



Overcoming Bullying through Character Learning: Building Positive Personality in Students

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Abstract

Bullying telah menjadi masalah yang meresahkan di lingkungan sekolah, dengan dampak yang merugikan bagi korban serta lingkungan belajar secara keseluruhan. Untuk mengatasi masalah ini, pendekatan yang terpadu dan efektif diperlukan, salah satunya adalah melalui pembelajaran karakter di sekolah. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan studi pustaka untuk memahami hubungan antara pembelajaran karakter dan pencegahan *bullying*. Melalui identifikasi topik permasalahan, pencarian literatur, analisis, dan pemilihan literatur terkini, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi efektivitas pembelajaran karakter dalam mengatasi *bullying*, pemahaman nilai-nilai inti yang sesuai, penguatan diri, dan pengelolaan emosi siswa, dampak jangka pendek dan panjang *bullying*, serta peran bystander intervention dalam mendorong campur tangan siswa dalam situasi *bullying*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pendidikan karakter berperan penting dalam mengurangi insiden *bullying*, dengan penguatan nilai-nilai seperti empati, keadilan, penghargaan terhadap perbedaan, tanggung jawab, dan keberanian. Dampak jangka pendek dan panjang *bullying* pada siswa mencakup stres, penurunan kesejahteraan emosional, gangguan konsentrasi, hingga gangguan kesehatan mental dan rendah diri. Implikasi jangka pendek dan panjang *bullying* termasuk penghambatan pengembangan pribadi, peningkatan biaya perawatan kesehatan, dan kehilangan produktivitas. Strategi pencegahan dan intervensi meliputi pendidikan dan kesadaran, kebijakan anti-*bullying*, dukungan emosional dan kesehatan mental, serta pengembangan keterampilan sosial dan resiliensi. *Bystander intervention* juga penting dalam mendorong siswa untuk campur tangan dan melawan *bullying*. Penelitian ini memberikan gambaran komprehensif tentang pentingnya pembelajaran karakter dalam menanggulangi *bullying* di lingkungan sekolah dan menyajikan implikasi praktis serta rekomendasi untuk masa depan.

Kata Kunci: Bullying, Pembelajaran Karakter dan Kepribadian Positif

Abstract

Bullying has become a disturbing problem in the school environment, with detrimental impacts on victims and the learning environment as a whole. To overcome this problem, an integrated and effective approach is needed, one of which is through character learning in schools. This research uses a qualitative approach with literature study to understand the relationship between character

learning and *bullying prevention*. Through identification of problem topics, literature searches, analysis, and selection of the latest literature, this research aims to explore the effectiveness of character learning in overcoming *bullying*, understanding appropriate core values, self-strengthening, and managing students' emotions, short and long term impacts of *bullying*, as well as the role of bystander intervention in encouraging student intervention in *bullying situations*. The research results show that character education plays an important role in reducing *bullying incidents*, by strengthening values such as empathy, justice, respect for differences, responsibility and courage. The short and long term impacts of *bullying* on students include stress, decreased emotional well-being, impaired concentration, mental health problems and low self-esteem. The short and long term implications of *bullying* include hindered personal development, increased health care costs, and lost productivity. Prevention and intervention strategies include education and awareness, anti- *bullying policies*, emotional and mental health support, and development of social skills and resilience. *Bystander intervention* is also important in encouraging students to intervene and fight *bullying*. This research provides a comprehensive picture of the importance of character learning in overcoming *bullying* in the school environment and presents practical implications and recommendations for the future.

Keywords: Bullying, Positive Character and Personality Learning

Introduction

Bullying is a phenomenon that is rampant in various schools throughout the world, and this has certainly become a major concern in the world of education. Not only is it directly detrimental to the victim, but it also creates an unsafe and uncomfortable learning environment for many students. In an effort to overcome this problem, an approach that is able to align and be sustainable. One approach that is increasingly recognized as part of the solution is through character learning in schools (Jemperu & Trihastuti, 2023).

