

# Need Analysis for Developing a Choice Theory Reality Therapy (CTRT)-Based Group Guidance Module for Cyberbullying Victims in Secondary Schools in Johor Bahru, Johor

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## ABSTRACT

The rapid expansion of digital technology has intensified adolescents' exposure to cyberbullying, creating a pressing need for structured school-based intervention. This study examined the need to develop a group guidance module grounded in Choice Theory Reality Therapy (CTRT) for cyberbullying victims in Malaysian secondary schools. A quantitative survey design was employed, involving 81 secondary school counsellors in Johor. A researcher-developed questionnaire was distributed online via Google Form and analysed using descriptive statistics. The findings demonstrated a strong need for a structured intervention module. Specifically, 72.8% of respondents reported that there were no specific guidelines for handling cyberbullying victims, 60.5% reported lacking the skills to handle such cases, 85.2% had already received clients who were victims of cyberbullying, 85.8% agreed that school counsellors should conduct intervention programmes such as group guidance, 95.1% expressed confidence in applying CTRT to support cyberbullying victims in school, 100% agreed that they needed knowledge on implementing the cyberbullying intervention module using the CTRT approach, and 98.8% supported the development of a CTRT-based intervention module. Additional need-analysis findings showed that 72.8% perceived the absence of specific guidelines for managing cyberbullying victims, 60.5% reported limited skills in handling such cases, 85.2% had already encountered cyberbullying victims in school counselling practice, 85.8% agreed that counsellors should implement intervention programmes such as group guidance, and 98.8% supported the development of a cyberbullying intervention module based on CTRT. Supplementary student-side findings further indicated that 52.8% of students had experienced cyberbullying at least once. Overall, the study provides clear empirical support for the development of a structured, theory-driven, and school-based CTRT module to assist counsellors in responding to cyberbullying more systematically and effectively.

**Keywords:** cyberbullying, needs analysis, school counsellors, group guidance, Choice Theory Reality Therapy, intervention module

## INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has transformed the social and communicative lives of adolescents. Social media platforms, instant messaging applications, and networked environments have expanded the ways young people interact, exchange information, and construct relationships. At the same time, these digital spaces have created new opportunities for peer aggression, particularly cyberbullying. Cyberbullying has become a major educational and psychosocial concern because it extends beyond the physical boundaries of school, can occur repeatedly, and may continue at any time of day through multiple digital channels (Hinduja & Patchin, 2020; Bhat, 2008; Chibbaro, 2007).

Unlike traditional bullying, cyberbullying can be amplified by anonymity, rapid dissemination of harmful content, and the persistent accessibility of victims. These characteristics intensify the emotional and psychological burden on adolescents and complicate school-based responses. Recent synthesis studies have shown that cyberbullying victimization is consistently associated with negative psychological outcomes, lower

school performance, and maladaptive coping, while intervention programmes show promising but uneven results depending on their design and implementation (Kasturiratna et al., 2024; Polanin et al., 2022).

In the Malaysian context, cyberbullying has received increasing institutional attention. The Ministry of Education Malaysia has formally issued SPI KPM Bil. 12 Tahun 2023 on the implementation of guidelines for managing bullying misconduct in educational institutions, reflecting official concern about bullying and cyberbullying as school-related disciplinary and welfare issues. In parallel, Malaysian reporting has indicated a substantial volume of cyberbullying complaints, reinforcing the need for practical and preventive intervention efforts at school level. These developments place school counsellors in a central position as frontline practitioners responsible for psychosocial support, early intervention, and structured guidance for affected students.

School counsellors are well placed to implement targeted responses because cyberbullying often manifests in emotional distress, interpersonal withdrawal, anxiety, school avoidance, and disrupted peer functioning. However, the effectiveness of school counselling intervention depends not only on counsellors' awareness of the issue, but also on the availability of a coherent therapeutic framework, practical guidance, and culturally appropriate intervention tools. Previous scholarship has emphasized the need for school counsellors to adopt structured and context-sensitive strategies when responding to cyberbullying in school communities (Bhat, 2008; Chibbaro, 2007).

