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Author Name(s): Yuliana Yuliana, Puji Gusri Handayani, Nurul Fajri, Susiati Susiati, Wa Ode Lili Andriani Nasri, Olfakhrina Olfakhrina.

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Article

The use of CBT-oriented group guidance as a preventive intervention against bullying among adolescents

Yuliana Yuliana*)[1], Puji Gusri Handayani[2], Nurul Fajri[3], Susiati Susiati[4], Wa Ode Lili Andriani Nasri[5], Olfakhrina Olfakhrina[6]

[1] Institut Agama Islam Hidayatullah Batam, Indonesia
[2] Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia
[3] Universitas Islam As Syafi'iyah, Jakarta, Indonesia
[4] Universitas Indraprasta PGRI, Jakarta, Indonesia
[5] Universitas Halu Oleo, Kendari, Indonesia
[6] UIN Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Bullying among adolescents remains a persistent problem that negatively affects students' psychological, social, and academic well-being. Although Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) has frequently been used to address bullying-related problems, its application within group guidance as a preventive intervention remains limited. Therefore, this study aimed to examine the potential effectiveness of CBT-oriented group guidance in reducing bullying behavior tendencies among adolescents. This study employed a quantitative approach using a pre-experimental one-group pretest–posttest design. The participants consisted of 10 students from SMK Maitreyawira Batam who demonstrated moderate to high bullying behavior tendencies. The intervention was implemented through structured group guidance sessions incorporating psychoeducation, cognitive restructuring, behavioral exercises, and emotional regulation training. Data were collected using a modified bullying behavior questionnaire and analyzed using the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test. The results showed a significant reduction in bullying behavior tendency scores following the intervention ($p = 0.003$). Descriptive analysis indicated that all participants shifted from the high category to the moderate category. These findings suggest that CBT-oriented group guidance may contribute to reducing bullying behavior tendencies among adolescents. However, the findings should be interpreted cautiously due to the small sample size and the absence of a control group.

Corresponding Author:

Yuliana Yuliana.
Institut Agama Islam Hidayatullah Batam
Email: yulianabk1784@gmail.com

Introduction

Bullying remains a serious and persistent problem among adolescents worldwide. Bullying can manifest in various forms, including physical, verbal, and social violence (Munandar et al., 2021). This phenomenon not only impacts psychological aspects but also affects students' social and academic well-being (Han et al., 2025; Hasan et al., 2025). Psychologically, victims of bullying have a higher risk of developing mental disorders. Research shows that victims of bullying are 1.73 times more likely to experience depression, while individuals who act as both victims and perpetrators are up to 3.19

times more likely (Ye et al., 2023). Furthermore, students who experience bullying are known to be 4.72 times more likely to experience anxiety and 3.64 times more likely to experience depression, and up to 18.52 times more likely to experience various psychological problems (Zhao et al., 2024). Other findings also show that more than half of bullying victims, whether verbal, physical, or social, experience mental disorders, with percentages of 61.9%, 73.9%, and 70.5% respectively (Liu et al., 2025).

In addition to psychological impacts, bullying also impacts students' academic and social aspects. Victims of bullying tend to experience decreased academic achievement, low motivation to learn, and increased anxiety when facing exams (Han et al., 2025). Socially, victims often withdraw from their environment, avoid group interactions, and experience difficulty establishing healthy social relationships (Saputra et al., 2025). This situation demonstrates that bullying is a multidimensional problem that requires not only comprehensive and ongoing prevention efforts but also comprehensive management.

Furthermore, bullying also occurs in schools, which should be a safe and comfortable place for students. Research conducted in 116 studies involving 603,231 participants found a combined prevalence of 25% victims of bullying, 16% perpetrators, and 16% victims and perpetrators in schools, resulting in psychological and social impacts, including suicide attempts (Ariani et al., 2025). Meanwhile, a study in China involving 84,289 students found that bullying victims reached 14.6%, with emotional bullying at 14.4% and physical bullying at 1.9% throughout 2024 (Yang et al., 2025). Meanwhile, in Sorong City, Indonesia, a survey of 165 students showed that 36.4% had been victims of bullying, while 10.3% had been perpetrators (Agustarika et al., 2025). These findings demonstrate that bullying is a problem that not only has widespread impacts but also occurs consistently in the school environment.