Bullying, also often defined as the systematic use of physical, verbal, or psychological violence to dominate, intimidate, or harm others who are weaker, has become a disturbing problem in many educational environments. Not only limited to elementary or middle school level, *bullying* is also found in universities and even in the work environment. However, at the primary and secondary education levels, the impact may be greater due to the more limited age range and dependence on the school environment (Handayani, 2022).

The impacts of *bullying* include various problems, from reduced self-confidence to serious mental health disorders such as depression and anxiety. Victims of *bullying*

often face difficulties in social interactions, feel isolated, and may even experience academic problems due to a non-conducive learning environment. On the other hand, perpetrators of *bullying* can also experience negative impacts, including hampered development of empathy and healthy social skills, as well as the risk of being involved in criminal behavior later in life (Olaleye & Lekunze, 2023).

In dealing with the complexity of the problem of *bullying*, especially in the widely connected digital era, an approach that involves all relevant parties is needed. Not only teachers and school staff, but also parents, the community, and even the perpetrators of *bullying* themselves must be involved in prevention and control efforts. One promising approach is through character learning, which integrates moral values and positive behavior into the school curriculum (Dwita et al., 2024).

Character learning is an educational process to form a positive personality in students, which includes good attitudes, values and behavior. By building positive personalities in students, it is hoped that they can become better individuals and be able to face problems such as *bullying* in a more constructive way (Nurhayati, 2020).

Character learning can be done through various methods and strategies. One effective approach is to integrate character values in the school curriculum. In this curriculum, values such as honesty, cooperation, empathy and respect for differences can be taught to students systematically. In this case, teachers have a very important role in guiding students to develop positive character (Jumarnis et al., 2023). By giving students a better understanding of the moral and ethical values that underlie healthy interpersonal relationships, character learning can help prevent bullying behavior and create an inclusive and safe school environment for all students (Avrillia & Banowati, 2024) . Based on the importance of character education in overcoming bullying, the following are findings from several previous authors which can be stated as follows:

According to the view that (Larozza et al., 2023) the teacher's strategy in overcoming bullying behavior *through* character education for high class students has been implemented well, as well as implementing good character values in everyday life. According to (al-huda, 2024) stated that religious character education is a solution and one of the appropriate platforms to overcome cases of *bullying* among students at MTs Al-Amin Mojokerto. Furthermore, according to (Siti Annisa Jumarnis et al., 2023) , in order to minimize bullying behavior, it is necessary to minimize constructive strategies. There are several strategies that can be implemented through implementing and strengthening character education, namely by carrying out activities with religious values or implementing religious values, integrating character education in classroom learning activities in Civics and Social Sciences subjects.

Based on the findings of several studies, it can be concluded that the teacher's strategy for dealing with bullying behavior through character education for students has been implemented well. Applying good character values in everyday life has also proven

effective. Apart from that, religious character education was also identified as the right solution to overcome cases of bullying among students.

Therefore, to minimize *bullying behavior*, constructive strategies are needed, such as implementing and strengthening character education. These steps include activities on religious values or the application of religious values, as well as integrating character education into classroom learning activities, especially in Civics and Social Sciences subjects.

By implementing this approach, it is hoped that it can create a safer educational environment and reduce *bullying incidents*. Apart from that, character education can also help students develop positive attitudes and values that underlie healthy social relationships and mutual respect.

In an effort to overcome *bullying*, it is important for schools and teachers to work together with students, parents and other related parties. Strong collaboration and shared commitment will be the key to success in creating an educational environment that is free from bullying behavior.

Based on previous researchers' statements and conclusions drawn, the author will explore further how character learning can be an effective tool in overcoming *bullying* in schools, practical examples of how character values can be integrated into the curriculum, and evaluate its impact on behavior. students and the school environment as a whole, opportunities and challenges. Through a deeper understanding of the relationship between character learning and *bullying prevention*, we hope to provide a strong foundation for more effective efforts to address this problem in the educational environment.

Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with literature study. The

qualitative approach is a research approach that aims to understand social phenomena in depth through the interpretation and analysis of descriptive data. This approach focuses on understanding the context, meaning and experiences of individuals or groups involved in the phenomenon under study (Sugiyono, 2016).

In research using a literature study approach, researchers collect data from literature sources that are relevant to the research topic. The data obtained are previously existing texts or documents, such as books, journal articles, research reports and other documents. The researcher then analyzed and interpreted the data to gain a deeper understanding of the research topic (Fitrah & Luthfiah). The research method used involves the following steps:

1. Identify the problem topic
2. Literature Search
3. Literature selection by searching for journal publications in the last 5 years and books in the last 10 years
4. Literature Analysis
5. Note important things
6. Start piecing together the analysis results

Results and Discussion

The results and discussion of the literature review carried out can reveal the main points in Overcoming bullying through character learning: building positive personalities in students, including:

1. The level of effectiveness of character education in overcoming *bullying* at school

Bullying is a complicated and disturbing problem in the school environment. The impact is not only felt by the direct victims, but also touches the entire school community, creating an unsafe and uncomfortable environment (Siregar et al., 2023). In an effort to overcome this problem, an appropriate and integrated approach is

needed. One approach that is increasingly recognized as part of the solution is character education in schools. The level of effectiveness of character education in overcoming *bullying* at school by considering challenges and recommendations for the future. Several important items include (Najwa et al., 2023) :

a. Character Education Concept

Character education is an approach that aims to shape individual character and morality which involves learning about desired values, attitudes and behavior, such as honesty, empathy, responsibility and respect for differences. Through character education, students are given the opportunity to understand the importance of morality in everyday life, as well as strengthen positive values that will guide them in facing challenges and conflicts.

b. The Importance of Character Education in Overcoming *Bullying*

Bullying often occurs due to a lack of understanding of values such as empathy, respect for differences, and responsibility for our actions. By incorporating character education into the school curriculum, we can help students understand the negative impacts of bullying behavior and strengthen social skills that can help them deal with conflict in a more positive way. Character education helps create an inclusive and safe learning environment, where each individual is valued and respected.

c. Empirical Evidence on the Effectiveness of Character Education

A number of studies have been conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of character education in overcoming *bullying* in schools. The results of this research show that character education can have a significant impact in reducing *bullying* incidents. For example, research conducted by (Smith & Low, 2013) found that schools that implemented character education programs had lower levels of bullying incidents compared to schools that did not.

In addition, research conducted by (Jones & Cunningham, 2017) found that students involved in character education programs had higher levels of empathy and were more likely to report *bullying behavior* they witnessed. This shows that character education not only helps reduce *bullying behavior*, but also creates a school culture that is more responsive to this problem.

d. Challenges of implementing Character Education

Although there is evidence showing the effectiveness of character education in reducing *bullying*, there are several challenges that must be overcome in implementing this approach in schools. One of the main challenges is the lack of support and resources available for character education programs. Many schools face constraints in terms of the time, money, and manpower required to implement these programs well.

Apart from that, there are also challenges in objectively assessing the effectiveness of character education programs. Measuring character education outcomes is often more subjective than measuring academic achievement, and it is difficult to precisely measure the long-term impact of these programs.

e. Recommendations for the Future

Although there are challenges that must be overcome, character education remains an approach that has great potential in overcoming *bullying* in schools. To increase its effectiveness, there are several steps that can be taken in the future:

- 1) Increase support and resources for character education programs in schools.
- 2) Involving parents and the community in supporting efforts to prevent *bullying* through character education.
- 3) Develop more effective evaluation methods to measure the long-term impact of character education programs.

