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DEVELOPING "MIND CONTROL ROOM": A WEBSITE-BASED SCHOOL COUNSELING RESOURCE FOR THE PREVENTION OF VERBAL AGGRESSION AMONG JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract
Verbal aggression among students can undermine psychological safety, peer relationships, and school engagement. This study reports the development of "Mind Control Room," a website-based guidance and counseling resource designed to support the prevention of verbal aggression among eighth-grade students at UPT SPF SMP Negeri 8 Makassar, Indonesia. The study used a research-and-development approach involving needs analysis, product design and prototyping, expert review, and a preliminary practicality assessment. The intervention concept draws on cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), particularly the identification and reappraisal of maladaptive automatic thoughts, and translates these principles into three website components: Verbal Check-Up, Change Your Mind, and My Action. The source manuscript reports that expert appraisal placed the product in the "very valid" category and that user responses indicated "very practical" usability. However, numerical scores, sample sizes, validator characteristics, instrument properties, and detailed implementation procedures were not reported in the available manuscript. Accordingly, the findings are interpreted as preliminary evidence of perceived content/design suitability and usability, not as evidence that the website reduces the incidence of verbal aggression. The article discusses the product's design rationale, potential contribution to technology-supported school counseling, implementation safeguards, and the need for controlled outcome evaluation. A subsequent study should report transparent development procedures and test behavioral outcomes using validated measures and an appropriate comparison design.

Keywords: school counseling, verbal aggression, cognitive behavioral therapy, digital intervention, educational design research, adolescents

Abstrak
Agresi verbal di kalangan siswa dapat merusak keamanan psikologis, hubungan antarteman, dan keterlibatan di sekolah. Studi ini melaporkan pengembangan "Mind Control Room," sebuah sumber daya bimbingan dan konseling berbasis situs web yang dirancang untuk mendukung pencegahan agresi verbal di kalangan siswa kelas delapan di UPT SPF SMP Negeri 8 Makassar, Indonesia. Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan penelitian dan pengembangan (research-and-development) yang mencakup analisis kebutuhan, perancangan dan pembuatan prototipe produk, tinjauan ahli, serta penilaian praktikalitas awal. Konsep intervensi ini mengacu pada terapi perilaku kognitif (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy/CBT)—khususnya identifikasi dan penilaian ulang

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*terhadap pikiran otomatis yang maladaptif—dan menerjemahkan prinsip-prinsip tersebut ke dalam tiga komponen situs web: *Verbal Check-Up*, *Change Your Mind*, dan *My Action*. Naskah sumber melaporkan bahwa penilaian ahli menempatkan produk ini dalam kategori "sangat valid," dan respons pengguna menunjukkan tingkat kegunaan yang "sangat praktis." Namun, skor numerik, ukuran sampel, karakteristik validator, properti instrumen, serta prosedur implementasi secara rinci tidak dilaporkan dalam naskah yang tersedia. Dengan demikian, temuan ini ditafsirkan sebagai bukti awal mengenai kesesuaian konten/desain dan kegunaan produk menurut persepsi pengguna, bukan sebagai bukti bahwa situs web tersebut mampu mengurangi kejadian agresi verbal. Artikel ini membahas dasar pemikiran desain produk, potensi kontribusinya terhadap konseling sekolah berbasis teknologi, langkah-langkah pengamanan dalam implementasi, serta perlunya evaluasi hasil yang terkontrol. Studi selanjutnya diharapkan dapat melaporkan prosedur pengembangan secara transparan dan menguji hasil perilaku menggunakan instrumen yang tervalidasi serta desain perbandingan yang tepat.*
Kata kunci: *konseling sekolah, agresi verbal, terapi perilaku kognitif, intervensi digital, penelitian desain pendidikan, remaja*

INTRODUCTION

Schools are developmental environments in which academic learning is inseparable from students' social and emotional experiences (Corey, 2017). Peer interactions can foster belonging and cooperation, but they can also involve intimidation, humiliation, exclusion, and aggressive communication. Verbal aggression—including insults, derogatory labels, threats, and humiliating remarks—may be normalized as joking or ordinary peer interaction, making it less visible to adults than physical aggression. Nevertheless, peer victimization is associated with adverse psychological and academic adjustment during early adolescence (Rueger & Jenkins, 2014). Meta-analytic evidence has linked peer victimization with lower self-esteem and greater internalizing symptoms (Mullan et al., 2023), while bullying involvement is associated with elevated depressive symptoms (Ye et al., 2023).

