International Journal of Technology and Education Research

https://e-journal.citakonsultindo.or.id/index.php/IJETER

E-ISSN: 2986-0733

Individual Counseling Services In Cyberbullying Behavior In Students: A Qualitative Study At Budi Mulia Junior High School, Pematangsiantar

Mirza Irawan[1], Inggrid Caroline Malau[2]

[12] Medan State University, North Sumatra, Indonesia

Corresponding Author:konsmirza@unimed.ac.id, inggridmalau2004@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims to describe how individual counseling services are implemented to address cyberbullying behavior problems experienced by students at Budi Mulia Junior High School, Pematangsiantar. This study used a descriptive qualitative approach with the main informant being a Guidance and Counseling teacher selected through a purposive method. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and document collection, then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model. The study showed that cyberbullying occurs in the form of negative comments, sarcasm on social media, teasing through online messages, and posts that demean peers. Individual counseling services were conducted in three stages: the initial stage, the core stage, and the final stage. Barriers to service implementation included low levels of student openness, the perception that the counseling room was like a place of punishment, and the instability of behavioral changes after the service was implemented. These findings indicate that individual counseling services are very important in helping students understand cyberbullying and increasing their awareness of using social media responsibly.

Keywords:individual counseling, cyberbullying, students, guidance and counseling teachers.

INTRODUCTION

The development of social media has transformed the way students interact and expanded their digital communication space. On the one hand, social media facilitates the exchange of information and expands social relationships. However, on the other hand, excessive use actually increases the likelihood of negative behaviors, such as cyberbullying.

Copyright to the author of some rights reserved This work is licensed under aCreative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Cyberbullying is defined as actions that hurt, ridicule, demean, or humiliate someone through electronic media, such as negative comments, sarcasm, taunts, and posts that harm others (Yusniarti, 2023 & Arifin et al., 2025).

In school settings, cyberbullying requires special attention because students are still in a period of immature emotional and social development. Conflicts within friendships, feelings of jealousy, the urge to respond impulsively, and a lack of self-control when using social media can trigger such behavior. Research conducted at Budi Mulia Junior High School in Pematangsiantar shows that cyberbullying occurs among students in various forms, such as negative comments, social media sarcasm, teasing via online messages, and posts accusing or criticizing peers. This situation indicates that social media has become a source of social conflict among students.

Addressing cyberbullying in schools requires the participation of guidance and counseling teachers, particularly through services that provide a deeper understanding of the problems faced by students. One relevant service is individual counseling, as it provides guidance and counseling teachers with the opportunity to explore the background of the problem, understand the emotional state of students, and tailor support to each individual's needs. Putri Mayang Sari et al. (2023) stated that individual counseling is a service frequently used to help students with their problems due to its more personalized approach. Similarly, Masdudi (2015) emphasized that individual counseling is a direct support process that helps individuals understand and resolve their personal problems.

Based on this, this study focuses on individual counseling services in the context of cyberbullying behavior among students at Budi Mulia Junior High School, Pematangsiantar. This study aims to describe the forms of cyberbullying behavior that occur, the implementation of individual counseling services by guidance counselors, and the obstacles encountered in implementing these services.

METHOD

Samples and Participants

This study used a qualitative descriptive approach. Participants were guidance and counseling teachers from Budi Mulia Junior High School in Pematangsiantar, selected purposively. Participant selection was based on the teachers' direct involvement in implementing individual counseling services and addressing cyberbullying behavior in the school environment. In qualitative research, participant selection is not intended to statistically represent the population, but rather to collect in-depth data from individuals who have an understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Sugiyono, 2023).

Copyright to the author of some rights reserved This work is licensed under aCreative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Inclusion Criteria

Participants in this study must meet the following inclusion criteria:

1. As an active guidance and counseling teacher at Budi Mulia Pematangsiantar Middle School.
2. Participate directly in the provision of individual counseling services related to cyberbullying behavior towards students.
3. Understanding the dynamics of cases and the process of guidance and counseling services in schools. These criteria are established to ensure that the data obtained remains relevant to the research focus.

Exclusion Criteria

Participants were excluded if they were not directly involved in addressing cyberbullying or provided individual counseling services to students unrelated to the issue. Furthermore, individuals with only general knowledge of guidance and counseling services and no direct experience in handling cases were not considered primary participants.

Rationalization of Method Selection

A descriptive qualitative approach was chosen because this study aimed to understand and describe in-depth the implementation of individual counseling services in the context of cyberbullying, rather than to examine the relationships between variables. This approach allowed for data collection in the form of narratives, experiences, and explanations from participants, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study. The research was also conducted in a realistic, everyday setting, allowing for a more precise understanding of the service process within the school context (Sugiyono, 2023).

Interview and Data Collection Guidelines

Research data was obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation collection. Interviews were used to obtain information on the types of cyberbullying behaviors, individual counseling methods, guidance and counseling teachers' approaches to fostering openness in students, and obstacles encountered during the service process. Observations were conducted to directly observe how the individual counseling process unfolded, from the opening stage and problem-solving to the closing stage. Documentation was used to supplement and strengthen the information obtained from interviews and observations.

