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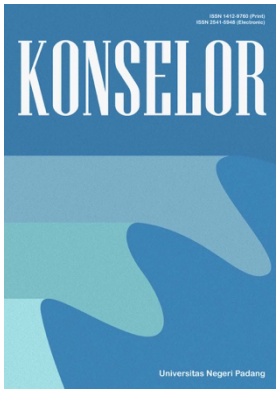

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Motivational Interviewing as an Intervention to Improve Achievement Motivation in Students Experiencing Bullying

Bambang Dibyo Wiyono1•, Riska Dwi Kurni Sari1, Mochamad Nursalim1, Najlatun Naqiyah1, Wiryo Nuryono1, Bakhrudin All Habsy1, Muhamad Afifuddin Ghozali1, & Akmal Nasri Kamal2
1Universitas Negeri Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia
2Centre for University Life and Wellness, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Brunesi Darussalam

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Correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to:
Bambang Dibyo Wiyono. Department of Guidance and Counseling, Universitas Negeri Surabaya. Jl. Raya Kampus Unesa, Lidah Wetan, Kec. Lakarsantri, Surabaya, Jawa Timur 60213, Indonesia. Email: bambangwiyono@unesa.ac.id

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Motivational Interviewing as an Intervention to Improve Achievement Motivation in Students Experiencing Bullying

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[1]Universitas Negeri Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia
[2]Centre for University Life and Wellness, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Brunesi Darussalam

Abstract: Bullying in schools continues to affect victims in various ways. One significant impact is the decline in their academic performance and achievement motivation. This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of motivational interviewing techniques in enhancing achievement motivation among victims of bullying. It employed a true experimental design with a pre-test and post-test control group. Data were gathered using an achievement motivation scale developed specifically for victims of bullying. Participants were selected based on their responses, specifically those with low achievement motivation. Since the data were not normally distributed, the Mann-Whitney test was used for analysis. An N-gain test assessed the technique's effectiveness. Results from the Mann-Whitney test showed a significant difference ($p = 0.009$) in score distributions between the experimental and control groups after intervention. The experimental group, which received motivational interviewing, achieved an average N-gain score of 58.05%, indicating it was quite effective compared to the control group that received routine counselling. In summary, motivational interviewing techniques have demonstrated considerable effectiveness in increasing achievement motivation among victims of bullying.

Key Words: Achievement motivation; Bullying victims; Motivational interviewing techniques

INTRODUCTION

Bullying is a common occurrence among children and most often takes place in schools. It frequently appears as acts of dominance or intimidation by older students towards younger ones, whether physically or non-physically, which in turn affects victims' motivation to succeed. Bullying alters the school environment from an enjoyable place to learn with friends into a frightening or even nightmarish setting, leaving a lasting negative impression on school life. As a psychological and academic threat, bullying involvement can have an adverse impact on children's educational outcomes, particularly academic achievement (Samara et al., 2021). It influences students' psychological well-being, academic success, and how these issues can be addressed to prevent negative consequences during education and later in life (Murphy et al., 2022). Bullying victimisation and the bullying climate have significant and negative relationships with students' performance in science, maths, and reading (Huang, 2022). Additionally, bullying was a significant predictor of achievement motivation (Karaman, 2023).

♦**Corresponding author:** Bambang Dibyo Wiyono. Department of Guidance and Counseling, Universitas Negeri Surabaya. Jl. Raya Kampus Unesa, Lidah Wetan, Kec. Lakarsantri, Surabaya, Jawa Timur 60213, Indonesia. Email: bambangwiyono@unesa.ac.id

The phenomenon of bullying within school environments is evidenced by cases of violence occurring between teachers and students or among students themselves (IImia Sari et al., 2022). Adolescence, particularly between the ages of 13 and 18, represents a stage when individuals are highly vulnerable to becoming victims of bullying, as this period marks the formation of personal identity and character (Hellström & Lundberg, 2020).