The broader bullying literature documents the prevalence and consequences of peer aggression across school contexts (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2019; Olweus, 1993; Smith, 2014; UNESCO, 2019; World Health Organization [WHO], 2021). (Olweus, 1993; Smith, 2014; UNESCO, 2019; World Health Organization [WHO], 2021). Meta-analyses indicate that school-based anti-bullying programmes can reduce bullying perpetration and victimization, although effects vary by programme design and implementation quality (Gaffney et al., 2019; Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). The evidence also cautions against treating all harmful peer interactions as identical (Modecki et al., 2014; Moore et al., 2017): bullying typically involves repetition and a power imbalance, whereas verbal aggression may occur in isolated conflicts as well as in sustained patterns of victimization (Hymel & Swearer, 2015; Volk et al., 2014). This article therefore uses "verbal aggression" as the principal product focus and does not assume that every verbal incident meets the definitional criteria for bullying.

Early adolescence is a particularly relevant period for preventive support because peer relationships, identity development, emotional reactivity, and social evaluation become increasingly salient. Research has associated peer victimization with psychological distress and social adjustment difficulties (Arseneault, 2018; Moore et al., 2017; Rueger & Jenkins, 2014). Verbal aggression should consequently be addressed not only through disciplinary responses but also through preventive education that helps students recognize harmful language, understand emotional triggers, and practice alternative responses. Whole-school approaches are important because aggressive behavior is shaped by individual, peer, classroom, family, and institutional conditions (Bradshaw, 2015; Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Salmivalli, 2010). (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Salmivalli, 2010). Developmental accounts of adolescent depression and adjustment further underscore the need to consider vulnerability and context rather than attributing aggression to a single cognitive mechanism (Abela & Hankin, 2008).

Cognitive behavioral therapy offers one relevant psychological framework. CBT conceptualizes emotional and behavioral responses as connected to interpretations of events and patterns of thinking (Beck, 1976, 2011; Beck, 2020). Cognitive restructuring helps individuals identify automatic thoughts, examine the evidence supporting them, consider alternative interpretations, and develop more adaptive responses (Beck, 2011; Kendall, 2012). In the context of verbal aggression, this process may help students notice hostile interpretations, global labeling, overgeneralization, and impulsive reactions before responding. This rationale is consistent with evidence on cognitive-behavioral approaches to anger and aggression among children and adolescents (Sukhodolsky et al., 2004; Sukhodolsky et al., 2016).

Digital delivery may extend the reach and flexibility of school-based psychosocial support, but digital format alone does not establish intervention effectiveness (Bandura, 1977; Abela & Hankin, 2008). Reviews of digital mental health interventions for adolescents report promising findings for some structured CBT interventions while also identifying variation in evidence quality, engagement, and implementation (Lehtimaki et al., 2021; Wright et al., 2023). Reviews of school-based digital interventions likewise emphasize that outcomes depend on intervention design, implementation, and the support available to students (Abura-Meerdink & Albright, 2024; Miller & Thabrew, 2024). Digital school counseling must also address confidentiality, equitable access, data security, informed consent, and procedures for responding to disclosures of harm (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2023).

Against this background, the present study developed “Mind Control Room,” a website-based counseling resource intended to support preventive work on verbal aggression at UPT SPF SMP Negeri 8 Makassar. The design translates selected CBT principles into three interactive components: Verbal Check-Up, Change Your Mind, and My Action. The study’s contribution is primarily developmental: it presents a theory-informed digital resource and preliminary appraisal of its validity and practicality. It does not claim to

establish behavioral efficacy because the source study did not report a controlled outcome evaluation.

