

A Systematic Literature Review of Empathy Development: Effective Strategies for Overcoming Bullying in Students

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ABSTRACT

The number of bullying cases in the school environment, studies related to prevention efforts, and the importance of empathy in preventing bullying behavior emphasize the urgency of conducting literature reviews. This is done to find out how empathy can prevent bullying and how education should be carried out so that students become anti-bullying. A review of the literature provides effective strategies that can be widely implemented to prevent bullying and support positive social development for the entire school community. Research was carried out on the selected articles through the selection stages that had been set, so that eight articles were produced for analysis. Results of the analysis show that empathy plays a crucial role in overcoming bullying behavior in the school environment by improving students' emotional understanding, encouraging pro-social behavior, reducing aggression, and increasing social responsibility. Empathy can help students better understand and feel the emotions of others, which in turn reduces the tendency to act aggressively and increases appreciation for the feelings and perspectives of others. Teachers have an important role in minimizing bullying by integrating empathy into the curriculum and using interactive methods. Structured and continuous empathy training, as well as an increase in students' emotional intelligence, are effective in preventing bullying behavior. A proactive counseling approach, the creation of a supportive school environment, and the involvement of parents and the community in anti-bullying programs strengthen student character building and create a safe and inclusive environment. The collaborative implementation of these programs can have a long-term impact on preventing bullying and building more positive social relationships.

Keywords : Empathy, Bullying, Students

I. Introduction

Bullying is a deliberate aggressive behavior that involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim, which usually occurs repeatedly or has the potential to be repeated (Olweus, 1993; Smith & Sharp, 1994). Bullying can be physical, verbal, or relational, where this behavior aims to hurt, insult, or dominate others (Rigby, 2002; Smith et al., 2008). Cyberbullying, as a new form of bullying, involves the use of digital technology to harass or intimidate other

individuals (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010). This behavior is often difficult for schools and parents to detect because it can occur outside the school's physical environment.

The impact of bullying on students is very significant and diverse, covering psychological, academic, and social aspects. A study conducted by Gini & Pozzoli (2009) found that bullying victims often experience mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. In addition, bullying victims also tend to show a decline in academic achievement due to a loss of interest in learning and increased absenteeism (Nakamoto & Schwartz, 2010). The long-term effect is that victims of bullying can develop more serious psychological disorders and difficulties in building healthy social relationships in adulthood (Arseneault et al., 2010).

In addition to the victim, the perpetrator of bullying also has negative consequences. According to Ttofi et al. (2012), bullies are at high risk of engaging in antisocial behavior in the future, including substance abuse and crime. They also tend to have poor relationships with peers and family. This effect suggests that bullying not only harms the victim but also the perpetrator and the surrounding environment, ultimately affecting the overall school climate (Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Swearer et al., 2010; R&D of the Ministry of Education and Culture, 2019).

An unhealthy school environment due to bullying can create an atmosphere of fear and discomfort for all students, not only for victims and perpetrators but also for the surrounding community. According to Rivers et al. (2009), witnesses to bullying can also experience emotional stress and feelings of guilt due to their inability to help victims. This can reduce the sense of security and trust among students, which negatively impacts the overall school climate. Therefore, effective intervention is needed to create a safe and supportive learning environment for all learners.

Bullying in schools is a serious problem in Indonesia. Data shows an increase in bullying cases at various levels of education. The number of cases in 2023, according to the Federation of Indonesian Teachers' Unions (FSGI), recorded 30 cases of bullying in schools throughout 2023. This figure increased from 21 cases in 2022. Of the total cases, 50% occurred at the junior high school level, 30%

at the elementary level, 10% at the high school level, and 10% at the vocational school level. Bullying cases in 2023 are spread across 12 provinces and 24 districts or cities. The provinces with the highest cases include East Java, West Java, and Central Java.

In 2023, there are two cases of bullying that have fatal consequences, namely one case at an elementary school in Sukabumi Regency and one case at MTs in Blitar. One of the cases at the elementary school level is suspected to be one of the triggers for suicide victims (Annur, 2024). Complaint data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) shows that child violence in early 2024 has reached 141 cases. Of all the complaints, 35 percent of them occurred in the school environment or education unit (<https://metro.tempo.co/>).

The government, through the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek), has launched the Roots program, which aims to tackle bullying in schools. In 2021, the program will have assisted 7,369 schools and trained 13,754 anti-bullying teacher facilitators. In 2023, this program will be continued with socialization and technical guidance in various regions (<https://news.republika.co.id/>).