Copyright to the author of some rights reserved This work is licensed under aCreative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Technology and Education Research

https://e-journal.citakonsultindo.or.id/index.php/IJETER

E-ISSN: 2986-0733

Data Collection Implementation Process

Data collection was conducted in three stages. First, the pre-field phase, which included developing a research plan, applying for research permits, initial communication with the school, and preparing research tools and instruments. Second, the field implementation phase, which involved conducting in-depth interviews with guidance and counseling teachers, observing the implementation of individual counseling services, and collecting related documents. Third, the intensive analysis phase, which involved organizing and processing the data collected during the research.

Ethical Considerations of Research

This research adhered to ethical principles by obtaining approval from the school before data collection. Participants were provided with an explanation of the research objectives, the topics covered, and how the data collected during the study would be used. The identities of the parties involved in the cyberbullying cases were not disclosed in the research report to maintain confidentiality and prevent any negative impact on students. Furthermore, data obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation were used solely for academic purposes. Throughout the research, the researcher maintained a polite, non-judgmental attitude and did not interfere with the ongoing counseling process.

Researcher Positionality

In this study, the researcher acted as the primary instrument (human instrument) directly involved in collecting and interpreting data. The researcher acted as an observer seeking to understand how individual counseling services are implemented in addressing cyberbullying, focusing on the perspectives of guidance and counseling teachers as the primary parties involved. The researcher did not act as the service implementer, but rather as the person conducting interviews, observing, recording, and interpreting the data based on findings in the field. Recognizing this position is important so that the researcher can continue to reflect on the possibility of subjectivity throughout the research process.

Reflexive Thematic Analysis

The research data was analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction stage, the researcher selected, directed, and simplified data from interviews, observations, and documentation according to the research focus. The data was then presented

Copyright to the author of some rights reserved This work is licensed under aCreative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

narratively to facilitate understanding of the research findings. The final stage was drawing conclusions, which involved understanding the overall meaning of the data obtained to understand how individual counseling services are implemented in the context of cyberbullying behavior. To ensure data reliability, the researcher re-examined the information, sought different or conflicting data sources, and discussed it with those familiar with qualitative research methods.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Forms of Cyberbullying Behavior in Students

This study shows that several forms of cyberbullying are perpetrated by students at Budi Mulia Junior High School in Pematangsiantar, such as negative comments on social media, sarcasm delivered through social media posts or stories, teasing through online messages, and spreading derogatory remarks about peers. These behaviors usually occur due to conflict between friends, feelings of anger, jealousy, or a desire to retaliate against the peer. In some situations, students are more willing to convey insults or sarcasm via social media than in person, because they feel more comfortable and don't need to face the target directly.

Implementation of Individual Counseling Services in the Context of Cyberbullying Behavior

The handling of cyberbullying behavior at Budi Mulia Junior High School, Pematangsiantar, is carried out by guidance and counseling teachers by providing individual counseling services. Based on the results of interviews and observations, the implementation of services is carried out in three stages: the initial stage, the main stage, and the closing stage. Initially, the guidance and counseling teacher tries to create a comfortable atmosphere by greeting students, asking how they are, and creating a sense of security so that students feel comfortable and interested in opening up. This stage is important because some students come to the guidance and counseling room feeling afraid, anxious, or not ready to share the problems they are experiencing. In the next stage, the guidance and counseling teacher begins to explore the chronology of cyberbullying incidents, the background of the conflict, and the parties involved in the incident.

Guidance and counseling teachers use open-ended questions, listen attentively, provide empathetic attention, and help students understand the impact of their behavior or experiences. Through this process, students are encouraged to recognize the causes of their actions, understand the impact of cyberbullying on others, and reevaluate behaviors previously considered normal on social media. In the final stage, guidance is provided, understanding is

Copyright to the author of some rights reserved This work is licensed under aCreative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

reinforced, and a brief evaluation of students' knowledge is conducted after the counseling process is complete. Guidance and counseling teachers emphasize the importance of managing emotions well, being careful in using social media, and avoiding actions that could harm peers. At this stage, individual counseling serves as a tool for problem-solving and a learning tool so that students are better able to communicate responsibly in the digital environment.

Barriers to the Implementation of Individual Counseling Services

The research also shows that implementing individual counseling services in the context of cyberbullying faces various challenges. The main obstacle identified is students' low level of openness in participating in the counseling process. Some students fear being perceived as guilty or embarrassed to admit their involvement in cyberbullying. Furthermore, students avoid calling the guidance counselor because they perceive the counseling room as a place of punishment, not a place to seek help.

Another obstacle relates to students' ability to sustain behavioral changes after the service is provided. Although students can understand the guidance and counseling teacher's instructions during the counseling session, their behavioral changes don't always occur consistently. This is influenced by their social environment, social media habits, and unstable emotional control. Therefore, addressing cyberbullying through individual counseling requires ongoing supervision and support to ensure the development of positive changes in students' attitudes and behaviors.