Against this background, the present study was conducted to examine the need to develop a Choice Theory Reality Therapy (CTRT)-based group guidance module for cyberbullying victims in Malaysian secondary schools. In line with the poster data, the justification for module development rests primarily on counsellors' reported needs, challenges, implementation readiness, and support for school-based intervention. CTRT was selected because it offers a practical counselling framework that emphasizes personal responsibility, behavioural choice, self-evaluation, and realistic planning. Through core concepts such as basic needs, total behaviour, quality world, and the WDEP system, CTRT provides a systematic structure for helping students understand their needs, evaluate current coping responses, and develop more adaptive actions (Glasser, 2010; Wubbolding et al., 2017). Before such a module can be developed and validated, a formal needs analysis is required to determine whether school counsellors perceive it as necessary, relevant, and applicable within school practice. The present article addresses that need.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Cyberbullying as a School-Based Psychosocial Issue

Cyberbullying is widely recognized as a contemporary extension of peer aggression in digitally mediated environments. It typically involves the repeated use of electronic communication to harass, humiliate, threaten, exclude, or otherwise harm another individual (Bhat, 2008; Hinduja & Patchin, 2023). Although cyberbullying may occur outside school grounds, its consequences frequently emerge within school settings through changes in attendance, concentration, peer relationships, emotional regulation, and help-seeking behaviour. For this reason, cyberbullying is not merely an online issue but also a school welfare and counselling issue.

A growing body of research has documented the adverse consequences of cyberbullying victimization for adolescents. These include anxiety, depressive symptoms, loneliness, psychosomatic complaints, and broader difficulties in well-being and school functioning (Kasturiratna et al., 2025; Nixon, 2014). Given these outcomes, school-based interventions should not be limited to disciplinary responses alone. They must also address students' coping skills, emotional regulation, perceived control, and resilience in digital environments.

### Role of School Counsellors in Cyberbullying Intervention

School counsellors play a crucial role in prevention, early identification, intervention, and post-incident support related to cyberbullying. Chibbaro (2007) and Bhat (2008) argued that counsellors require specific intervention strategies because cyberbullying differs from traditional bullying in visibility, anonymity, and persistence. Counsellors are expected not only to support victims individually, but also to design preventive

programmes, facilitate group interventions, collaborate with school leadership, and strengthen students' adaptive coping.

However, the literature also suggests that school systems often lack sufficient structure, training, or standardized intervention tools for counsellors. As a result, responses to cyberbullying may depend heavily on individual counsellor experience rather than on evidence-informed and theory-guided practice. This gap underscores the relevance of structured intervention modules that can support more consistent implementation in schools.

### **Relevance of CTRT for Cyberbullying Intervention**

Choice Theory Reality Therapy (CTRT), developed from Glasser's Choice Theory and elaborated in counselling practice by Wubbolding, is built on the assumption that behaviour is purposeful and linked to efforts to meet basic psychological needs. Choice Theory emphasizes five basic needs: survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun (Glasser, 2010). In counselling practice, Reality Therapy focuses on present behaviour, personal responsibility, and the development of workable plans for change.

A central practical component of Reality Therapy is the WDEP system, which guides counselling through exploration of Wants, Doing, Evaluation, and Planning (Wubbolding et al., 2017). This structure is relevant for cyberbullying victims because it helps clients clarify what they need, identify current coping responses, evaluate whether those responses are effective, and develop more constructive behavioural plans. In group guidance settings, CTRT may be particularly useful for strengthening self-awareness, perceived control, interpersonal decision-making, and adaptive coping in the face of online conflict.

### **Need Analysis as a Foundation for Module Development**

Module development in education and counselling should be grounded in empirical need rather than assumption. A needs analysis allows researchers to identify practice gaps, training limitations, contextual challenges, and practitioner expectations before designing a structured intervention. In the present study, the needs analysis is particularly important because it establishes whether school counsellors perceive cyberbullying as sufficiently prevalent and challenging to justify a dedicated CTRT-based group guidance module.

### **Problem Statement**

Although cyberbullying has become an increasingly visible concern in schools, many counsellors still operate without a structured intervention framework that is specifically designed for cyberbullying victims. In the current study context, this gap is especially important because school counsellors are already encountering cyberbullying cases but may lack specific training, guidelines, and theory-based resources for intervention.

