

The Effect of Empathy Training on Bullying Behavior in Juvenile Prisoners: A Quasi Experiment

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Purpose: The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of empathy training on bullying behavior in juvenile prisoners at the Bandung City Special Development Institute for Children.

Methods: This study used a quantitative method with a quasi-experimental design with pre and post-test with control group. The sampling technique used purposive sampling and obtained a sample of 100 respondents (50 intervention group and 50 control group). Empathy training was conducted for 3 months as many as 4 sessions consisting of education, role play, watching movies, and reflection. Data collection used the Indonesian version of the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire. Univariate analysis used mean, min-max, and standard deviation values. Bivariate analysis used Wilcoxon test and Mann–Whitney test.

Results: The results showed that in the intervention group, most respondents had high bullying behavior before the intervention (70%) and had low bullying behavior after the intervention (64%). In the control group, most respondents showed a high level of bullying behavior (80%) at pre-test and had high level of bullying behavior (78%) at post-test. The results of the Wilcoxon test showed a p value of <0.001, indicating that there was a significant effect on reducing bullying behavior in prisoners in LPKA Bandung City after being given empathy training. The results of the Mann–Whitney test showed a value of p<0.001 which means that there is a difference in the level of bullying behavior between the control and intervention groups.

Conclusion: Empathy training is a recommendation for community nurses in Bandung City Special Development Institute for Children to implement community-based nursing interventions in preventing bullying in children and adolescents, especially adolescents in prison.

Keywords: bullying, juvenile, empathy training, prisoners

Introduction

Bullying is intentional and repeated aggressive behavior, aimed at hurting weaker or defenseless individuals.¹ Forms of bullying include physical (hitting, kicking), verbal (taunting, threatening), social (ostracizing, spreading rumors), and cyberbullying (harassing or intimidating via digital technology).² Among children, especially in schools and communities, bullying is a serious problem. Data shows that more than 20% of children worldwide are victims of bullying at school, which has a negative impact on their physical, mental health, academic performance and social relationships.³

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reports that in 2021 there were 42,540 cases of bullying recorded throughout the world. Some countries with the highest incidence of bullying are Austria, Estonia, Russia and Japan.⁴ American research on 15,600 teenagers, 17% of whom reported having been the perpetrator of bullying in their environment.⁵ Based on rankings from 78 countries, Indonesia is ranked 5th in the countries with the most incidents of bullying.⁶ Cases of bullying among teenagers often occur in Indonesia. As many as 5 out of 10 teenagers in Indonesia have been perpetrators of bullying.⁷ Based on data from previous research, the incidence of

bullying at LPKA reached 81.3% in the form of physical bullying, 60% experienced verbal bullying, and 70% experienced psychological bullying.⁸ The results of other research in juvenile prisons show that of the 132 prisoners who were the perpetrators of bullying, 63.6% were the victims of bullying in the last 6 months, 80.3% were the perpetrators of bullying.⁹ Many incidents in LPKA occur because juvenile prisoners have prior criminal experience.

In juvenile correctional institutions in Indonesia, general conditions often show a stressful environment with limited facilities and overcapacity. Data from the Ministry of Law and Human Rights shows that thousands of children are in correctional institutions, with the number continuing to increase every year.¹⁰ In this context, bullying behavior among child prisoners becomes a serious problem. The forms of bullying that occur include physical violence, verbal intimidation, social exclusion, and group pressure.¹¹ Factors that influence the prevalence of bullying in juvenile correctional institutions include high levels of stress, lack of supervision, and power dynamics among inmates. This harsh and competitive environment often exacerbates aggressive behavior, making effective interventions indispensable to address these issues and create a safer, more supportive rehabilitation environment.¹²

Bullying has a significant negative impact on juvenile prisoners, especially in terms of their mental health, including increasing the risk of depression, anxiety and lasting trauma.¹³ Physically, victims of bullying often experience cuts, bruises, or even serious injuries that require medical treatment. On the social side, bullying damages juvenile inmates' interpersonal relationships, hindering their ability to trust others and build healthy connections.¹⁴ The impact of bullying for a child who is a bully is that a child who is a bully tends to have poor empathy and social interaction and tends to have abnormal behavior.¹⁵ Such as hyperactive behavior towards the surrounding environment. In addition, bullies also have the potential to experience mental health disorders such as uncontrolled emotional symptoms.¹⁶ The unsafe and intimidating environment resulting from bullying hinders the achievement of rehabilitation goals and perpetuates the cycle of violence and antisocial behavior.¹⁶

Empathy is the ability to understand and feel the feelings of others, which is divided into two main components: cognitive empathy, namely the ability to understand another person's perspective, and affective empathy, namely the ability to feel the same emotions as another person.⁵ The importance of empathy lies in its role in shaping positive social behavior and building healthy interpersonal relationships.¹⁷ Studies and theories suggest that empathy serves as a protective factor against antisocial and aggressive behavior, including bullying.^{18,19} By developing empathy, individuals are better able to feel the suffering of others, which encourages them to avoid behavior that could cause harm. Research also shows that interventions that increase empathy can reduce levels of aggression and increase prosocial actions.²⁰ Therefore, empathy is considered an important key in efforts to reduce bullying incidents and promote a more harmonious social environment.

