importance of observer participation within sociodrama activities as part of the reflective learning process, extending previous discussions that primarily emphasized active role-play participants. Practically, the findings suggest that school counselors may consider integrating structured sociodrama techniques into guidance and counseling programs aimed at preventing cyberbullying and promoting responsible digital behavior. Role-playing activities combined with reflective discussion may help students develop empathy, emotional awareness, and perspective-taking skills necessary for healthy online interaction. Schools may also utilize sociodrama-based interventions as part of broader digital citizenship and character education programs to strengthen students' social responsibility in online environments.

The study did not formally evaluate intervention fidelity or counselor-related effects during the implementation process. Variations in facilitation style, group dynamics, and participant engagement may have influenced the effectiveness of the intervention. Future research may therefore incorporate fidelity assessment procedures and multi-site implementation designs to strengthen the consistency and transferability of intervention

outcomes. In addition, the findings highlight the importance of preventive counseling services that move beyond information delivery toward more interactive and emotionally engaging learning experiences. Adolescents often understand online behavior cognitively but may not fully recognize its emotional and social consequences. Sociodrama provides opportunities for students to experience these consequences symbolically through interpersonal interaction and reflection. In the context of cyberbullying, students sometimes only truly understand its impact after “*experiencing another person’s perspective*,” and this is where the primary strength of sociodrama lies.

CONCLUSION

The findings suggest that sociodrama-based group guidance may contribute to reductions in cyberbullying behavior among adolescents within the studied school context. Beyond behavioral reduction, the intervention appeared to facilitate empathy development, emotional awareness, perspective-taking ability, and reflective understanding of the consequences of harmful online behavior. The integration of observer participation and reflective discussion within sociodrama activities may strengthen students’ emotional engagement and social accountability during digital interaction. The findings suggest that cyberbullying prevention programs may benefit from counseling approaches that emphasize experiential learning and interpersonal reflection rather than relying solely on informational or lecture-based methods. Sociodrama-based interventions may hold considerable potential for integration into school counseling, digital citizenship education, and adolescent character development programs aimed at promoting healthier and more responsible online behavior.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

BI contributed to the conceptualization of the study, research design, data collection, intervention implementation, data analysis, and initial manuscript drafting. DIP contributed to the supervision of the research process, methodological refinement, validation of the study framework, interpretation of findings, critical revision of the manuscript, and final approval of the submitted version. Both authors have read and approved the final manuscript and agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

AI DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The authors declare that AI-assisted tools were used only to support language refinement, grammar checking, and readability improvement during manuscript preparation. The authors did not use AI tools to generate research data, conduct statistical analysis, interpret findings, or replace scholarly judgment. All intellectual content, methodological decisions, data interpretation, and final manuscript revisions were reviewed and approved by the authors.

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