Bullying perpetrated by students inevitably affects the victims, both psychologically and academically. One noticeable impact is a decline in students' motivation, particularly their achievement motivation (Hysing et al., 2021). Victims of bullying often feel insecure about their abilities, both in academic and non-academic domains. If bullying in schools is not addressed promptly and effectively, it can negatively affect student participation, engagement in learning, and overall academic achievement (Fariz et al., 2023). The impact of bullying on victims includes decreased motivation to achieve, as evidenced by a lack of enthusiasm to complete academic tasks, reduced responsibility for assignments, and declining participation in classroom activities. Victims of bullying often struggle to adapt to the school environment due to the emotional distress caused by their experiences (Fariz et al., 2023). Other negative effects include psychological distress, such as feelings of fear, discomfort, and worthlessness. Victims may also encounter reduced concentration during learning and difficulty adjusting to their surroundings (Rahman et al., 2023).

Bullying behaviour that occurs in schools can be caused by various factors. In many cases, such behaviour is not recognised by the perpetrator as bullying (Samara et al., 2021). Although it may initially be intended as a joke, it can be perceived differently by the victim, as individuals vary in how they interpret and respond to teasing. Some victims may openly share their experiences, while others choose to remain silent due to fear of retaliation or further bullying (Tiwa, 2023). In certain communities, this negative behaviour is often perceived as normal or acceptable (Temaluru et al., 2019).

Bullying is an act of violence committed by an individual or group who misuse their power or strength, causing the victim to feel distressed, traumatised, and helpless (Soesanto, 2023). Within the educational environment, bullying behaviour cannot be justified, as it directly affects students' mindsets and behaviours. A student's mindset and behaviour—whether positive or negative—are heavily influenced by their surroundings, making it crucial for them to be in a supportive environment.

If not properly addressed, bullying can lead to an increasing number of victims over time, each experiencing different forms and intensities of harm. Every victim's experience is unique, shaped by individual character and emotional response. Repeated incidents of bullying at school can disrupt and hinder students' psychological and academic development (Menestrel & Le Menestrel, 2020). Bullying can occur anywhere and at any time. When perpetrators feel safe or unpunished, such actions tend to recur. Consequently, schools that should serve as secure and supportive spaces for learning may instead become intimidating environments (Fariz et al., 2023; Kallman et al., 2021).

The impact of bullying on victims includes decreased motivation to achieve, as evidenced by a lack of enthusiasm to complete academic tasks, reduced responsibility for assignments, and declining participation in classroom activities. Victims of bullying often struggle to adapt to the school environment due to the emotional distress caused by their experiences (Fariz et al., 2023). Other negative effects include psychological distress, such as feelings of fear, discomfort, and worthlessness. Victims may also encounter reduced concentration during learning and difficulty adjusting to their surroundings (Rahman et al., 2023).

In response to bullying incidents in schools, guidance and counselling teachers have made efforts to address them. This process typically involves summoning both the perpetrator and the victim to the guidance and counselling office. The initial step is to evaluate each party's account of the incident. Once the sequence of events is understood, appropriate action is taken. The teacher's approach generally includes encouraging the perpetrator to acknowledge their mistake and providing guidance on the appropriate steps to take following the incident. The perpetrator usually apologises to the victim, and the matter is deemed resolved. Many counselling practices are merely advisory or punitive, yet they do not change internal motivation (Hernandez et al., 2021). The counselling process conducted by guidance and counselling teachers has not been fully effective, as bullying behaviour continues to persist in the school environment. This is partly because guidance and counselling teachers often provide general advice that may not meet students' actual needs, leading students to lack understanding of the purpose

or meaning of the advice. As a result, many students remain unaware of whether their words and actions constitute bullying behaviour (Lestari & Khusumadewi, 2020).

Achievement motivation is an internal drive or desire within an individual to attain success (McClelland, 1987; Wiyono et al., 2025). It serves as an internal force that strengthens an individual's effort to perform better and more efficiently, enabling them to solve problems or complete challenging tasks (Nursalim et al., 2017; Zohair et al., 2021). When students lack the drive or desire to achieve, it can lead to a decline in their performance. The presence of achievement motivation within students encourages their growth and helps them achieve their goals. The higher a student's achievement motivation, the better their performance will be (Kartam et al., 2020). Counsellors play an important role in providing solutions or assistance for students experiencing problems, particularly in improving the achievement motivation of students who are victims of *bullying* (Thorifah et al., 2020). Essentially, achievement motivation already exists within every individual as a drive to act and obtain the best possible outcomes (Hartati et al., 2021; Goudeau & Cimpian, 2021). One technique that can enhance students' achievement motivation is motivational interviewing.