Empathy training as an intervention involves a variety of methods designed to improve an individual's ability to understand and feel the feelings of others. These methods include role-playing, in which participants assume the role of another person to experience their perspective; group discussions, which encourage open sharing of experiences and feelings; and reflective activities, which invite individuals to reflect on their own feelings and actions and their impact on others.²¹ A review of the literature shows that empathy training programs are effective in a variety of contexts, including correctional institutions. Research shows that empathy training can reduce aggressive behavior and increase positive social interactions among prisoners.²² These programs help develop the emotional skills necessary to create a more supportive environment and reduce bullying incidents, thereby contributing to a more effective and successful rehabilitation process.²³

Previous research shows that empathy training is conducted over 6 sessions of 30–60 minutes each for adolescents aged 12–14 years.²² The second session involved providing empathy materials through bullying and empathy videos, which were discussed with friends. The third session involved story telling about kindness. The fourth and fifth sessions were filled with games that stimulated the subject's empathy, and ended with a closing. Activities were carried out for 7 days. Measurement of bullying behavior using the Olweus Bullying Scale. Another study also showed that empathy training is one of the training techniques that train students in schools to have empathy for other students who experience different conditions.²⁴ Empathy training was conducted for 3 months on junior high school students. Activities include story telling, education, and role play. The results showed that empathy training can reduce bullying behavior.

Various types of crimes committed by children and adolescents in the Bandung City Special Development Institution (LPKA) include child protection issues, robbery, narcotics, murder, theft, and breach of order. This shows that the

background of children and adolescents who are fostered in LPKA Bandung City is risky behavior. Previous research shows that adolescents who have a background of risky behavior can become perpetrators of repeated bullying behavior.²⁵ At LPKA, there is no program that focuses on dealing with the problem of bullying among juvenile prisoners at LPKA. So interventions are needed that focus on dealing with the problem of bullying in juvenile prisoners.

The research gap in the context of juvenile correctional institutions in Indonesia is clearly visible from the lack of studies exploring empathy interventions to reduce bullying behavior. In fact, the need for effective intervention is urgent, considering the high incidence of bullying among child prisoners which has a negative impact on their mental health and rehabilitation process. The hypothesis of this research is that empathy training has the potential to be an effective intervention to reduce bullying behavior because empathy can increase emotional awareness and understanding of other people's feelings. By developing empathy, child prisoners are expected to reduce aggressive behavior and build more positive social relationships, creating a safer environment conducive to rehabilitation. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify the effect of empathy training on bullying behavior in fostered residents at LPKA Bandung City. The hypothesis in this study is H0 is that there is no effect of empathy training on bullying behavior in LPKA Bandung City, H1 is that there is an effect of empathy training on bullying behavior in LPKA Bandung City.

Material and Methods

Study Design

This research used a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test and post-test model with a control group. This design was chosen because it allows researchers to compare changes in bullying behavior between a group that received an empathy training intervention and a group that did not receive the intervention. In the initial stage, child prisoners at LPKA Bandung City had their level of bullying behavior measured using the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (OBVQ). Participants who met the inclusion criteria were then randomly divided into the control group and the intervention group. This research was not randomized, but group division was carried out randomly. Randomization was only used to randomize the samples to the control and intervention groups, this study was not blinded in the research process and there was no manipulation in the variables, as well as not controlling for co-founding factors that can influence bullying behavior such as communication between the control and intervention groups because they live together in LPKA Bandung city. The intervention group took part in empathy training consisting of 4 sessions for 3 months, while the control group continued their routine activities. After 3 months, both groups were measured again using the OBVQ to assess changes in bullying behavior. The control group received treatment, namely seminars on empathy and bullying as well as scheduled daily activities at LPKA such as religious activities, education, arts and culture, and sports activities. This matter has been discussed with the head of education and training LPKA Bandung city. Furthermore, the development of empathy training can be carried out independently by nurses at LPKA to be given to all juvenile prisoners accompanied by a research team. This design was chosen because it allows measuring the effects of the intervention while taking into account other variables that may influence the results.