2. Understanding of core values that are appropriate in overcoming *bullying*

Understanding and applying appropriate core values has a very important role. These values not only guide individual behavior, but also shape an inclusive and supportive school culture. In preventing *bullying*, there are values to overcome it, including (Larozza et al., 2023)

a. Empathy

Empathy is the ability to understand and feel what other people feel. In preventing *bullying*, having empathy for others is an important first step. Students who have strong empathy tend to better understand the negative impacts of *bullying behavior* and are more likely to choose not to engage in such behavior. Therefore, character education must strengthen the value of empathy and teach students to see situations from other people's perspectives before acting.

b. Justice

Justice are values that encourage fair and equal treatment of all individuals, regardless of their differences. In *bullying prevention*, it is important for students to understand that everyone has the same right to feel safe and respected in the school environment. Justice also includes the responsibility to fight injustice and unfair treatment. Therefore, character education must strengthen the values of justice and provide students with the skills to act fairly in conflict situations.

c. Respect for Differences

Respect for differences are values that encourage appreciation and acceptance of individual diversity. In *bullying prevention*, it is important for students to understand that each person is unique and valuable, regardless of their differences. Reinforcing the value of respect for differences can help reduce *bullying* incidents related to differences such as race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation. An inclusive approach to character education must emphasize the

importance of respecting and celebrating diversity.

d. Responsibility

Responsibility are values that encourage individuals to take responsibility for their actions and decisions. In *bullying prevention*, students need to understand that they have a responsibility to not only maintain their own safety and well-being, but also to protect their friends from *bullying behavior*. Reinforcing the value of responsibility in character education can help create a school environment where each individual feels responsible for the safety and well-being of others.

e. Courage

Courage are values that encourage individuals to act with integrity and courage in the face of challenges and injustice. In preventing *bullying*, students need to have the courage to fight bullying behavior and support their friends who are victims. A bold approach to character education must provide students with the skills and support to identify and report *bullying behavior*, as well as to fight for safer and more inclusive school environments.

3. Self-strengthening and emotional management to deal with *bullying situations*

Self-strengthening and managing emotions are two very important aspects in overcoming *bullying situations*. When a student is a victim of *bullying*, often the first thing that is affected is their self-confidence and self-esteem. Feelings of helplessness and low self-esteem can hinder a person's ability to respond effectively to bullying situations. Apart from that, *bullying situations* also often trigger intense emotions such as anger, fear, or anxiety, which if not managed properly can disrupt students' cognitive functions and behavior (al-huda, 2024).

Self-strengthening helps students to build confidence in their own abilities and

worth. This involves recognizing and appreciating their own strengths, talents, and achievements, as well as developing the communication skills necessary to enforce personal boundaries and defend themselves. Meanwhile, emotional management helps students to recognize, understand, and manage their emotions in a healthy and productive way which includes the use of relaxation and deep breathing techniques to calm themselves, as well as developing skills in identifying and expressing emotions constructively (Fadil, 2023).

Then, there are various strategies that can be used to help students develop self-strength in dealing with *bullying situations*. One effective strategy is to build self-confidence. This can be done through:

- 1) Introduction to Strengths and Talents
Encourage students to identify and appreciate their own strengths, talents, and achievements. By recognizing the good things in themselves, students will feel more confident in facing difficult situations.
- 2) Setting Achievable Goals
Encourage students to set realistic, measurable goals for themselves, and reward themselves when they achieve these goals. This helps them to feel valuable and competent.
- 3) Promotes a Positive Attitude
Teaches students to understand and accept themselves, as well as to remain optimistic and focus on positive things in their lives. Viewing failure as an opportunity to learn and grow is also an important part of this positive attitude.

Apart from self-strengthening, managing emotions is also a very important skill in dealing with *bullying situations*. There are various strategies that can be used to help students manage their emotions better, including (Handayani, 2022) :

- 1) Breathing and Relaxation Exercises
Teaching students deep breathing techniques and relaxation exercises to

help them calm themselves when they feel tense, anxious, or angry. Regular and controlled deep breathing exercises can help reduce stress levels and improve students' emotional well-being.

2) Identification and Expression of Emotions

Encourage students to identify and be able and brave to express their emotions in a healthy and productive manner. Through writing, art, or talking with a trusted adult, students can learn to cope with difficult emotions and find healthy ways to express them.