Research questions

(1) What student needs and design considerations informed the development of Mind Control Room? (2) How was CBT-informed content translated into the website's three principal components? (3) What preliminary evidence of content/design validity and user practicality was reported?

METHOD

Research design and development procedure

The study employed a research-and-development (R&D) approach to produce and obtain preliminary appraisal of a website-based school counseling resource. The procedure described in the source manuscript comprised needs analysis, product planning, prototype development, expert validation, and practicality testing. The R&D orientation is also informed by established development and counseling literature (Corey, 2017; Easterday et al., 2018; McKenney & Reeves, 2019, 2021; Plomp & Nieveen, 2013). This sequence is consistent with the general logic of educational design research, in which a practical intervention is developed through theoretically informed design and evaluated in its intended context (Easterday et al., 2018; McKenney & Reeves, 2019, 2021; Plomp & Nieveen, 2013). The present report should be understood as an early-stage product-development study rather than a full-cycle design-based research programme. Methodological alignment and iterative design decisions can be further considered in light of recent work on educational design research (Jacobsen & McKenney, 2024).

Setting and participants

The development took place in UPT SPF SMP Negeri 8 Makassar, Indonesia. The source manuscript identifies eighth-grade students as the student users and school guidance and counseling teachers as practitioner participants. It also states that experts reviewed the material and media dimensions. The manuscript does not provide the number of students, teachers, or experts; sampling procedures; age or gender distributions; inclusion criteria; or the professional qualifications of the validators. These details must be supplied from the original research records before journal submission. They should not be reconstructed or estimated.

Needs analysis and product design

The needs analysis used a student questionnaire to identify forms of verbal aggression and the perceived need for digital counseling media. The source manuscript reports that teasing, insults, negative labeling, sarcastic remarks, and verbal threats were identified in everyday peer interactions, and that verbal aggression was the most prominent form reported in the school context. Because item wording, response scales, sample size, and descriptive frequencies are not available, this finding is reported qualitatively and should not be interpreted as a prevalence estimate.

The design translated the needs analysis and CBT principles into three components. Verbal Check-Up was intended to prompt recognition of verbal behaviors and provide an initial indication of areas requiring attention. Change Your Mind was designed to guide students through identifying an automatic thought, examining its accuracy or helpfulness, and considering a more balanced interpretation. My Action was designed to support self-reflection and self-monitoring of intended or attempted communication changes. Self-monitoring and structured skills practice are established elements in cognitive-behavioral approaches (Beck, 2011; Kendall, 2012; Kazdin, 2005).

Instruments and evaluation

The instruments identified in the source manuscript were a needs-analysis questionnaire, expert-validation forms, and user-practicality questionnaires. Expert review addressed content relevance, language clarity, theoretical alignment, visual presentation, and organization. Instrument construction and scale refinement should follow established measurement-development principles (DeVellis, 2017). Practicality assessment addressed accessibility, clarity of instructions, attractiveness, ease of use, and perceived usefulness. The manuscript does not report the number of items, scale anchors, score-conversion formula, validity evidence for the instruments, reliability estimates, or the numerical results. These omissions limit reproducibility and prevent independent verification of the "very valid" and "very practical" classifications.

Data analysis

The source manuscript states that quantitative descriptive analysis was used to summarize appraisal scores and that qualitative analysis was used to examine comments and suggestions from experts and users. A reproducible report should specify the formula used to convert raw scores to percentages or indices, the decision thresholds for each category, how missing responses were handled, and how qualitative comments informed revisions. If content validity was quantified, the authors should report the selected index and its rationale (e.g., Aiken's V or a content-validity index), the number and expertise of raters, item-level results, and uncertainty where appropriate (Aiken, 1985; Lynn, 1986; Polit & Beck, 2006). These statistics cannot be added without the underlying data. The interpretation of ratings should be grounded in established approaches to content validity and expert judgment (Aiken, 1985; Lynn, 1986; Polit & Beck, 2006).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Needs identified in the school context