DISCUSSION

This study shows that students at Budi Mulia Junior High School in Pematangsiantar engage in several forms of cyberbullying, including offensive comments on social media, harmful innuendo, teasing via online messages, and posts targeting their peers. These behaviors arise from friendship conflicts, feelings of anger, envy, and the desire to react directly on social media. These findings suggest that social media serves not only as a communication tool but can also be a platform for aggressive behavior in digital interactions (Arifin et al., 2025; Yusniarti, 2023).

Cyberbullying management in schools involves providing one-on-one counseling services by guidance and counseling teachers. This service was chosen because it helps guidance and counseling teachers better understand students' problems, identify their root causes, and provide assistance tailored to each individual's needs. This finding aligns with Putri Mayang Sari et al. (2023), who demonstrated that individual counseling is effective in helping students overcome their problems because the assistance provided is personalized and targeted.

Copyright to the author of some rights reserved This work is licensed under aCreative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Individual counseling in this study was implemented in three stages: the initial stage, the core stage, and the final stage. Initially, the guidance and counseling teacher created a calm and comfortable atmosphere so that students felt comfortable and willing to speak openly. In the initial stage, the guidance and counseling teacher explored the history of the problem, its causes, and the impact of cyberbullying using open-ended questions, empathy, and active listening. Meanwhile, in the final stage, the guidance and counseling teacher provided guidance, reinforcement, and a brief evaluation so that students better understood the consequences of their behavior. This pattern aligns with Masdudi's (2015) opinion that individual counseling is a planned assistance process to help someone understand and resolve their personal problems.

In addition to helping students resolve problems, individual counseling also provides a way to foster understanding among students. Through this service, guidance counselors not only address conflicts but also explain the impact of cyberbullying, the importance of self-control, and ethical social media use. Thus, individual counseling not only helps address current issues but also fosters social awareness and responsibility in students.

This study also shows that the implementation of individual counseling still faces several obstacles, such as a lack of openness from students, a tendency to avoid calling the guidance counselor, and unstable behavioral changes that occur after the counseling service is provided. These conditions indicate that addressing cyberbullying issues is not sufficient in a single meeting but requires continuous follow-up and support. Therefore, the success of individual counseling services depends on the level of openness of students, the ability of the guidance and counseling teacher, and support from the school environment in fostering healthier digital behaviors.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that there is cyberbullying behavior carried out by students at Budi Mulia Junior High School, Pematangsiantar, which includes negative comments, sarcasm, teasing, and posts that are detrimental to their peers on social media. Handling this behavior is carried out by providing individual counseling services by guidance and counseling teachers, which are implemented in three stages: the initial stage, the core stage, and the final stage. However, in its implementation, these services still experience obstacles due to a lack of openness from students, a tendency to avoid guidance and counseling teachers, and unstable behavioral changes, so that follow-up activities and ongoing mentoring are needed.

Copyright to the author of some rights reserved This work is licensed under aCreative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

REFERENCE

Arifin, I., Nirwana, Nurmagfira, & Aksayanti. (2025). Dynamics of cyberbullying on social media and its impact on adolescents' social lives. DISCOURSE: Indonesian Journal of Social Studies and Education, 2(2), 92–102.https://doi.org/10.69875/djosse.v2i2.133

Hanifah, H., Salsabillah, L., Tazkia Fitri, A., Mona Febriani, R., Hidayatullah, R., Harmonedi, H., Relevant, P., & Thinking and Hypothesis of Educational Research Haura Hanifah, K. (nd). IHSAN: Journal of Islamic Education. http://ejournal.yayasanpendidikandzurriyatulquran.id/index.php/ihsan

Insani, B., Andi Yaksa, R., Guidance and Counseling, J., Teacher Training and Education, F., & Jambi, U. (2022). Factors causing cyberbullying behavior in students. Jambura Guidance and Counseling Journal, 3(1), 26–33.

Jamaruddin, J. (2021). The role of guidance and counseling teachers in improving student self-control at SMK Negeri 1 Sarjo, Pasangkayu Regency (Doctoral dissertation, IAIN Palu).

Masdudi. (2015). Guidance and counseling from a school perspective. Nurjati Press.

Rovida, K., & Sasmini. (2024). The concept of techno-prevention-based cyberbullying prevention in the Society 5.0 era in Indonesia. IUS QUIA IUSTUM Law Journal, 31(2), 461–485.https://doi.org/10.20885/iustum.vol31.iss2.art10

Sari, PM (2023). Implementation of junior high school individual counseling services in Medan City.

Sugiyono. (2023). Quantitative, qualitative, and R&D research methods (2nd edition, 5th printing). Alfabeta.

Yusniarti, N. (2023). Guidance and counseling teachers' efforts in addressing cyberbullying. TAUJIHAT: Journal of Islamic Guidance and Counseling, 81–97.https://doi.org/10.21093/tj.v4i2.756

Copyright to the author of some rights reserved This work is licensed under aCreative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.