In addition to the long-term impacts on victims of bullying, so too do perpetrators. Research shows that not only victims of bullying experience long-term impacts, but perpetrators also experience long-term depression and anxiety (Widodo et al., 2025). The social impacts experienced by perpetrators include difficulty forming social relationships and isolation from friends (Guy et al., 2019). Furthermore, it can impact the perpetrators' personality and social behavior development (Lusiana & Arifin, 2022). Therefore, handling bullying should not only be done after the incident occurs but also focus on systematic and ongoing prevention efforts within the school environment.

Although various efforts have been made, such as the imposition of disciplinary sanctions and individual counseling services, these approaches tend to be reactive. This means that these interventions focus more on handling bullying after it has occurred, rather than on systematic and ongoing prevention efforts from the outset. School interventions are generally still dominated by reactive strategies rather than comprehensive, proactive or preventative approaches (Burlet & Panahon, 2022). Furthermore, a recent meta-analysis confirmed that comprehensive, preventative school-based programs are more effective in reducing bullying behavior than interventions that focus solely on individual interventions after the incident (Gaffney et al., 2021). This situation indicates the need for a more structured preventive approach that addresses both the cognitive and behavioral aspects of students.

One service that can be used as a preventative measure is group counseling. This service provides opportunities for students to interact, share experiences, and develop social skills in a supportive atmosphere. Through group dynamics, students can learn to understand themselves and others, thus encouraging the development of positive social behavior. Research shows that group guidance is effective in improving social skills, empathy, and the quality of interactions between students (Fauzi & Yustiana, 2024). Furthermore, group guidance also contributes to the prevention of bullying behavior by strengthening communication skills and managing emotions as protective factors (Wiharto et al., 2025).

The effectiveness of group guidance is largely influenced by the theoretical approach underlying its implementation. One approach that is particularly relevant to bullying prevention is Cognitive

Behavioral Therapy (CBT), which emphasizes the modification of maladaptive thoughts and behaviors. CBT helps individuals identify irrational beliefs, regulate emotions, and develop more adaptive behavioral responses through cognitive restructuring and behavioral training (Hofmann et al., 2019). Previous studies have also demonstrated that CBT is effective in reducing aggressive behavior, improving emotional regulation, and enhancing social skills (Matthys & Schutter, 2021). The integration of CBT into group guidance is theoretically meaningful because the strengths of both approaches complement one another in facilitating behavioral change. CBT provides structured techniques for identifying maladaptive cognitions and developing more adaptive patterns of thinking and behavior. Meanwhile, group guidance offers a social learning context in which students can share experiences, receive feedback from peers, practice newly acquired skills, and observe positive behavioral models. Through group interaction and reflection, the cognitive restructuring and behavioral skills promoted by CBT can be reinforced and applied in real interpersonal situations. Consequently, CBT-oriented group guidance not only addresses the cognitive factors associated with bullying tendencies but also strengthens the social competencies necessary for positive peer relationships. Therefore, integrating CBT principles into group guidance provides a comprehensive framework for preventing bullying by targeting both the cognitive and social-behavioral mechanisms underlying adolescent behavior.

Previous studies consistently demonstrate the effectiveness of cognitive and behavioral interventions in addressing bullying-related problems among students. CBT-based interventions have been shown to reduce bullying behavior by modifying maladaptive cognitions and behavioral responses that contribute to aggressive actions (Saadah et al., 2021). Beyond reducing problematic behaviors, these interventions also improve students' social adjustment, interpersonal relationships, and psychological well-being, particularly among those affected by bullying (Kim & Kim, 2024). Similarly, school-based programs that integrate cognitive and behavioral components have been found to promote more adaptive social interactions while simultaneously reducing bullying tendencies (Putra et al., 2026). Taken together, these findings suggest that approaches targeting both cognitive and behavioral processes hold considerable potential for preventing bullying and fostering healthier peer relationships within the school environment.