Participants

Participants in this research were juvenile prisoners at LPKA Bandung City. All juvenile prisoners are male. The sampling technique used purposive sampling. Inclusion criteria were: (1) juvenile prisoners have minimum OBVQ score ≥ 47 , indicating moderate bullying behavior; (2) juvenile prisoners who will become LPKA inmates for the next 3 months; and (3) able to communicate well in Indonesian. Exclusion criteria were an OBVQ score < 47 , indicating low levels of bullying behavior, and juvenile prisoners who would not become inmates for the next 3 months, because the duration of empathy training was 3 months. These inclusion criteria were chosen to ensure that participants were individuals with relevant levels of bullying behavior and who would remain in the institution throughout the intervention period, thereby allowing the training to be effective and the outcomes measured to be valid.

The sample in this research was 100 juvenile prisoners at LPKA Bandung City. 100 respondents were randomly divided into two groups, namely the control group and the intervention group. This research has received research approval from LPKA Bandung City. Before conducting research, this research carried out written informed consent from

the inmates at LPKA Bandung City. Juvenile prisoners aged 12–18 years are in the juvenile category. They live and are the responsibility of the head of education and training of LPKA Bandung City. So that writing informed consent is given to the child and to the person who is responsible for them, namely the head of the field of education and training of LPKA Bandung City. Research permits and writing informed consent were also given to the head of the education and training section at LPKA Bandung City and to youth assisted residents at LPKA. In LPKA, the head of education and training is responsible for juvenile prisoners in LPKA, so that writing informed consent is not given to parents. There were no participants who withdraw from this activity, all participants participated in the activity from start to finish for 3 months.

Procedure

The intervention in this study adapts from the empathy training program that has been conducted by Dewi (2023), the empathy training program has 10 sessions consisting of education, structured discussions, watching films, role play, and self-reflection.²⁶ The intervention is a development of previous research related to KiVa Anti-Bullying which contains one of the activities in increasing empathy in students, the research has registered a research protocol on clinicaltrials.gov with the number NCT02898324.⁵ Based on discussions with the Head of the Education and Training Division of LPKA Bandung City, it was agreed to conduct the training in 4 sessions consisting of education, watching movies, role play, and self-reflection.

This research consists of three main stages. In the first stage, measurement before the experiment, the research assistant distributed the OBVQ questionnaire to select respondents who met the inclusion criteria. After that, participants were randomly divided into control and intervention groups. The second stage is implementing the intervention. One week before the training, the researcher gave a briefing to the research assistant. Empathy training consisted of 4 sessions conducted over 3 months, starting with a seminar on bullying which was attended by both groups. The intervention group then took part in educational sessions, group discussions, role-play, watching films, and self-reflection, while the control group continued their daily activities as determined by the LPKA. The third stage was the measurement after the experiment, where the OBVQ post-test was distributed to both groups to measure changes in bullying behavior. The activity closed with appreciation to the participants and handing over souvenirs to the LPKA. The activities carried out during the three months are described in the following table (Table 1).

Data Collection

The instrument used in this research is The Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (OBVQ-R), which has been translated and adapted. This questionnaire consists of 22 items with a Likert scale from 1 (never) to 4 (several times/week), which assess bullying behavior carried out by adolescents. The validity of this instrument has been tested with a value of 0.340–0.637, and reliability with Cronbach's alpha of 0.85,²⁷ indicating that this instrument is valid and reliable for measuring bullying behavior among teenagers. The questionnaire was distributed directly to the research respondents to measure the level of bullying they experienced. The scores obtained from this questionnaire were grouped into three categories, namely low bullying with a score range of 22–44, moderate bullying with a score range of 45–66, and high bullying with a score range of 67–88. In addition, this instrument has been tested in the Indonesian language context with validity results in the range 0.340–0.673 and reliability 0.893,²⁸ as well as previous test results with validity 0.348–0.837 and reliability 0.927.²⁹ Examples of questions in this questionnaire are I hit, kicked, or pushed someone and I pulled someone's hair or scratched them.