Effective intervention in addressing bullying is essential because of the negative impact of bullying on students' psychological, social, and academic well-being. Bullying can lead to mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, and even suicidal thoughts or actions in the victim (Rigby, 2003; Gini & Pozzoli, 2009; Arseneault et al., 2010; Klomek et al., 2010). In addition, victims of bullying often experience a decline in academic achievement due to feeling insecure and stressed in the school environment (Nakamoto & Schwartz, 2010). As such, appropriate interventions can help prevent these impacts and ensure a healthy learning environment for all students.

Effective interventions are not only important to protect victims but also to change the behavior of bullies. Intervention programs that focus on changing the behavior of actors can help prevent futures escalation of problems and support positive social development. Additionally, effective interventions can help create a more positive and inclusive school climate. Schools that successfully implement anti-bullying programs tend to have a safer and more supportive environment,

which in turn improves the well-being and academic achievement of all students (Swearer et al., 2010; Ningsih, 2016; Wardhani & Ramdani, 2018; Putri & Yuniar, 2020). Programs like this can also strengthen relationships between students, teachers, and parents, building a stronger and more cooperative school community.

The importance of effective interventions is also recognized in various programs that have been implemented in schools around the world, including Indonesia. The Roots program, for example, has been implemented in thousands of schools in Indonesia and involves teacher training as well as the establishment of change agents among students to spread the anti-bullying message (Republika Online, 2023). These programs show that, with the right support, schools can take proactive steps to address bullying and create a safer and more positive learning environment.

The study of empathy is an important aspect of overcoming bullying because empathy helps students understand and feel what others are experiencing. According to Eisenberg et al. (2010), empathy is the ability to recognize and share the feelings of others, which can reduce aggressive behavior and increase prosocial behavior among students. By developing empathy, students can more easily understand the negative impact of bullying on the victim, which in turn can reduce their intention to commit the act. Research shows that programs that focus on increasing empathy among students can significantly reduce the incidence of bullying in schools (Van Noorden et al., 2015; Santoso & Rahmawati, 2015; Utami & Nugroho, 2018; Wulandari & Prasetyo, 2020).

Teaching empathy is not only beneficial for victims and perpetrators of bullying but also for the entire school community. A study by Jolliffe & Farrington (2006) found that increased empathy can create a more inclusive and supportive school environment where students feel safer and more accepted. This can improve the overall school climate and encourage positive interactions between students. Thus, the study of empathy and the implementation of empathy development programs in schools are very important in efforts to prevent and overcome bullying, as well as in creating a positive and supportive learning environment for all students.

II. Method

The method used is Systematic Literature Review (SLR) is a systematic and structured research method to identify, evaluate, and synthesize all relevant evidence from the existing literature on a particular topic (Rahayu & Hosizah, 2021).

This method involves the following steps:

1. Develop research questions.

The research questions are made based on the needs of the chosen topic. The following are the research questions in this study:

RQ1: How does empathy overcome bullying behavior in students?

RQ2: How do teachers teach to minimize behavior in students?

2. Selection Criteria

The selection criteria for this study are as follows:

a. Inclusion Criteria: Journal articles or scientific papers are relevant to the topic being searched for using the keywords empathy, bullying, and students. Publications in the last 10 years (2014–2024). Articles within the national scope.

b. Exclusion Criteria: 1). journal articles or scientific papers that are not available in full text; 2). publications that do not come from journals.

3. Developing the search strategy

The search process is carried out using a search engine (Google Chrome) with the site address <https://garuda.kemdikbud.go.id>. Search By: Title; Keywords: empathy, bullying, student; Filter by Year: From 2014 to 2024.

4. The study's selection process

The selection process is carried out in two stages, where the title and abstract of the research are examined first to determine whether the research is relevant or not to the topic being sought.

5. Appraising the quality of studies

The data found will be evaluated based on the following quality assessment criteria:

QA1: Does the article come with the appropriate sample size or informant?

Q2: Is the article equipped with data analysis techniques?

QA3: Does the article have a discussion about empathy?

QA4: Does it explain the relationship between empathy and bullying?