Despite evidence supporting the effectiveness of CBT interventions and group guidance in addressing bullying-related problems, important limitations remain in the existing literature. Most previous studies have focused on curative interventions implemented after bullying incidents occur, such as mediation between perpetrators and victims (Diac et al., 2025; Monalika et al., 2025; Velarde-Camaqui et al., 2026). Furthermore, CBT has predominantly been applied in individual counseling settings or broader school programs, particularly for victims of bullying (Lydecker, 2022; Velarde-Camaqui et al., 2026). As a result, empirical evidence regarding the integration of CBT principles into group guidance services as a preventive intervention remains limited. Therefore, it is still unclear whether CBT-oriented group guidance can effectively reduce bullying tendencies before bullying behaviors become established among students.

The novelty of this study lies in the integration of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) principles into group guidance services as a preventive intervention against bullying among adolescents. Unlike previous studies that have primarily emphasized curative interventions or individual counseling approaches, this study focuses on preventing bullying behavior before it occurs by addressing the cognitive and behavioral factors associated with bullying tendencies. In addition, the study extends existing research by examining the application of CBT-oriented group guidance within the context of vocational high school (SMK) students, a population that faces complex social interactions and is vulnerable to bullying behavior. Thus, this study contributes new empirical evidence regarding the potential of CBT-oriented group guidance as a school-based preventive strategy for reducing bullying tendencies among adolescents.

This research focuses on adolescents in the school context, specifically students at the vocational high school (SMK) level, who face complex social dynamics and are vulnerable to bullying. Therefore,

this study aims to test the effectiveness of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)-based group counseling as a preventive intervention in reducing the tendency for bullying behavior in adolescents.

Methods

This study employed a quantitative approach using a pre-experimental design, specifically a one-group pretest–posttest design. The purpose of this design was to examine the effectiveness of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)-oriented group guidance in preventing bullying behavior among students at SMK Maitreyawira Batam. In this design, measurements were conducted twice, namely before (pretest) and after (posttest) the intervention. The difference between the two sets of scores was used to determine changes in the level of students' bullying behavior tendencies.

The sampling technique used was purposive sampling with the following criteria: (1) active students of SMK Maitreyawira Batam, (2) students who demonstrated moderate to high tendencies to engage in bullying behavior based on the pretest results of the modified Olweus Bully-Victim Questionnaire, and (3) willingness to participate in all group guidance sessions. Based on these criteria, a total of 10 students were selected as research participants. This number represented all students who met the inclusion criteria and agreed to participate in the intervention. In addition, the relatively small group size was considered appropriate for the implementation of CBT-oriented group guidance, as it allowed for active participation, intensive interaction, effective monitoring of individual progress, and the development of optimal group dynamics throughout the intervention process.

Participant selection was conducted through several stages. First, the modified bullying behavior questionnaire was administered as a screening instrument. Second, the obtained scores were categorized using the score classification procedure proposed by Azwar (2019), which classifies respondents into low, moderate, and high categories based on the mean and standard deviation of the total scores. The categorization criteria were as follows: low ($X < M - 1SD$), moderate ($M - 1SD \leq X < M + 1SD$), and high ($X \geq M + 1SD$), where M represents the mean score and SD represents the standard deviation. Students whose scores fell within the moderate and high categories were considered eligible for participation because they demonstrated a greater tendency to engage in bullying-related behaviors and therefore required preventive intervention. Third, students who met the moderate to high bullying tendency criteria were identified as potential participants. Finally, students who fulfilled all inclusion criteria and agreed to participate in all intervention sessions were selected as research participants.

Prior to data collection, permission to conduct the study was obtained from the administration of SMK Maitreyawira Batam. All participants were informed about the objectives, procedures, and voluntary nature of the study before participating. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants. Participants were assured that their responses would remain confidential and would be used solely for research purposes. They were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences.

The implementation procedure of CBT-oriented group guidance in this study was conducted through several systematic stages. In the initial stage (Stage I), the activities focused on group formation, in which the group leader explained the definition and objectives of the program, outlined the procedures and underlying principles of group guidance, and facilitated self-introductions to build rapport among members. In Stage II (transition), the group leader explained the flow of subsequent activities, discussed the group atmosphere, and fostered cohesion through ice-breaking activities or games. This stage also aimed to enhance participants' engagement and provided an introduction to material related to aggressive behavior as a foundation for initial understanding.