Preliminary needs-analysis findings indicate that counsellors face several practice-related constraints, including limited procedural guidance, limited skills in handling cyberbullying victims, and a clear need for greater knowledge regarding the implementation of a CTRT-based intervention module. At the same time, respondents expressed strong support for school-based intervention and for the development of a dedicated module. These conditions suggest a clear discrepancy between the practical demands of school counselling and the availability of a structured intervention resource.

Accordingly, the problem addressed in this study is the absence of a validated, theory-guided, and school-appropriate module that can assist counsellors in delivering consistent group guidance support to cyberbullying victims. This study therefore aims to generate empirical justification for the development of such a module.

### **Objectives Of the Study**

This study was conducted to achieve the following objectives:

1. To identify the need for developing a CTRT-based group guidance module for cyberbullying victims in secondary schools.
2. To examine school counsellors' experiences and challenges in handling cyberbullying cases.
3. To determine counsellors' readiness, skills, and training needs related to the use of CTRT in cyberbullying intervention.
4. To provide empirical support for the development of a structured school-based intervention module.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study employed a quantitative survey design using a needs-analysis approach. The design was selected because it allowed the researcher to gather systematic information on counsellors' experiences, perceptions, and professional needs related to cyberbullying intervention.

### Participants

The respondents consisted of 81 school counsellors from secondary schools in Johor and 250 students from Johor Bahru, Johor. Participants were selected based on their professional role and direct relevance to school-based counselling practice.

### Instrumentation

The instrument was developed by the researcher and distributed online using Google Form for teachers and through hardcopy to students. For teachers, it comprised two main sections. Section A collected demographic information such as gender, age, level of education, years of service, school type, and district of service. Section B focused on needs-analysis domains, namely: (a) exploration and research issues, (b) experience and challenges, (c) intervention programmes, and (d) needs and suggestions.

### Data Analysis

The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistics in SPSS version 29.0. The analysis included frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The present article emphasizes the descriptive findings most directly relevant to the need for module development.

## RESULTS

This section presents the findings from two respondent groups involved in the preliminary needs analysis, namely school counsellors and secondary school students. For journal presentation, the findings are organized into separate tables to distinguish counsellor-based evidence from student-based evidence.

### Counsellor-Based Needs Analysis Findings

Table 1: Findings derived from the school counsellors data.

No.	Item	Finding (%)	Interpretation
1	Counsellors who reported that there were no specific guidelines for handling cyberbullying victims	72.8	A substantial proportion perceived the absence of structured procedural guidance.
2	Counsellors who reported lacking the skills to handle cyberbullying cases effectively	60.5	More than half of the respondents perceived themselves as insufficiently skilled.

3	Counsellors who had received clients who were victims of cyberbullying in various forms	85.2	Cyberbullying cases were already present in school counselling practice.
4	Counsellors who agreed that intervention programmes such as group guidance should be implemented	85.8	Most respondents supported school-based group intervention for cyberbullying victims.
5	Counsellors who expressed confidence in applying CTRT to support cyberbullying victims in school	95.1	Most respondents showed positive readiness toward the use of CTRT in school settings.
6	Counsellors who agreed that they needed knowledge on implementing the cyberbullying intervention module using CTRT	100.0	All respondents indicated a need for implementation knowledge and guidance.
7	Counsellors who supported the development of a cyberbullying intervention module based on CTRT	98.8	Nearly all respondents endorsed CTRT as the basis for module development.