Motivational interviewing was first introduced as a clinical approach to enhance readiness for change (Miller & Rollnick, 2012). It aims to identify and strengthen the counselee's intrinsic motivation to develop consistent value changes in their life (Miller, 2023; Arkowitz, Miller, & Rollnick, 2015). Furthermore, motivation is considered an intrapersonal aspect that enhances decision-making ability (Indriani et al., 2022). Therefore, it is crucial to implement a counselling service utilising the *motivational interviewing* technique to increase the achievement motivation of students who are victims of *bullying*. This approach helps ensure that victims do not feel further oppressed or fearful; instead, they are empowered to prove that being a victim of bullying is not a barrier to achievement.

The use of motivational interviewing as an alternative to increase the achievement motivation of students who are victims of bullying is based on previous research by Kushendar & Fitri (2016), in which similar cases were addressed using the SFBC (Solution-Focused Brief Counselling) technique and found to be effective. However, certain limitations were identified, particularly ambivalence among individuals. According to Mulawarman (2020), ambivalence refers to a state of conflicting feelings within the counselee, where one simultaneously likes and dislikes their behaviour. In other words, there are times when an individual desires something but simultaneously resists it. The limitation of the SFBC technique is its inability to effectively address individuals with ambivalent behaviour; therefore, motivational interviewing is applied to address this shortcoming identified in previous studies.

Motivational interviewing is designed to elicit and explore clients' discrepancies and ambivalence. Counsellors highlight the gap between a counselee's behaviour and personal values to increase their motivation for change. Special attention is given to statements indicating a desire to change rather than those expressing resistance to change (Corey, 2016). In this context, *motivational interviewing* can be conducted in a *group setting*, which, in terms of effectiveness, enables group members to support one another and enhances service efficiency, particularly for counselees with low attendance (Mulawarman, 2020).

Group counselling can also assist students struggling to cope with *stress* arising from personal life challenges. It focuses on efforts to help individuals face future realities with optimism by providing services that meet their basic psychological needs and enable them to deal with life situations constructively without harming others (Ainiah, Qurrotul & Khusumadewi, 2018). Therefore, this study aims to examine the effectiveness of the motivational interviewing technique in improving achievement motivation among students who are victims of bullying.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research approach with a true-experiment design. The research design is a pretest-posttest control group design. The purpose of this design is to test the causal influence of motivational interviewing on achievement motivation. Two groups of subjects were randomly

selected, and the hypotheses were tested using pre-tests and post-tests administered to both the experimental and control groups to determine if there were differences in outcomes between the groups (Campbell & Stanley, 1963;Creswell & Creswell, 2018;Anshori, 2019).

Participants

The population in this study were eighth-grade students at SMPN 28 Surabaya. The screening procedure is for students who are identified as victims of bullying and show low achievement motivation according to a validated scale. The sampling method used was purposive, followed by random assignment via a lottery. Final sample size per group, namely n = 5 for the experimental group and n = 5 for the control group. Ethical considerations that have been made include permission from the school, informed consent, and voluntary participation.

Instrumentation

The data collection instrument used in this study was adapted from McClelland's theory, developed by Wiyono et al., (2023) and consisting of four indicators: (1) enthusiasm for challenging academic tasks, (2) responsibility for assigned academic tasks, (3) initiative in learning innovation, and (4) utilisation of feedback on each performance. The scale was tested for item validity, with 33 items deemed valid and a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.854.

Procedure

In this research design, two groups of research subjects were randomly selected to test the hypotheses by administering pre-tests and post-tests to the experimental group and the control group to determine whether there were any differences in the results between the two groups. In this research, a research design was also created, which will be used in each meeting conducted, guided by the motivational interviewing stages.