In Stage III (core activities), the intervention process was centered on CBT-based techniques. Participants engaged in question-and-answer sessions regarding aspects of aggressive behavior they had not yet understood, followed by stimulus activities such as watching videos related to the

development of positive behaviors, including tolerance, assertiveness, prosocial behavior, empathy, emotional regulation, and self-concept. Each session was followed by in-depth discussions to facilitate cognitive restructuring and the development of more adaptive behaviors. Additionally, interspersed activities were incorporated to maintain group dynamics. In Stage IV (termination), the group leader and members collectively shared their impressions and outcomes of the activities as a form of reflection, as well as conveyed messages and expectations regarding future behavioral changes. Finally, in Stage V (follow-up), participants were encouraged to deepen their understanding by independently exploring information related to the materials covered, such as tolerance, assertiveness, prosocial behavior, empathy, emotional regulation, and self-concept. The activities concluded with an evaluation of participants' experiences during the group guidance sessions and were formally closed by the group leader. The schedule for the implementation of the group guidance services is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Research Procedures

Day/Date	Topic	CBT Technique	Activity Description
Monday, February 2, 2026	Pretest	Assessment	Administration of an initial questionnaire to measure the level of bullying
Thursday, February 5, 2026	Introduction to Bullying	Psychoeducation	Discussion on the definition, types, and impacts of bullying
Thursday, February 12, 2026	Thoughts and Behavior	Cognitive Restructuring	Identifying negative thoughts related to bullying
Wednesday, February 18, 2026	Modifying Negative Thoughts	Cognitive Restructuring	Exercises to replace negative thoughts with positive ones
Thursday, February 26, 2026	Empathy and Perspective	Cognitive Reframing	Training to understand others' feelings
Thursday, March 5, 2026	Assertive Behavior	Behavioral Experiment	Practice of assertiveness without causing harm
Wednesday, March 11, 2026	Emotional Regulation	Relaxation & Self-Control	Techniques to manage emotions during conflict situations
Thursday, March 12, 2026	Posttest	Evaluation	Administration of a final questionnaire and activity reflection

The instrument used in this study was the Olweus Bully-Victim Questionnaire (Olweus, 1996) which was adapted to suit the characteristics of vocational high school students at SMK Maitreyawira Batam. The adaptation process involved translating the original instrument into Indonesian, revising several item wordings to improve linguistic clarity and cultural relevance, and modifying the content to reflect situations commonly encountered by students in the school context. The instrument was subsequently refined into 20 items while maintaining its focus on measuring bullying behavior tendencies, including physical, verbal, and social/relational bullying, as well as aggressive and dominant behavior. These modifications were intended to ensure that the instrument was understandable, contextually appropriate, and relevant to the target population.

Prior to field testing, the modified instrument underwent expert validation to assess its content relevance, clarity, and suitability for the target population. The experts reviewed the wording, content coverage, and contextual appropriateness of each item to ensure that the instrument adequately represented the construct of bullying behavior among vocational high school students. Suggestions provided during the review process were incorporated into the final version of the questionnaire before it was administered to participants. Validity plays a fundamental role in instrument development because it is closely related to the accuracy and appropriateness of a test in reflecting the variable under investigation. The higher the validity of an instrument, the more accurately it

represents the phenomenon being measured (Syahputra et al., 2025). Therefore, the quality of the instrument was evaluated through validity and reliability testing.

The final instrument employed a four-point Likert scale ranging from very inappropriate (1) to very appropriate (4), with higher scores indicating a greater tendency to engage in bullying behavior. Validity plays a fundamental role in instrument development because it is closely related to the accuracy and appropriateness of a test in measuring the intended construct. Therefore, the quality of the instrument was evaluated through validity and reliability testing. Item validity was assessed using the Product Moment correlation technique, and all items demonstrated correlation coefficients greater than the critical r-table value (rcount > rtable), indicating satisfactory validity. Reliability was examined using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.87, indicating high internal consistency. Accordingly, the instrument was considered suitable for measuring students' bullying behavior tendencies.