From each journal article or scientific paper, the answer score below will be given for each of the questions above. a. Y (yes) b. T (no)

III. Findings

From the search results, 11 articles were found to be selected; 2 articles were repetitions of existing articles, and 1 article could not be accessed in full. So that the total number of articles that can be included in the inclusion criteria is as many as 8 articles, and those classified as exclusion criteria are 3 articles. Of the 8 inclusion articles as a whole, they are included in the acceptance category, and assessing the quality of studies for all articles received a yes answer, so there are 8 articles that are processed at the next stage.

The results of the selection of article criteria are shown in the following table:

Author	Title	Publisher
Dewi (2023)	Pelatihan Empati Untuk Menurunkan Perilaku Bullying Pada Pelaku Bullying Siswa SMP	Jurnal Intervensi Psikologi Volume 15, Nomor 1, Juni 2023
Cahyaningrum, et.al. (2018)	Pengembangan Panduan Pelatihan Empati Menggunakan Teknik Sinema Edukasi Untuk Mencegah Perilaku Bullying Siswa Sekolah Menengah Pertama	Jurnal Kajian Bimbingan dan Konseling, 3(3), 2018, 139-145
Tawaa & Silaen (2020)	Hubungan Antara Kecerdasan Emosional Dan Empati Dengan Perilaku Bullying Pada Siswa SMP Negeri 242 Lenteng Agung Jakarta Selatan	Jurnal IKRA-ITH Humaniora Vol 4 No 2 Bulan Juli 2020
Bimantoko et.al. (2020)	Efektivitas Pelatihan Empati Untuk Meningkatkan Perilaku Anti-Bullying Pada Siswa SMPN X Surabaya	Ristekdik (Jurnal Bimbingan dan Konseling) Vol 5 , No.2, 2020 hlm.132-140
Winata (2017)	Pelatihan Empati Untuk Meningkatkan Sikap Anti-Bullying Pada Siswa Bystander SMP "X" Surabaya	Jurnal Kesehatan dan Sains, September 2017,1(1):45-52
Maulany et.al. (2022)	Dampak Perundungan (Bullying) Verbal Terhadap Empati Korban Pada Siswa SMPN 7 Muaro Jambi	Jurnal Ilmiah Dikdaya, 12 (1), April 2022, 195-201
Perwira,	Pengembangan Panduan Pelatihan	Jurnal Pembelajaran,

et.al. (2021)	Empati Dengan Teknik Sosiodrama Bagi Siswa SMP Untuk Mencegah Terjadinya Bullying	Bimbingan, dan Pengelolaan Pendidikan, 1(5), 2021, 336-345
Delviana, et.al. (2024)	Pengaruh Konseling Kelompok Teknik Realitas Terhadap Empati Siswa Pelaku Bullying Di Sekolah SMA Negeri 16 Medan	Jurnal Dunia Pendidikan Volume 4 Nomor 3 Maret 2024

Source : Processed from <https://garuda.kemdikbud.go.id/>

IV. Discussion

1. RQ1: How does empathy overcome bullying behavior in students?

Empathy plays an important role in overcoming bullying in the school environment. Based on various studies that have been summarized, Some of the important roles of empathy as a leader are:

a. Increased emotional understanding

Empathy helps students better understand and feel the emotions of others (Hartati & Lestari, 2016; Sutanto & Kurniawan, 2017; Prasetya & Widodo, 2019). By developing these skills, students are better able to recognize and appreciate the feelings of their peers. Dewi research (2023) shows that empathy training can significantly lower bullying behavior because students begin to appreciate the feelings and perspectives of others, which reduces their tendency to commit aggressive actions.

b. Encourages pro-social behavior

Empathy training teaches positive social skills, such as cooperation, effective communication, and peaceful conflict resolution (Sari & Yuniar, 2018; Putri & Rahmawati, 2019). This can help create a more harmonious and inclusive school environment. Bimantoko et al. (2020) showed that students who had undergone empathy training showed improvements in pro-social behavior and decreased involvement in bullying.

c. Reduction of Aggressive Behavior

Empathy can help students reduce aggressive behavior by increasing their awareness of the negative impact of bullying on victims. Through a deeper understanding of the suffering experienced by the victim, students tend to be more empathetic and less willing to engage in bullying behavior. High emotional

intelligence and empathy are associated with a decrease in bullying behavior (Tawaa & Silaen, 2020; Susanti & Purnama, 2022; Wijayanti & Hermawan, 2023).

d. Increased social responsibility

Empathy training can increase students' social responsibility, including the role of students as bystanders. Students who have a high level of empathy are more likely to take positive action when witnessing bullying. More likely to report the incident or provide support to the victim, showing a proactive attitude in dealing with bullying (Rahayu & Pratama, 2021). Witnesses with high empathy are not only more likely to help victims directly but also seek to reduce the incidence of bullying through preventive measures and reporting to the school (Nugraha & Lestari, 2022). Research by Winata (2017) shows that empathy training can improve anti-bullying attitudes among bystander students, so that they are more active in preventing and stopping bullying.

e. Supports victims' emotional recovery.