Table 1. Motivational Interviewing Design for the Experimental Group

Counseling Session	Activity	Duration
Pre-Counseling	Giving a pre-test to the achievement motivation scale of bullying victims	-
1	Opening the counseling session Building an engaging relationship (Engaging) Focusing the change goal (Focusing) Closing	40 minute
2	Opening the counseling session Building good relationships within the group Generating motivation (Evoking) Assigning assignments between sessions Closing	40 minute
3	Opening the counseling session Building rapport and a comfortable atmosphere within the group Reflecting on the assignments from the previous session Planning changes Assigning assignments between sessions Closing	40 minute
4	Opening the counseling session Building good relationships within the group Reflecting on the previous session's assignments Evaluating the client's change achievements Closing	40 minute
Post Counseling	Giving a post-test to the achievement motivation scale of bullying victims	-

Table 2. Usual Counselling Design for Control Group

Counseling Session	Activity	Duration
Pre-Counseling	Giving a pre-test to the achievement motivation scale of bullying victims	-
1	1. Opening the counseling session	40 minute

Counseling Session	Activity	Duration
	2. Creating a facilitative environment and relationship 3. Introduction to group counseling 4. Problem identification 5. Goal setting 6. Closing	
2	1. Opening the counseling session 2. Establishing a positive atmosphere within the group 3. Exploring and assessing oneself 4. Reflecting on experiences for personal change 5. Closing	40 minute
3	1. Opening the counseling session 2. Building a positive atmosphere in the group 3. Planning responsible actions 4. Summarizing and providing feedback 5. Closing	40 minute
4	1. Opening the counseling session 2. Establishing a positive atmosphere within the group 3. Evaluating changes 4. Closing	40 minute
Post Counseling	Giving a post-test to the achievement motivation scale of bullying victims	-

Data analysis

The data analysis technique used to determine the significance of the difference between the before- and after-treatment groups. This study used a nonparametric statistical test, namely the Mann-Whitney test, to test the comparative hypothesis between two independent samples (Mat Roni & Djajadikerta, 2021). Before conducting the Mann-Whitney test, a normality test was performed to determine whether the data were normally distributed. After conducting the Mann-Whitney test, the researcher conducted an N-gain test. According to Triyono et al., (2024) N-gain or normalised gain is a method used to measure the effectiveness of a treatment.

RESULTS

The research subjects were selected based on their achievement motivation levels. This measurement was conducted by administering an achievement motivation scale to eighth-grade students who were victims of bullying. After completing the scale, the researchers analysed the results into three categories: high, low, and moderate. To determine the categories, the mean and standard deviation were calculated. The following are the values used to determine the achievement motivation scale categories for bullying victims based on the distributed scale results:

a. High category = $M + 1.SD \leq X$
$= 82.5 + 16.5 \leq X$
$= 99 \leq X$
b. Medium category = $M-1SD \leq X < M+1SD$
$= 82.5-16.5 \leq X < 82.5+16$
$= 66 \leq X < 99$
c. Low category = $X<M-1SD$
$= X< 82.5 -16.5$
$= X<66$

This analysis identifies students with low achievement motivation and those who are victims of bullying. These students will serve as research subjects, with the experimental group receiving motivational interviewing group counseling and the control group receiving reality group counseling. Table 3 presents the pre-test results for students with low achievement motivation in the experimental group, while Table 4 shows the same for the control group. Table 5 displays the pre-test and post-test

results for the experimental group, and Table 6 shows the pre-test and post-test results for the control group.

Table 3. Pre-test Results of the Experimental Group

No	Name	*Pre-test*	Category
1	FBR	58	Low
2	BASP	65	Low
3	MMT	63	Low
4	NYA	65	Low
5	SBAW	64	Low

Table 4. Pre-test Results of the Control Group

No	Name	*Pre-test*	Category
1	TCWM	64	Low
2	NDRP	62	Low
3	AIN	64	Low
4	RDC	58	Low
5	PS	61	Low

Table 5 Results of Pre-test and Post-test of the Experimental Grou

No	Name	Pre-test	Post-test	Direction	Explanation
1	FBR	58	98	40	Score increased to moderate category
2	BASP	65	115	50	Score increased to high category
3	MMT	63	103	40	Score increased to high category
4	NYA	65	94	29	Score increased to moderate category
5	SBAW	64	105	41	Score increased to high category
Total		315	515	200	
Mean		63	103	40	

Table 6. Results of the Pre-test and Post-test for the Control Group

No	Name	Pre-test	Post-test	Direction	Explanation
1	FBR	58	98	40	Score increased to moderate category
2	BASP	65	115	50	Score increased to high category
3	MMT	63	103	40	Score increased to high category
4	NYA	65	94	29	Score increased to moderate category
5	SBAW	64	105	41	Score increased to high category
Total		315	515	200	
Mean		63	103	40	

Assumption Check

The pre-test and post-test results for the experimental and control groups were first analysed for normality to determine whether the data were normally distributed. The following are the results of the normality test using SPSS version 26.