The data analysis technique used in this study was nonparametric statistical analysis, namely the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test. This test was used to determine differences in pretest and posttest scores in the same group after receiving Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)-based group guidance intervention.

Results and Discussion

The changes in students' bullying behavior tendencies were analyzed descriptively by comparing the pretest and posttest results based on score categorization. The frequency distribution and percentages of these results are presented in Table 2. Based on Table 2, which presents the results of the descriptive analysis, a clear change in the level of students' bullying behavior tendencies was observed following the intervention. Prior to the implementation of the service, all participants were categorized at a high level, indicating that the tendency toward bullying behavior was relatively serious and uniformly distributed among group members. After participating in group guidance based on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), all participants showed a decrease to the moderate category. This shift indicates that the intervention was effective in reducing the intensity of bullying behavior, although it has not entirely eliminated the tendency.

Table 2. Categorization of Bullying Behavior Scores in Pretest and Posttest

Category	Interval	Pretest (f)	Pretest (%)	Posttest (f)	Posttest (%)
Very Low	20–35	0	0%	0	0%
Low	36–51	0	0%	0	0%
Moderate	52–67	0	0%	10	100%
High	68–83	10	100%	0	0%
Very High	84–100	0	0%	0	0%
Total		10	100%	10	100%

Based on Table 2, a clear change in the level of students' bullying behavior tendencies was observed following the intervention. Prior to the implementation of the service, all participants were categorized at a high level, indicating that the tendency toward bullying behavior was relatively serious and uniformly distributed among group members. After participating in CBT-oriented group guidance, all participants shifted to the moderate category. This finding indicates a reduction in bullying behavior tendency scores following the intervention.

To provide a more comprehensive description of the changes in bullying behavior tendencies following the intervention, descriptive statistical analyses were conducted. The results of the descriptive statistics, including the mean and standard deviation of pretest and posttest scores, are presented in Table 3.

Tabel 3. Descriptive respondent

Variable	N	Mean	SD
Pretest	10	78.30	2.21
Posttest	10	60.30	2.21

Based on Table 3, the mean pretest score was 78.30 (SD = 2.21), indicating a relatively high tendency toward bullying behavior among the participants prior to the intervention. Following participation in CBT-oriented group guidance, the mean posttest score decreased to 60.30 (SD = 2.21), representing an average reduction of 18 points. This decrease suggests a positive change in participants' bullying behavior tendencies after the intervention. In addition, the similar standard deviation values observed in both measurements indicate that the distribution of scores remained relatively consistent across participants.

An examination of individual participant scores further revealed that all 10 participants experienced reductions in bullying behavior tendency scores following the intervention. The decreases ranged from 17 to 19 points, indicating a consistent pattern of change among participants. No participant demonstrated an increase or maintained the same score, suggesting that the observed reduction occurred across all members of the group rather than being driven by only a few individuals. These differences are also presented in the following image.