Meanwhile, Table 2 presents the mean scores and standard deviations for officers’ perceptions and experiences related to cyberbullying. Overall, the findings indicate a high level of agreement across all items, with an overall mean score of 4.45 and a standard deviation of 0.69, which falls within the interpretation of agree to strongly agree. Among the items, the statement “*Victims of cyberbullying at school are at risk of experiencing mental health issues*” recorded the highest mean score (M = 4.62, SD = 0.56), indicating that the respondents demonstrated strong awareness of the psychological implications of cyberbullying. This was followed by the item “*I understand what is meant by cyberbullying behavior*” (M = 4.52, SD = 0.61), suggesting that the officers possessed a sound understanding of the concept of cyberbullying. Meanwhile, the item “*I have handled clients who were victims of cyberbullying in various forms*” obtained the lowest mean score, although it still remained at a high level (M = 4.21, SD = 0.89). The relatively higher standard deviation for this item suggests greater variation in respondents’ practical experience in handling cyberbullying cases. In general, these findings demonstrate that the officers have substantial knowledge of cyberbullying, are aware of its mental health consequences, and have some degree of exposure to managing such cases in practice.

Table 2: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of School Counsellors

Theme	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I understand what is meant by cyberbullying behavior.	4.52	0.61	Agree to Strongly Agree
Victims of cyberbullying at school are at risk of experiencing mental health issues.	4.62	0.56	Agree to Strongly Agree
I have handled clients who were victims of cyberbullying in various forms (for example, cyberstalking through social media, bullying via text messages, impersonation of accounts, and others).	4.21	0.89	Agree to Strongly Agree
<b>Average</b>	<b>4.45</b>	<b>0.69</b>	<b>Agree to Strongly Agree</b>

The counsellor findings demonstrate three major patterns. First, school counsellors reported notable limitations in procedural guidance and practical skills for handling cyberbullying cases. Second, cyberbullying was clearly present in counselling practice, as reflected in the high proportion of respondents who had already encountered student victims. Third, support for school-based intervention and for the development of a CTRT-based module was overwhelmingly strong, indicating that counsellors viewed such a module as both necessary and relevant for school implementation.

### Student Demographic and Online Engagement Profile

Table 3 presents the demographic background and online engagement profile of the 250 secondary school student respondents aged 14 and 16.

Table 3: Demographic and Online Engagement Profile of Secondary School Students (n = 250)

Variable	Category	n / %
Sample size	Secondary school students	n = 250
Age group	14 and 16 years old	
Grade level	Form 4	69.2%
	Form 2	30.8%
Gender	Male and female	54% and 46%
Ethnicity	Malay	66.8%
	Chinese	16.0%
	Indian	16.0%
	Others	1.2%
Time spent online daily	Less than 1 hour	28.4%
	1–2 hours	39.2%
	3–5 hours	27.6%
	More than 5 hours	4.8%
Most used platforms	YouTube	74.0%
	TikTok	72.0%
	Instagram	71.2%
	Google	45.6%
Main purpose of internet use	Relieve boredom	61.6%
	Online gaming	30.0%
	Web surfing	28.4%