3) Seek Support

Teach students to seek support from friends, family, or mental health professionals when they face difficult or surprising situations. Having someone to support and trust to talk to and share feelings with can help students feel more safe and connected.

4. Short-term and long-term impacts of bullying on students

Bullying is not only limited to the school environment, but has a widespread and profound impact on various aspects of students' lives. By exploring the short-term and long-term impacts of *bullying* on students, you can understand how serious this problem is and the need for strong and appropriate action to overcome it. In cases of *bullying*, it has several impacts, both short and long term, the explanation is as follows (Octaviani et al., 2022) :

a. Short-Term Impact of Bullying on Students

In the short term, victims of *bullying* can immediately feel disturbing psychological and emotional impacts. Some of these impacts include:

1) Stress and Anxiety

The experience of being the target of *bullying* often causes high levels of stress and anxiety in students. They may

feel afraid or worried about their safety in the school environment.

2) Decreased Emotional Well-Being

Bullying often makes students feel sad, embarrassed, or low in self-esteem. They may feel worthless or unloved, which can affect their overall emotional well-being.

3) Concentration Disorders

Students who are victims of *bullying* may have difficulty concentrating at school because they are distracted by thoughts about recent *bullying incidents* or worries about possible future incidents.

4) Physical or Health Injury

In some cases, victims of *bullying* may experience physical injuries such as bruises or cuts. Even if the physical injuries are not serious, they can still cause pain and discomfort.

These impacts not only affect the well-being of individual students, but can also impact their ability to learn and participate effectively in the school environment.

b. The Long-Term Impact of Bullying on Students

Apart from the short-term impacts that are felt directly, *bullying* can also have long-term, ongoing impacts on students. Some of these long-term impacts include:

1) Mental Health Disorders

Bullying can leave a deep mark on a student's mental health. They may experience depression, anxiety, or even post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a result of their traumatic experiences.

2) Feelings of Inferiority and Lack of Self-Confidence

The constant experience of being the target of *bullying* can damage a student's self-esteem and self-confidence. They may experience feelings of low self-esteem or worthlessness, which can hinder their ability to succeed in various aspects of life.

3) Relationship and Socialization Disorders

Students who are victims of *bullying* may have difficulty building and maintaining healthy relationships with others. They may become more introverted or withdraw from social interactions because they are afraid or distrustful of others.

4) Decline in Academic Achievement

Emotional and psychological disorders caused by *bullying* can impact students' academic performance. They may have difficulty concentrating in school or lose motivation to study, which can lead to a decline in their academic performance.

The long-term impacts of *bullying* can continue to impact students' lives even after they leave the school environment, hindering their personal, professional, and social development.

Apart from having an impact, it turns out that bullying has a number of short-term and long-term implications, the implications are:

1) Inhibition of Personal Development

Bullying can hinder a student's personal development, limiting their ability to reach their full potential in many aspects of life. One thing can disrupt the process of identity formation and the development of important social skills.

2) Rising Health Care Costs

The mental and physical health impacts of *bullying* can lead to increased health care costs, both for individuals and the health system as a whole. This includes the costs of medical care and mental therapy, as well as costs associated with lost productivity due to disruption caused by *bullying*.

3) Loss of Productivity

Bullying can disrupt students' concentration and productivity at school and the workplace. This can lead to decreased productivity, which in turn can reduce students' potential contribution to society as a whole.

Then, there are several steps to prevent and intervene *bullying* in the school environment, including (Dwita et al., 2024) :

1) Education and Awareness

It is important to continue to educate students, parents, teachers, and the public about the dangers and consequences of *bullying* through educational programs, seminars, and awareness designed to increase understanding of the issue.

2) Strong Anti- *Bullying* Policy

Schools and educational institutions must have anti-bullying policies that are clear and implemented consistently. This includes procedures for reporting *bullying incidents*, strict sanctions for perpetrators of *bullying*, and support provided for victims.

3) Emotional Support and Mental Health

It is important to provide emotional and mental health support for students who are victims of bullying. This may include individual or group counseling services, as well as peer support programs designed to help students overcome their experiences.