Data Analysis

Univariate analysis was used to describe the demographic distribution and research variables such as age, education level, and length of detention. Data obtained from pre-test and post-test were analyzed to determine the effect of empathy training on bullying behavior. Based on the results of the normality test, the post-test data was not normally distributed, while the pre-test data was normally distributed. Therefore, the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was used to test the effect of empathy training before and after the intervention, and the Mann–Whitney test was used to determine the difference in effect between the control group and the intervention group. The decision-making basis for the Wilcoxon signed rank test

Table I Procedure of Empathy Training

Sessions	Content	Time
First session: psychoeducation conducted by 5 facilitators	Education related to bullying, namely the definition of bullying, the phenomenon of bullying in adolescents, factors that cause bullying, the incidence of bullying in adolescents, how to prevent bullying, and how to act when bullying occurs. Then continued with an educational session related to empathy material regarding the definition of empathy, factors that affect empathy, the impact of empathy, the influence of empathy on bullying, and how to foster empathy. Participants: 50 intervention group participants, education conducted by 3 facilitators	60 minutes
Second session: focus group discussion and role play	Participants were invited to discuss with facilitators, namely researchers and research assistants (5 S.Kep., Ners graduates) related to bullying and empathy. Students were divided into 5 groups with 10 inmates in each group accompanied by the facilitator. During the discussion, participants were asked to develop scenarios for 10 minutes related to how to reduce bullying behavior that can be done in LPKA Bandung City. After that, participants practiced and role played for 30 minutes. Then, participants discussed the meaning of the results of the role play for 20 minutes. Participants: 50 intervention group participants, education conducted by 5 facilitators	60 minutes
Third session: watching a movie	Watching a movie related to bullying from the Ministry of Education and Culture which was downloaded via youtube. Watching the movie was conducted for 60 minutes divided into 5 groups (10 prisoners accompanied by 1 research assistant). The duration of the movie is 10 minutes for the first video and 7 minutes for the second video. After that, the group discussed the lessons learned from the movie and conveyed opinions about bullying and empathy from the movie for 30–40 minutes. Participants were also invited to share their experiences related to their bullying experiences. Participants: 50 intervention group participants, education conducted by 5 facilitators	60 minutes
Fourth session: self-reflection and refreshment	Self-reflection and refreshment related to the bullying and empathy materials that have been given. This session was conducted for 2×60 minutes in the fourth week of April. In the first 1 hour, participants were invited to self-reflect on the activities that had been carried out over the past 3 months in 5 groups accompanied by researchers and research assistants (1 group consisted of 10 intervention group inmates). Then, in the next 1 hour, participants refresh with researchers related to bullying and empathy material, as well as activities that have been carried out for the past 3 months. Participants: 50 intervention group participants, education conducted by 5 facilitators	120 minutes

and Mann–Whitney test is if the Asym.sig (2-tailed) value <0.05 then there is a significant difference. Then, if the Asym.sig (2-tailed) value > 0.05 then there is no significant difference.

Ethical Considerations

This research has received ethical permission from the West Java Province STIKEP PPNI Research Ethics Commission with number No. III/056/KEPK-SLE/STIKEP/PPNI/JABAR/II/2024 and with the Declaration of Helsinki. The ethical principles applied in this research include autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, veracity, justice, and confidentiality. Research participants provide written informed consent to participate and are guaranteed data confidentiality and protection against all forms of risks that may arise during the research. This research also ensures that all actions taken are for the benefit of the participants and do not cause harm, and that the information provided during the research is correct and transparent.

Results

The characteristics of respondents in this study include age, gender, education level and how long they have been inmates. The number of respondents who filled out the questionnaire was 100 inmates in LPKA Bandung City.

Based on Table 2., it can be seen that of the 100 respondents who were divided into the control group and the intervention group, the majority of respondents were aged 13–19 years (74%), 35 respondents from the intervention group (70%) and 39 respondents from the control group (74%). At the educational level, almost half of the respondents had junior high school education (41%), the highest education level in the intervention group was 22 respondents at junior high school and in the control group the highest education level was high school, namely 20 respondents. Regarding the characteristics of the length of time they have been inmates, more than half of the respondents have been inmates for more than 1 year (57%) in both the control group (29 people) and the intervention group (28 people) (Table 2).

Based on Table 3, it was found that in the pre-test score for bullying behavior, the lowest score was 56 in the control group and the highest score was 86 in the control group. Then, in the post-test results for bullying behavior, the lowest score was 22 in the control group and the highest score was 88 in the control group. The highest mean value was in the control pre-test group at 70.78, while the lowest mean value was in the intervention post-test group at 42.60 (Table 3).

Based on Table 4, research results in the intervention group during the pre-test showed that the majority of respondents had high levels of bullying behavior (70%). After the post-test, it was found that the majority of respondents had low levels of bullying behavior (64%) (Table 4).

Based on Table 5, the results of research on the control group during the pre-test showed that the majority of respondents had high levels of bullying behavior (80%). After the post-test, it was found that the majority of respondents in the control group had a high level of bullying behavior (78%) (Table 5).