In addition to reducing bullying behavior, empathy can also help in the emotional recovery of bullying victims (Handayani & Putra, 2021; Rizky & Setiawan, 2022). When peers show empathy for the victim, this can provide significant emotional support, helping the victim feel valued and supported. The research of Maulany et al. (2022) highlights the negative impact of verbal bullying on victim empathy and how appropriate interventions can help restore victims' empathy abilities. Empathy training through psychoeducation shows a significant improvement in the empathy ability of bullying victims, helping them overcome emotional trauma (Gusniarti, 2018; Sari et al., 2021).

f. Increases the effectiveness of psychological interventions.

Empathy is a key component in many effective psychological interventions to prevent bullying. Group counseling with reality techniques conducted by Delviana et al. (2024) shows that this approach can increase the empathy of bullying students, changing their attitudes and behaviors to be more positive. Experiential learning-based training has also been shown to be effective in increasing empathy in adolescents who are bullying perpetrators, which in turn helps reduce bullying (Nirmala et al., 2020).

Empathy can address bullying in learners because, through various training programs and interventions focused on developing empathy, students can learn to understand and appreciate the feelings of others, reduce aggressive behavior, increase pro-social behavior, and support victims of bullying. The widespread implementation of these programs in schools can create a safer, more inclusive, and more supportive environment for all students.

2. RQ2: How do teachers teach to minimize behavior in students?

There are several things that educators can do now and in the future so that bullying behavior can be prevented.

a. Integration of Empathy in the Curriculum

Educators must integrate lessons about empathy into the curriculum. This can be done through relevant subjects such as character education or life training. Integrating character education into every learning experience is one way to ensure that students not only have academic abilities but also have noble character. The main character values that are expected to emerge are honesty, intelligence, toughness, and caring (Marzuki, 2023).

The integration of empathy education in the curriculum is not only about adding new subjects but also involves the entire educational process, supported by teacher example, parental involvement, and a conducive school culture. With this approach, students are expected to develop strong empathy and be able to interact with understanding and respect for others.

b. Use of Interactive and Participatory Methods

Interactive and participatory approaches have been shown to be effective in developing empathy. Research by Officer et al. (2021) suggests that sociodrama can help students understand the feelings and perspectives of others through the simulation of social situations, which in turn reduces their tendency to engage in bullying. Research shows that by reading digital comics that contain messages about how to prevent bullying, students can develop skills to deal with and prevent bullying. This method has proven to be effective and very feasible to use in the context of learning in schools (Maulana, 2022).

c. Structured empathy training

Schools should provide a structured and ongoing empathy training program. These activities can help students experience and understand situations from the perspective of others. Structured empathy training can improve children's social development and adaptability. This study shows that children who participate in empathy training programs experience an increase in prosocial behavior and a decrease in aggressiveness (Arniansyah, 2022). Ongoing empathy training programs help students develop good interpersonal skills and prevent bullying behavior in school.

d. Increased emotional intelligence

Teaching emotional intelligence should be a priority. Tawaa, Sondang, and Silaen (2020) showed that students with high emotional intelligence are less likely to engage in bullying. Research shows that emotional intelligence has an important role in improving students' self-concept and learning patterns (Saputra, 2023).

By integrating the values of emotional intelligence into the curriculum, students are expected to develop the ability to recognize, manage emotions, and build good social relationships (Riyadi, 2023). Teachers can teach students how to recognize and manage their own emotions, as well as how to understand the emotions of others.

e. Proactive counseling approach

Schools should implement a proactive counseling approach. Interventions through proactive counseling can help students develop a better understanding of the impact of bullying and increase their empathy for victims (Adit et al., 2019). Appropriate counseling not only helps victims recover from trauma but also prevents perpetrators from repeating acts of bullying in the future (Sari, 2020). Group counseling with reality techniques researched by Delviana et al. (2024) helps students who are bullies realize the impact of their behavior and develop empathy, thereby reducing the likelihood of bullying.

f. Creating a supportive school environment

Teachers and school staff need to create a supportive and inclusive environment. By creating an inclusive and collaborative environment, schools can reduce the incidence of bullying and provide better support to victims and bullies

(Firdaus, 2019). Another thing schools can do is establish positive social norms, reinforce pro-social behavior, and promptly address any incidents of bullying.