4) Development of Social Skills and Resilience

Students need to be given opportunities to develop social skills and resilience that will help them better deal with challenges and conflict. This can be done through character development programs, social skills training, and extracurricular activities that promote teamwork and cooperation.

5. *Bystander Intervention* in encouraging students to intervene and fight *bullying*

Bystander intervention, or intervention by a third party, is an important concept in overcoming the problem of *bullying* in the school environment. The role of bystanders or *bystanders* in *bullying situations* is often overlooked, even though they have great potential to influence conflict dynamics and provide support to victims.

Next, how important is the role of *bystander intervention* in encouraging students to intervene and fight *bullying*, as well as strategies that can be used to increase *bystander participation* in efforts to prevent *bullying* can be expressed as follows:

a. The Importance of Bystander Intervention

Bystander intervention is a concept that recognizes that most *bullying incidents* involve not only the perpetrator and victim, but also a number of other individuals who witness or know about the incident. Bystanders have *the* potential to stop or reduce *bullying behavior* with their intervention. Research shows that intervention by *bystanders* can have a good impact in reducing *bullying incidents* in schools. When *bystanders* actively intervene to stop or report *bullying behavior*, they help create a safer, more inclusive, and supportive school environment for all students.

b. Factors Influencing Bystander Interference

Although important, not all *bystanders* feel comfortable or confident to intervene in *bullying situations*. There are several factors that influence a person's likelihood of intervening, including:

- 1) The need for social approval
Some individuals may be reluctant to intervene because they fear the reaction of their friends or worry about how they will be judged by others.
- 2) Minimal interpersonal skills
Some individuals may be unsure about what they should say or do in a *bullying situation*, so they choose not to intervene.
- 3) Fear of retribution
There is also the fear that they themselves will become targets of *bullying* if they interfere in the situation, causing them to choose to remain silent.

c. Strategies to Encourage Bystander Intervention

To increase *bystander participation* in *bullying prevention efforts*, effective and targeted strategies are needed. Some strategies that can be used to encourage *bystander intervention* include:

- 1) Education and training
Provide education to students about the role of *bystanders* in stopping *bullying* and provide the skills needed to intervene effectively.
- 2) Promote positive norms
bystander participation in stopping *bullying* and providing support to victims.
- 3) Provide a safe complaint channel
Create a system that allows students to report *bullying incidents* anonymously and without fear of retribution.
- 4) Support victims
Provide support and assistance to victims of *bullying*, so that *bystanders* feel more confident to intervene and fight this behavior.

d. Benefits of Bystander Intervention

The benefits obtained from *bystander intervention* include:

- 1) Create a safer and more supportive school environment for all students.
- 2) Increase students' sense of responsibility and involvement in preventing *bullying*.
- 3) *bullying incidents* and improve students' mental and emotional well-being.

Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that character education has an important role in overcoming *bullying* in schools by strengthening values such as empathy, justice, respect for differences, responsibility and courage. Character education programs can help students understand the negative impacts of *bullying behavior* and strengthen the social skills

necessary to resolve conflict in a more positive way.

Second, understanding and applying appropriate core values such as empathy, justice, respect for differences, responsibility and courage have a very important role in overcoming bullying. These values help shape an inclusive and supportive school culture, and guide individual behavior in dealing with conflict.

Third, self-strengthening and managing emotions are important aspects in dealing with *bullying situations*. Through developing self-confidence and emotional management skills, students can be better prepared and able to respond effectively to bullying situations.

Lastly, *bystander intervention has great potential to reduce bullying* incidents in schools by encouraging intervention from third parties. Bystanders have *an* important role in creating a safer and more supportive school environment for all students.

In order to deal with *bullying* effectively, character education, understanding core values, self-strengthening, emotional management, and the role of bystander intervention need to be strengthened and integrated into a holistic and sustainable approach. In this way, the school environment can become a safe, inclusive and supportive place for all students.

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