Table 7. Normality Test Results

Tests of Normality							
	Group	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Treatment Results	Experimental Group	.295	10	.014	.842	10	.047
	Control Group	.335	10	.002	.767	10	.006
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction							

Table 7 shows the results of the Shapiro-Wilk test; the experimental group has a significance value of 0.047, while the control group has a significance value of 0.006. Since both groups have significance values <0.05, it can be concluded that the data are not normally distributed.

Inferential Statistics

Since the data is not normally distributed, data analysis will be performed using the Mann–Whitney test. The following are the results of the Mann–Whitney test conducted with SPSS version 26.

Table 8. Result of Mann–Whitney U Test

Ranks			
Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
	5	8.00	40.00
Experimental Group	5	3.00	15.00
Total	10		

Test Statistics[a]	
	Skor
Mann-Whitney U	.000
Wilcoxon W	15.000
Z	-2.611
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.009
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.008[b]
a. Grouping Variable: Group counseling	
b. Not corrected for ties.	

Table 8 shows that N represents the number of experimental and control groups, with 5 participants in each. The asymptotic significance (2-tailed) is 0.009. Because this is less than 0.05, H1 is supported, and Ho is rejected. This indicates a statistically significant difference in score distribution between the experimental and control groups after motivational interviewing, which aims to enhance the achievement motivation of students who have experienced bullying. To evaluate treatment effectiveness, an N-gain test is necessary. Table 9 presents the results of this N-gain test.

Table 9. N-gain Test Results

Descriptives					
	Group			Statistic	Std. Error
NGain_Persen	Experiment	Mean		58.0459	5.06877
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	43.9728	
			Upper Bound	72.1191	
		5% Trimmed Mean		57.9449	
		Median		57.9710	
		Variance		128.462	
		Std. Deviation		11.33412	
		Minimum		43.28	
		Maximum		74.63	
		Range		31.34	
		Interquartile Range		18.79	
		Skewness		.369	.913
		Kurtosis		1.344	2.000

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Descriptives				
Group			Statistic	Std. Error
Control	Mean		20.6887	8.66175
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	-3.3602	
		Upper Bound	44.7375	
	5% Trimmed Mean		20.4594	
	Median		11.7647	
	Variance		375.129	
	Std. Deviation		19.36825	
	Minimum		2.86	
	Maximum		42.65	
	Range		39.79	
	Interquartile Range		37.35	
	Skewness		.494	.913
	Kurtosis		-3.145	2.000

After performing the N-gain test, it is essential to adjust the N-gain value according to the effectiveness criteria outlined by Hake (1999).

Table 10. Criteria for Determining the Level of Effectiveness

Percentage (%)	Interpretation
< 40	Ineffective
40 – 55	Less Effective
56 – 75	Quite Effective
>75	Effective

Table 11. Results of N-gain Test Analysis

Group	Pre-test	Post-test	N-gain Percent	*Mean*
Experiment	58	98	54,05%	58,04 %
Experiment	65	115	74,63%	
Experiment	63	103	57,97%	
Experiment	65	94	43,28%	
Experiment	64	105	60,29%	
Control	64	93	42,65%	20,68%
Control	62	64	2,86%	
Control	64	72	11,76%	
Control	58	88	40,54%	
Control	61	65	5,63%	

Tables 10 and 11 show that the average N-gain score for the experimental group was 58.0459, or approximately 58.04%, while the control group's average N-gain was 20.6887, or about 20.68%. Based on the criteria in Table 11, the experimental group falls into the fairly effective category, whereas the control group is classified as ineffective. These results support accepting the alternative hypothesis (Ha) and rejecting the null hypothesis (Ho). Therefore, it can be concluded that group counseling with motivational interviewing techniques was moderately effective in increasing achievement motivation among bullying victims in the experimental group. In contrast, the reality group counseling provided to the control group was ineffective in improving the achievement motivation of grade VIII students at SMPN 28 Surabaya.