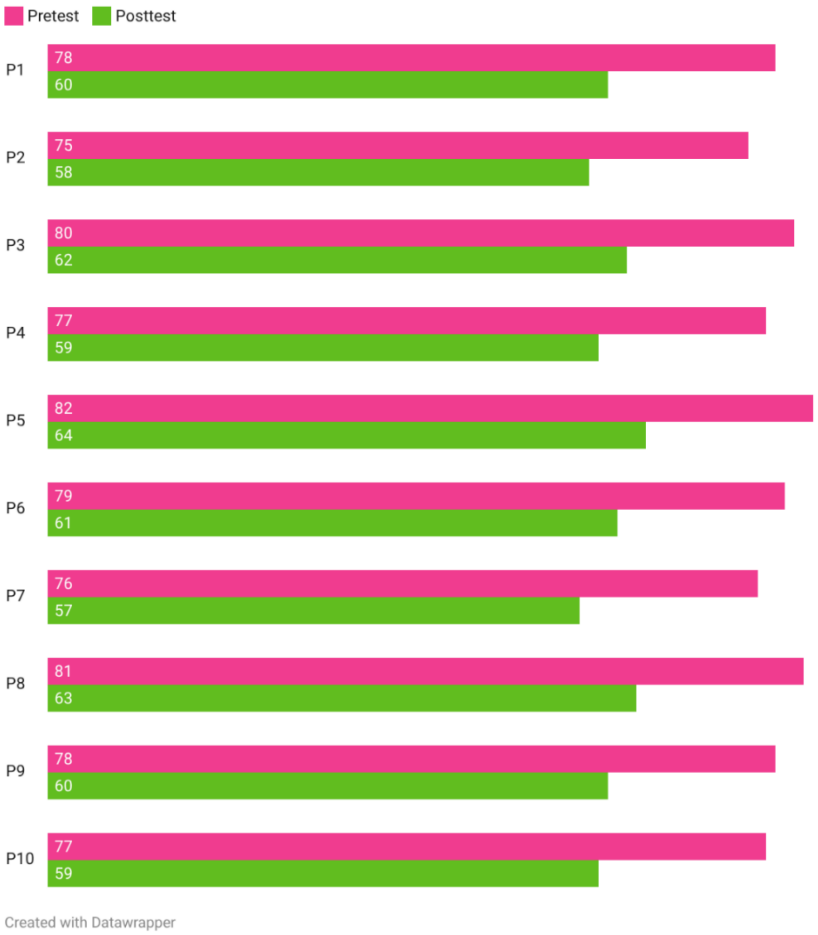

Figure 1. Comparison of Pretest and Posttest Scores

Based on Figure 1, the comparison of pretest and posttest scores among the 10 students indicates a consistent decrease in scores following the implementation of CBT-oriented group guidance. The pretest scores, which ranged from 75 to 82, declined to a range of 57 to 64 in the posttest, with a relatively uniform reduction of approximately 17–19 points. This finding suggests that participation

in CBT-oriented group guidance was associated with a reduction in bullying behavior tendencies among students at SMK Maitreyawira Batam. Therefore, the findings indicate that CBT-oriented group guidance may contribute to reducing bullying behavior tendencies among students. To strengthen the findings from the descriptive analysis, the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was conducted to examine the differences between pretest and posttest scores. The results of the Wilcoxon test are presented in Table 3, as follows.

Table 4. Results of the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

Test Statistics	Posttest – Pretest
Z	-2.970
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.003

Based on Table 3, the analysis shows that the Z value is -2.970 with a significance value (Asymp. Sig. 2-tailed) of 0.003. This significance value is lower than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), indicating that there is a statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores. These results indicate that participation in CBT-oriented group guidance was associated with a statistically significant reduction in students' bullying behavior tendency scores.

The findings of this study suggest that CBT-oriented group guidance may contribute to reducing bullying behavior tendencies among adolescents. The decrease in bullying behavior scores observed following the intervention indicates that integrating cognitive and behavioral strategies within a group setting may facilitate positive changes in students' thought patterns and behaviors. However, considering the pre-experimental design employed in this study, the findings should be interpreted with caution. Although the intervention may have contributed to the observed improvements, other factors such as increased self-awareness, peer interaction, repeated exposure to anti-bullying content, and participants' motivation to change may also have influenced the reduction in bullying behavior tendencies.

One possible explanation for these findings is the cognitive restructuring process emphasized in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). According to CBT, individual behavior is influenced by thought patterns and interpretations of social situations (Nakao et al., 2021). Through cognitive restructuring, students are encouraged to identify irrational beliefs and maladaptive thought patterns related to aggression, dominance, and peer relationships, and subsequently replace them with more adaptive ways of thinking. These cognitive changes may contribute to improved emotional regulation, including reductions in anger, impulsivity, and aggressive tendencies (Hofmann et al., 2019). In addition, behavioral exercises conducted during group guidance sessions provide opportunities for students to practice empathy, assertive communication, and constructive conflict resolution in a structured environment (Gaffney et al., 2021).