The needs analysis, as summarized in the source manuscript, identified verbal aggression as a salient concern in students' daily interactions. Reported forms included teasing, insults, negative labeling, sarcastic comments, and verbal threats. The source text characterizes verbal aggression as the most dominant form of aggression observed in the school context. In the absence of the underlying sample description and item-level frequencies, this result is best interpreted as a descriptive finding from the local needs

assessment rather than evidence of a general pattern among Indonesian junior high school students. Global monitoring reports similarly identify school violence and bullying as concerns requiring coordinated prevention and response (CDC, 2019; UNESCO, 2019; WHO, 2021).

Features of the Mind Control Room website

The resulting product was an interactive website organized around three components. Verbal Check-Up provides a structured prompt for students to recognize and reflect on verbal behaviors. Its intended function is preliminary awareness and needs identification; it should not be presented as a diagnostic instrument unless it has undergone appropriate psychometric development and validation.

Change Your Mind operationalizes a simplified cognitive-restructuring sequence. Students are prompted to identify a situation, recognize the thought associated with it, evaluate whether the thought is supported by evidence, and formulate a more balanced alternative. This component reflects the cognitive model and CBT skills-training principles (Beck, 1976, 2011; Kendall, 2012). The website should be framed as psychoeducational practice rather than a replacement for individualized assessment or counseling.

My Action supports reflection and self-monitoring by inviting students to consider the communication behavior they wish to change and review their progress. Self-monitoring can increase awareness of behavioral patterns and is commonly used within behavioral and cognitive-behavioral interventions (Kazdin, 2005). The component is intended to encourage repeated practice and personal responsibility; the current study does not establish whether it produces sustained behavioral change.

Preliminary validity and practicality appraisal

The source manuscript reports that expert appraisal classified the media as “very valid” in relation to CBT content alignment, prevention content, language, visual presentation, and organization. It also reports that user practicality responses fell within the “very practical” category, with positive perceptions concerning access, instruction clarity, visual appeal, and ease of use. These are the findings available in the manuscript. No numerical scores, percentages, confidence intervals, participant counts, or item-level results are provided; therefore, the categorical results cannot be independently checked or reproduced.

The distinction between validity, usability, and effectiveness is important. Expert appraisal can provide preliminary evidence about content and design suitability, while user testing can indicate perceived usability and acceptability. Neither, on its own, demonstrates a reduction in verbal aggression. Such a claim requires a behavioral outcome evaluation with an appropriate baseline, comparison condition where feasible, validated measures, and follow-up assessment.

DISCUSSION

The principal output of this study is a theory-informed website that organizes preventive counseling content into awareness, cognitive reflection, and action-monitoring components. The sequence is conceptually coherent with CBT: students first recognize a behavior or triggering situation, then examine the cognitions associated with it, and finally identify an alternative response to practice. Cognitive-behavioral interventions for anger in children and adolescents have shown beneficial effects in prior outcome research, although the magnitude and generalizability of effects depend on intervention components and study quality (Sukhodolsky et al., 2004; Sukhodolsky et al., 2016). The current development study draws on that rationale but does not itself test those clinical or behavioral outcomes. The cognitive-behavioral rationale also sits within a broader evidence base on cognitive and behavioral approaches to childhood and adolescent emotional and behavioral difficulties (Beck et al., 1979; Kazdin, 2005).

The focus on verbal aggression is consistent with research showing that peer victimization is associated with adverse emotional and academic adjustment (Rueger & Jenkins, 2014), lower self-esteem and internalizing symptoms (Mullan et al., 2023), and depressive symptoms (Ye et al., 2023). Nevertheless, prevention should not reduce the problem to individual cognition alone. Aggressive communication is embedded in peer norms, classroom climate, school discipline, power relations, and wider social contexts. Social-ecological and whole-school perspectives therefore suggest that digital self-reflection tools should complement, rather than replace, teacher practice, school-wide prevention, family engagement, and clear reporting pathways (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Salmivalli, 2010; UNESCO, 2019). This interpretation is also consistent with research distinguishing verbal, relational, physical, and cyber forms of peer aggression (Wang et al., 2009).