DISCUSSION

According to the research outlined, the 10 subjects who experienced bullying exhibited low achievement motivation. This aligns with earlier studies showing a link between bullying and reduced

interest in learning among seventh-grade students. As such, addressing bullying more effectively is essential, since its negative effects can impact many areas of victims' lives, including their drive to succeed academically. The motivational interviewing technique used aimed to boost achievement motivation in bullying victims. Those with low achievement motivation tend to avoid difficult tasks, care little about grades, and may show laziness and irresponsibility (McClelland, 1987). Conversely, individuals with high achievement motivation often demonstrate: (1) valuing achievement and feedback, (2) embracing academic challenges, (3) being innovative and creative in learning, and (4) taking responsibility for their academic work. At the start of counselling, clients often feel ambivalent—they want to change but also wish to stay the same. Counsellors focus on encouraging change talk to help clients build their motivation. Motivational interviewing is a person-centred counselling method that helps individuals explore and resolve ambivalence about changing behaviours (Miller & Rollnick, 1991). It is designed to motivate, guide, and support positive behavioural change by addressing underlying issues (Miller & Rollnick, 2013).

A key factor in its success is the use of group counselling, which acts as an effective support service in problem-solving (Alawiyah et al., 2025; Trisnowati et al., 2026). Group counselling is especially beneficial for students who are victims of bullying and have low achievement motivation, fostering collaboration among group members to find solutions to their shared challenges (Wiyono, 2015). It can assist students in exploring and expressing their problems and supporting them in changing their values and attitudes for the better (Edwards & Kirven, 2019). This form of counselling aims to prevent and resolve issues by helping students to find solutions and promote more positive behavioural changes (Lumongga, 2017). The impact of the treatment was evident in the behaviour of the experimental group during each 40-minute session. Initially, the experimental group showed low achievement motivation. The researcher employed techniques such as open-ended questions, affirmations, reflective listening, and summarising. The counsellor actively engaged clients in "change talk,' which encompasses their desires, abilities, reasons, needs, commitments, and planned steps towards change. Successful motivational interviewing also depends on the counsellor's performance; counsellors must assess client needs and identify effective methods to address specific problems (Ben-Artzey, 2025). This aligns with Wiyono et al., (2023), those who emphasised the importance of counsellor performance indicators, including possessing comprehensive counselling knowledge, conducting client assessments, and designing tailored services for students. According to Nursalim, (2015) the counsellor, performance involves the skills and behaviours necessary for effective guidance, covering planning, implementation, and evaluation. Additionally, Nursalim, (2020) counsellors must master interpersonal skills, problem-solving abilities, and an understanding of human growth and development (Hsieh et al., 2024).

This study supports the research conducted by Anisah et al., (2019) the title "The Effectiveness of Motivational Interviewing Counselling to Increase Learning Motivation of Broken Home Students at SMP Negeri 1 Pelaihari." The study found a descriptive increase in learning motivation after individual counselling using motivational interviewing techniques, with motivation levels rising from an average of 55.58% before counselling to 66.11% after, representing a 10.53% increase. Similar findings were reported by Afriwilda and Mulawarman (2021), who demonstrated that motivational interviewing significantly improved psychological well-being compared to a control group that did not receive such intervention.

CONCLUSION

Research indicates that implementing group counselling with motivational interviewing techniques can significantly boost achievement motivation scores among students who are bullying victims, compared to a control group. Additionally, N-gain analysis indicates that this counselling method is highly effective in enhancing achievement motivation among these students. The findings from this study can serve as a useful reference for the effectiveness of motivational interviewing techniques in improving low achievement motivation among bullying victims. Suggestions for school counsellors can be used as an alternative to increase achievement motivation in students who are victims

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of bullying. School counsellors can also use the researchers' proven counselling guidelines as a reference for increasing achievement motivation in students who are victims of bullying. Due to several obstacles encountered by researchers, including timing and location, future researchers are expected to be more selective in selecting the time and location for future counselling sessions.

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