Beyond cognitive mechanisms, group dynamics may also help explain the observed changes. The group setting enables participants to exchange experiences, receive feedback, and observe alternative ways of responding to interpersonal situations. From a social learning perspective, these interactions facilitate learning through observation, imitation, and modeling, which may strengthen the internalization of positive values and adaptive social behaviors. The application of CBT techniques within a group context also allows cognitive and behavioral changes to be reinforced through repeated interaction, social support, and behavioral practice among participants (Isnaini et al., 2023). Therefore, the reduction in bullying behavior tendencies observed in this study may be associated not only with cognitive restructuring processes but also with the social learning experiences that emerged throughout the group guidance activities. These findings indicate that CBT-oriented group guidance provides a potentially valuable framework for addressing both the cognitive and social dimensions associated with bullying behavior among adolescents.

The findings of the present study may also be interpreted in light of previous evidence highlighting the social nature of bullying behavior. Syahputra, et al. (2024) reported that relational aggression among adolescents is closely associated with patterns of social interaction and

environmental influences, including social media exposure. This finding is relevant to the present study because it suggests that bullying behavior is shaped not only by individual cognitive factors but also by broader social processes. In this context, the reduction in bullying behavior tendencies observed among participants may be explained by the ability of CBT-oriented group guidance to address both individual cognitive patterns and interpersonal interactions within a supportive group environment. Thus, the current findings extend previous research by demonstrating the potential value of integrating cognitive-behavioral strategies with group-based learning experiences in bullying prevention efforts.

The findings of the present study are generally consistent with previous research demonstrating the benefits of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)-based interventions in addressing bullying-related problems among adolescents. Previous studies have reported that CBT contributes to reductions in bullying behavior through the modification of maladaptive cognitions and behaviors (Saadah et al., 2021), improvements in social relationships, adjustment, and psychological well-being (Kim & Kim, 2024), and the promotion of more adaptive social interactions in school settings (Putra et al., 2026). Similar findings have also been reported by Ferraz De Camargo et al. (2023) who highlighted the potential of CBT-based approaches in preventing and addressing bullying behavior, as well as by ime (2025) who emphasized the importance of group-based interventions in influencing both individual behavior and peer-group dynamics. Furthermore, Maulany & Ardi (2024) demonstrated that CBT-based group guidance can reduce anxiety and worry among victims of bullying. While these studies primarily focused on reducing the consequences of bullying or addressing existing bullying-related problems, the present study extends this body of literature by examining CBT-oriented group guidance as a preventive intervention targeting students with elevated tendencies toward bullying behavior. This distinction suggests that CBT principles may be beneficial not only for intervention after bullying occurs but also for preventing the development of bullying behavior among adolescents.

The broader implications of the present findings are also supported by studies examining other forms of negative peer behavior among adolescents. Hapsari et al. (2026) demonstrated that body shaming can negatively affect adolescents' mental health, while Normalasari et al. (2025) reported that relational aggression is associated with declines in psychological well-being. These findings suggest that harmful interpersonal behaviors extend beyond bullying itself and may contribute to a range of emotional and social difficulties among adolescents. In this context, the reduction in bullying behavior tendencies observed in the present study may be particularly important because preventive interventions targeting maladaptive cognitions, emotional regulation, and social interactions have the potential to reduce broader psychosocial risks. This interpretation is further supported by Rismayanti et al. (2025) who found that CBT-based interventions promote more adaptive behavioral patterns among students, and by Hikmat et al. (2024) who emphasized the value of school-based preventive approaches in addressing bullying-related problems. Taken together, these findings reinforce the importance of integrating CBT-oriented group guidance into school counseling programs as part of a broader effort to promote students' psychological well-being and positive social development.

Several factors may help explain the positive changes observed following the implementation of CBT-oriented group guidance. One important factor is the integration of cognitive and behavioral components, which enables students not only to recognize maladaptive thought patterns but also to practice more adaptive behaviors in real social situations. This interpretation is consistent with previous findings indicating that CBT reduces bullying behavior through structured processes of cognitive and behavioral modification (Saadah et al., 2021)

Another factor relates to the role of group dynamics. Through interaction with peers, participants were able to share experiences, receive feedback, and learn alternative ways of responding to interpersonal conflicts. Such processes may strengthen social learning and reinforce adaptive behavioral changes. Similar findings have been reported by Nisa et al. (2025) who demonstrated that CBT-based group counseling significantly reduces bullying behavior through intensive group

interaction. Likewise, Syahputra, et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of social interaction and environmental influences in shaping aggressive and relational behaviors among adolescents.