The digital format offers potential advantages in flexibility and repeat access. Perceived usefulness and ease of use are relevant dimensions in technology acceptance (Davis, 1989), while usability should be assessed against explicit effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction criteria (International Organization for Standardization [ISO], 2018; Nielsen, 1994). Evidence reviews indicate that digital interventions can support adolescent mental health promotion, but engagement, implementation quality, professional support, and intervention design are consequential (Lehtimaki et al., 2021; Wright et al., 2023). School-based digital mental health reviews also report heterogeneous findings and highlight the need for stronger implementation and outcome reporting (Abura-Meerdink & Albright, 2024; Miller & Thabrew, 2024). Thus, the contribution of Mind Control Room is not simply that it is web-based; rather, it is the attempt to connect a defined counseling rationale with structured activities that can be used within a school counseling programme. The recent global meta-analysis by Ariani et al. (2025) further underscores the psychological burden associated with bullying, supporting the importance of prevention while not establishing the efficacy of this particular website.

The three components also raise important design and measurement questions. Verbal Check-Up should be treated as an awareness or screening prompt, not a clinical diagnosis. Its content should distinguish occasional conflict, harmful verbal behavior, and repeated

bullying, including the role of power imbalance and repetition (Volk et al., 2014). Change Your Mind should avoid implying that students who experience victimization are responsible for changing their thoughts instead of receiving protection. Cognitive restructuring is appropriate as a skill for managing interpretations and responses, but it must not invalidate students' experiences or substitute for adult intervention when threats, harassment, or persistent victimization occur. My Action should provide safe, non-punitive reflection and avoid collecting unnecessary sensitive information. The cognitive-emotional framework has a longer history in rational-emotive and cognitive therapy (Ellis, 1962), although the current product specifically adopts a CBT-informed rather than a comprehensive clinical treatment protocol.

From an implementation perspective, school counselors should retain oversight of the website and establish procedures for students who disclose ongoing harm or feel unsafe. Privacy and confidentiality require particular attention because digital tools may generate records that can be accessed, transmitted, or stored beyond the counseling encounter. Professional guidance emphasizes informed consent, equitable access, secure handling of student information, and explicit protocols for virtual or technology-supported counseling (ASCA, 2022, 2023). The website should also be tested across devices, browsers, connectivity conditions, and accessibility needs. Usability should be evaluated systematically rather than inferred solely from general satisfaction (Davis, 1989; Nielsen, 1994; International Organization for Standardization [ISO], 2018).

The study has several limitations. First, it was conducted in one school, which limits transferability to other school settings. Second, the available report does not specify sample sizes, participant characteristics, validator qualifications, instrument properties, numerical validity and practicality results, or the detailed revision history. Third, no comparison group, pretest–posttest behavioral outcome, or follow-up assessment is reported. Consequently, the conclusion must remain limited to product development and preliminary appraisal. Future research should report the complete development record, establish the psychometric properties of any screening or outcome measures, evaluate implementation fidelity and student engagement, and test whether the website contributes to measurable changes in verbal aggression and related social-emotional outcomes.

CONCLUSION

This study developed Mind Control Room, a website-based school counseling resource designed to support the prevention of verbal aggression among junior high school students. The product organizes its content into three components: Verbal Check-Up for behavioral awareness, Change Your Mind for CBT-informed cognitive reflection, and My Action for self-reflection and monitoring. The source manuscript reports favorable expert and user appraisals, categorized as very valid and very practical. Because the numerical evidence and evaluation procedures were not included in the available

manuscript, these findings should be interpreted as preliminary perceptions of product suitability and usability. They do not establish effectiveness in reducing verbal aggression. Mind Control Room may be considered a supplementary resource within a broader school prevention strategy, provided that ethical safeguards and counselor oversight are in place. Controlled evaluation with transparent methods and behavioral outcomes is required before making effectiveness claims.

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