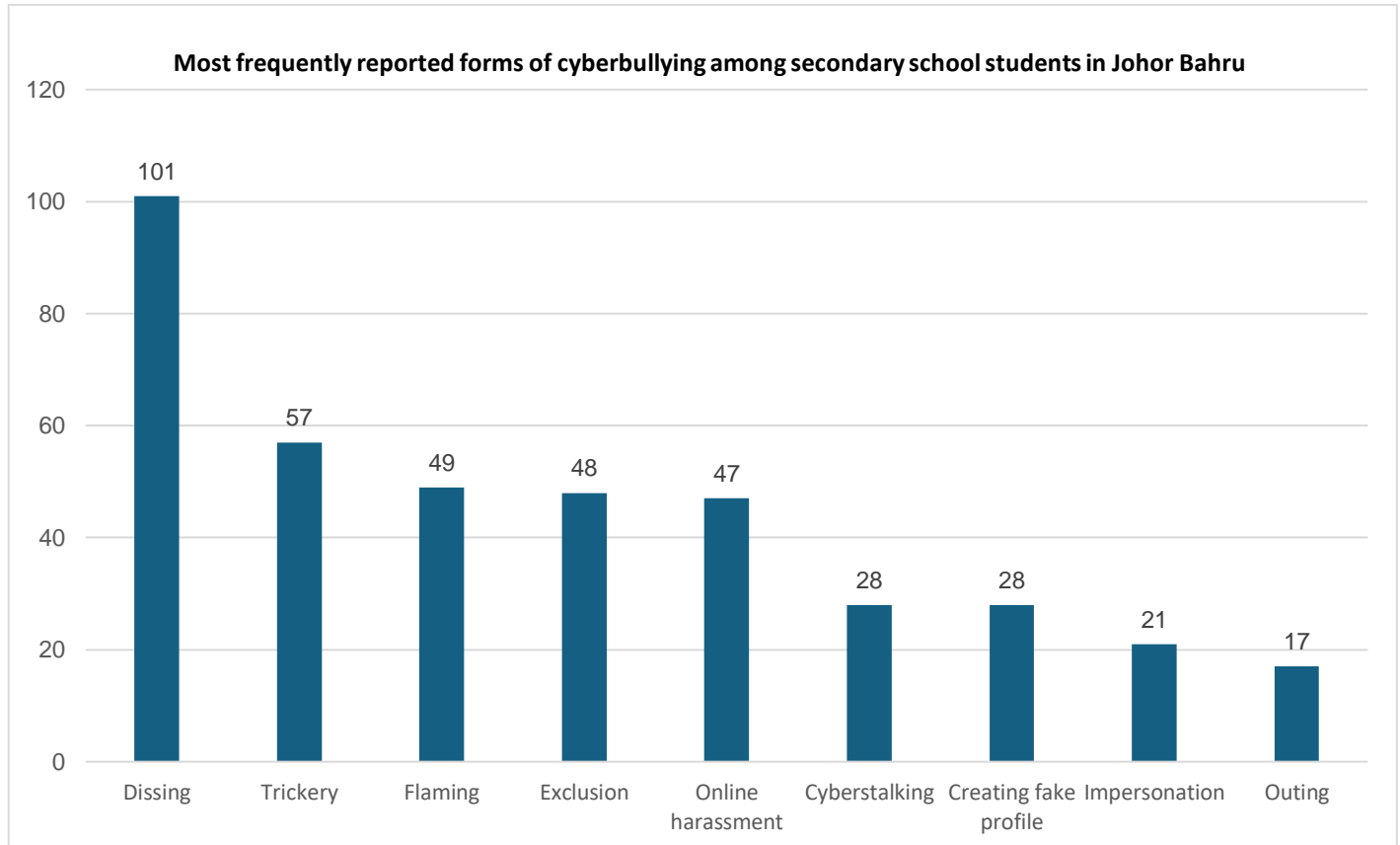
The student sample consisted of 250 secondary school students aged 14 and 16 years old. In terms of grade level, the majority were Form 4 students (69.2%), followed by Form 2 students (30.8%). The gender distribution was relatively balanced, comprising 54% and 46%. Most respondents were Malay (66.8%), while Chinese and Indian students each represented 16.0%, and 1.2% were from other ethnic groups. Regarding daily internet use, the largest proportion of students reported spending 1–2 hours online per day (39.2%), followed by less than 1 hour (28.4%), 3–5 hours (27.6%), and more than 5 hours (4.8%). The most frequently used online platforms were YouTube (74.0%), TikTok (72.0%), Instagram (71.2%), and Google (45.6%). In terms of purpose of internet use, most students reported going online to relieve boredom (61.6%), followed by online gaming (30.0%), web surfing (28.4%), and other purposes (9.6%). Overall, these findings indicate that the respondents were actively engaged in digital environments, particularly for leisure-oriented purposes, which may increase their exposure to online interactions and cyberbullying-related risks. Students' experience with cyberbullying.

From the finding, 52.8% of the students reported having experienced cyberbullying at least once, with repeated

incidents reported by nearly one in five students. The most reported forms of cyberbullying were dissing (n = 101), trickery (n = 57), flaming (n = 49), exclusion (n = 48), and online harassment (n = 47). Other reported forms included cyberstalking (n = 28), creating fake profiles (n = 28), impersonation (n = 21), and outing (n = 17). These findings indicate that students were exposed to multiple forms of cyberbullying, particularly online insults, provocative interactions, peer exclusion, and deceptive online behaviour.

### Students' Experience with Cyberbullying

Figure 1 presents the reported cyberbullying experiences among the student respondents.