In addition, improvements in students' psychological functioning may have contributed to the observed reduction in bullying tendencies. Previous research has shown that CBT-based group guidance can reduce anxiety and negative emotional experiences among students Maulany & Ardi (2024) Better emotional regulation may help students respond to social situations more adaptively and reduce the likelihood of engaging in bullying-related behaviors. Furthermore, the successful implementation of CBT-oriented group guidance may also depend on students' active participation and the facilitator's ability to effectively manage group processes and apply CBT techniques. Consistent with Tamamiyah (2024) structured implementation within school settings appears to be an important factor supporting positive behavioral change among students.

Despite its potential benefits, the implementation of CBT-oriented group guidance in schools may face several practical challenges. School counselors often have limited time, large student caseloads, and varying levels of training in CBT techniques. In addition, the successful implementation of group-based interventions requires consistent student participation, adequate institutional support, and sufficient opportunities for follow-up activities. Therefore, schools need to provide appropriate resources and professional development opportunities to ensure the effective and sustainable implementation of CBT-oriented group guidance programs.

The findings of this study have important implications for the practice of guidance and counseling in schools, particularly in the development of more systematic and evidence-based bullying prevention programs. CBT-based group guidance can be utilized as a preventive strategy integrated into counseling services to foster more adaptive social behavior among students. In addition, schools may develop training programs for school counselors to enhance their competence in effectively applying CBT techniques within group settings. Another implication is the need for institutional support in the form of school policies that provide adequate time, facilities, and a conducive environment for the sustainable implementation of such interventions. Therefore, the implementation of CBT-based group guidance not only impacts individuals but also contributes to the creation of a safe, positive, and bullying-free school climate.

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the use of a one-group pretest–posttest design without a control group limits the ability to attribute the observed changes exclusively to the intervention. Second, the relatively small sample size restricts the generalizability of the findings to broader and more diverse adolescent populations. Third, the intervention was conducted over a relatively short period, which may have limited the extent of behavioral changes observed among participants. Fourth, no follow-up assessment was conducted; therefore, the long-term sustainability of the intervention effects remains unclear. In addition, the measurement of bullying behavior relied primarily on students' self-reports, which may be influenced by social desirability and response bias. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve larger sample sizes, employ experimental or longitudinal designs, include follow-up assessments, and utilize multiple sources of data in order to obtain more comprehensive evidence regarding the effectiveness of CBT-oriented group guidance in preventing bullying behavior.

Conclusions

The findings of this study suggest that CBT-oriented group guidance may contribute to reducing bullying behavior tendencies among adolescents. The observed decrease in bullying behavior scores following the intervention indicates that integrating cognitive restructuring and behavioral practice within a group setting may support the development of more adaptive thinking patterns, emotional regulation, and positive social interactions. These findings provide preliminary evidence that CBT-oriented group guidance has potential as a preventive strategy for addressing bullying behavior in school settings. This study also contributes to the growing literature on the application of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) within preventive school-based interventions. Unlike many previous

studies that have focused primarily on curative approaches, the present study examined the potential of CBT-oriented group guidance as an early intervention for students who demonstrate elevated bullying tendencies. The findings suggest that combining CBT principles with group guidance may offer a promising approach for supporting positive behavioral change among adolescents.

However, the findings should be interpreted in light of several limitations, including the use of a one-group pretest–posttest design without a control group, the relatively small sample size, and the absence of follow-up measurements to examine the long-term sustainability of the intervention effects. Therefore, future studies are encouraged to employ experimental designs with control groups, involve larger and more diverse samples, and conduct follow-up assessments to provide stronger evidence regarding the effectiveness of CBT-oriented group guidance in preventing bullying behavior among adolescents.

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