An environment with peer support is also very important; peers have a significant contribution to make in shaping students' positive character, which can play a role in preventing bullying behavior (Kurniawan & Sudrajat, 2022). Research shows that social support from peers contributes significantly to the psychological well-being of adolescents. Peer social support contributes 42.4% to the psychological well-being of adolescents, which in turn can reduce the risk of bullying (Mufidha, 2019). Winata (2017) found that empathetic bystander students were more likely to take action to stop bullying.

Students are often more influenced by their peers than by teachers or parents. Therefore, schools must empower students to be agents of positive change among their peers. Mentoring programs, in which older students mentor younger students, can be an effective way to spread values of empathy and pro-social behavior.

g. Experiential Education

Teachers can use experiential educational approaches to teach about the consequences of bullying. The experiential learning approach applied in education is able to change student behavior by providing first-hand experience of the consequences of bullying so that students better understand the negative impact of the action (Samsuri, 2020). Experiential learning can overcome the gap in education quality by encouraging students to be active, responsible, and independent subjects in their learning process (Nugroho et al., 2022). Learning activities such as community service projects or real-life situation simulations can help students see the impact of bullying from different perspectives, increasing their awareness and empathy.

h. Training and support for teachers

Teachers also need training and support to manage the classroom in a way that prevents bullying. Providing training to teachers in the form of positive reinforcement and continuous support can increase students' motivation to learn and reduce negative behaviors such as bullying in the classroom (Firdaus et al., 2020). Wahiddah research (2020) shows that the development of training

programs for teachers in using positive affirmations as a classroom management strategy has proven to be effective in minimizing learning barriers and reducing bullying incidents in schools. This training can include strategies for recognizing early signs of bullying, effective interventions, and ways to build positive relationships with and between students.

i. Parent and community engagement

Bullying prevention cannot be done only in schools. Parental involvement in anti-bullying programs is essential. Parental involvement through parenting programs plays a very important role in reducing bullying cases in elementary schools. The synergy between school programs and parenting programs can create a more conducive and safe environment for students (Firdaus, 2019). In addition to parental involvement, community involvement also contributes to bullying prevention. Active participation from parents and the community in anti-bullying programs at school can strengthen efforts to build children's character from an early age, thereby preventing bullying in the future (Irhamna, 2020). The implementation of workshops and seminars involving parents and the community can increase insight into educating about anti-bullying.

By adopting an approach that focuses on developing empathy, emotional intelligence, and social skills, educators can effectively reduce the incidence of bullying in schools. The implementation of structured training programs, counseling support, and the creation of an inclusive school environment will help create a safer and more supportive school culture for all students. Through collaboration between teachers, students, parents, and the community, these efforts can have a long-term impact on preventing bullying and building more positive social relationships.

V. Conclusion

Empathy plays a crucial role in overcoming bullying behavior in the school environment. Several studies show that empathy can improve students' emotional understanding, encourage pro-social behavior, reduce aggressive behavior, and increase students' social responsibility in preventing bullying. Through empathy training, students can better understand and feel the emotions of others, which reduces the tendency to commit aggressive actions. Empathy training can

significantly lower bullying behavior as students begin to appreciate the feelings and perspectives of others. In addition, empathy training also teaches positive social skills such as cooperation and peaceful conflict resolution, which helps to create a more harmonious and inclusive school environment.

Teachers play an important role in minimizing bullying behavior by integrating empathy into the curriculum and using interactive and participatory methods in teaching. Structured and continuous empathy training, as well as an increase in students' emotional intelligence, are also effective in preventing bullying behavior. A proactive counseling approach and the creation of a supportive school environment, as well as the involvement of parents and the community in anti-bullying programs, can strengthen efforts to build student character and create a safe and inclusive environment. The collaborative implementation of these programs between teachers, students, parents, and the community can have a long-term impact on preventing bullying and building more positive social relationships.

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