Based on the survey, the most frequently reported form of cyberbullying among secondary school students in Johor Bahru was dissing (n = 101), indicating that insulting, belittling, or mocking others online was the most common negative online behaviour experienced by students. This was followed by trickery (n = 57), flaming (n = 49), exclusion (n = 48) and online harassment (n = 47), suggesting that many students were also exposed to deceptive acts, hostile online arguments, being left out of online groups, and repeated disturbing messages. Less frequently reported forms included cyberstalking and creating fake profiles (n = 28 each), followed by impersonation (n = 21) and outing (n = 17). Overall, the pattern shows that direct verbal attacks and socially harmful online behaviours were more common than identity-based or privacy-related forms of cyberbullying.

### DISCUSSION

The present study provides strong evidence that the development of a CTRT-based group guidance module for cyberbullying victims is both justified and necessary. The findings clearly show that cyberbullying is already being encountered in school counselling practice, while many counsellors report insufficient skills and a lack of specific guidelines for responding to such cases. This pattern reflects a significant implementation gap between the professional responsibility assigned to school counsellors and the practical resources currently available to them.

These findings are consistent with previous literature emphasizing that school counsellors require structured and context-sensitive approaches to address cyberbullying effectively (Bhat, 2008; Chibbaro, 2007). When

counsellors face cyberbullying cases without a dedicated framework, intervention may become inconsistent, reactive, or overly dependent on personal experience. In contrast, a structured module can provide procedural clarity, coherent session flow, and practical tools that enhance intervention consistency across school contexts.

The findings also support the value of targeted intervention rather than relying solely on general counselling activities. Meta-analytic evidence suggests that cyberbullying interventions can reduce both perpetration and victimization, but their effectiveness varies according to programme structure and design (Polanin et al., 2022). This implies that carefully designed, issue-specific intervention modules may be more effective than generic responses. In the context of the present study, a dedicated CTRT-based group guidance module may therefore strengthen the precision and usefulness of school counselling support.

From a theoretical perspective, CTRT appears particularly appropriate for cyberbullying intervention. This is also consistent with the poster finding that most counsellors expressed confidence in applying CTRT to support cyberbullying victims, while simultaneously indicating that they still needed structured knowledge and implementation guidance. Choice Theory provides a framework for understanding how behaviour is linked to the fulfilment of basic needs, while Reality Therapy emphasizes personal responsibility, present-focused evaluation, and constructive behavioural planning (Glasser, 2010). The WDEP system further contributes a practical counselling structure that is suitable for school-based group guidance (Wubbolding et al., 2017). For cyberbullying victims, these elements may be valuable in rebuilding perceived control, clarifying needs, evaluating ineffective coping strategies, and strengthening more adaptive ways of responding to online victimization.

The present findings also have practical implications for module development. First, the proposed module should be designed as a school-friendly intervention resource that counsellors can implement realistically within existing school counselling structures. Second, the module should include not only session content but also implementation guidance, theoretical explanation, and practical examples to address the reported lack of skills and guidelines. Third, because the findings are rooted in the Malaysian secondary school context, the module should be culturally and developmentally appropriate for local students and aligned with current school policy expectations.

## CONCLUSION

This study confirms a strong and explicit need for the development of a Choice Theory Reality Therapy (CTRT)-based group guidance module for cyberbullying victims in Malaysian secondary schools. The needs-analysis findings show that many counsellors report insufficient procedural guidance and practical skills and are already handling cyberbullying victims in their daily professional work. At the same time, support for a structured CTRT-based intervention module is almost unanimous.

The study therefore offers a clear empirical foundation for the next stage of research, namely module construction, expert validation, pilot implementation, and effectiveness testing. In practical terms, the proposed module has the potential to become an alternative intervention tool that helps school counsellors support cyberbullying victims more systematically, consistently, and effectively.

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## Ethical Approval

This study was approved by the UTM Research Ethics Committee with reference number [UTMREC-2026-214] and Ministry of Education, Malaysia in Educational Research Application System (eRAS2.0) with reference number [KPM.600-3/2/3-eras (25947)]. All participants provided informed consent prior to their inclusion in the study, and confidentiality and anonymity were assured throughout the research process.

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