Based on the continuation of Table 6, it is known that Asymp.Sig (2-tailed) is <0.001 for the intervention group and 0.930 for the control group. The basis for decision making in the Wilcoxon test is if the Asymp.Sig value <0.05, then the hypothesis is accepted (Table 6). Based on the Wilcoxon test in this study, the Asymp.Sig (2-tailed) value is smaller than

Table 2 Frequency Distribution of Characteristics of Youth Assisted Residents in Special Development Institutions for Children in Bandung (n=100)

Characteristics	Experimental Group (n= 50)		Control Group (n= 50)		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Age						
School (10–12)	15	30.0	11	22.0	26	26
Teenagers (13–19 years)	35	70.0	39	78.0	74	74
Mean Age	14.42		15.14		14.78	
Current education						
Elementary School	11	22.0	11	22.0	22	22
Junior High School	22	44.0	19	38.0	41	41
Senior High School	17	34.0	20	40.0	37	37
Has Been an Inmate for a Long Time						
< 1 year	22	44.0	21	42.0	43	43
≥ 1 year	28	56.0	29	58.0	57	57

Table 3 Descriptive Analysis Test Results (n=100)

Group	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-test Control	56	86	70.86	5,599
Post-test Control	22	88	70.00	9,212
Pre-test Intervention	62	84	70.04	5,194
Post-test Intervention	24	77	42.60	13,161

Table 4 Frequency Distribution of Levels of Bullying Behavior in the Experimental Group (n=50)

Characteristics Level of Bullying	Pre-Intervention		Post Intervention	
	Σ	%	Σ	%
Low	0	0	32	64.0
Medium	15	30.0	16	32.0
High	35	70.0	2	4.0

Table 5 Frequency Distribution of Levels of Bullying Behavior in the Control Group (n=50)

Characteristics Level of Bullying	Pre-Control		Post-Control	
	Σ	%	Σ	%
Low	0	0	1	2.0
Medium	10	20.0	10	20.0
High	40	80.0	39	78.0

Table 6 Wilcoxon Test of the Effect of Empathy Training on Bullying Behavior

Value Components	Postintervention - Preintervention	Postcontrol - Precontrol
Z	-6.135	-0.088
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	<0.001	930
Mean difference	27.44	0.86

0.05, so it can be concluded that the hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is a difference between the level of bullying behavior in the pre-test and post-test scores, so it can also be concluded that there is a significant influence on reducing bullying behavior among inmates in LPKA Bandung City after being given empathy training. The difference in mean score from post-test to pre-test in the control group was 0.86 and in the intervention group was 27.44.

Based on the data in Table 7, it is known that the Asymp.Sig (2-tailed) value is <0.001. The basis for decision making in the Mann Whitney test is if the Asymp.Sig value <0.05, then the hypothesis is accepted. Asymp.Sig (2-tailed) value $0.000 < 0.05$, it can be concluded that the hypothesis is accepted (Table 7). Based on this, the results showed that there

Table 7 Mann Whitney Test of the Differences in Bullying Behavior Post-Test Scores in the Control and Intervention Groups

Measurement	Results
Mann-Whitney U	130,500
Wilcoxon W	1405,500
Z	-7,721
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	<0.001

was a difference in the level of bullying behavior between the control class and the intervention class after being given empathy training to inmates in Bandung City.

Discussion

Based on research results from a total of 100 respondents, it was found that the majority of respondents were teenagers, namely 74 inmates (74%). The description of bullying behavior in adolescents who are not given intervention can produce detrimental psychological, emotional and social impacts. Bullying behavior tends to continue and become increasingly severe, causing victims to feel isolated, afraid and anxious if appropriate intervention is not given.³⁰ Victims of bullying may experience decreased self-esteem, lose interest in social or academic activities, and even experience persistent depression or anxiety.³¹ In addition, victims of bullying may also experience physical health problems, such as headaches, digestive disorders, or sleep problems as a result of constant stress.³²

The absence of interventions that focus on bullying can lead to an increase in its incidence because perpetrators feel there are no policies or consequences that inhibit their behavior.³³ Without firm action, bullies may feel free to continue their behavior without fear of significant consequences. The absence of intervention also causes bullying to be considered normal.³⁴ This can create an unsafe and uncondusive environment, where victims of bullying feel unprotected and do not get the protection they need.

Based on the Wilcoxon test, the Asymp.Sig (2-tailed) value was <0.001 , which means it is smaller than 0.05, this shows that there is a significant influence on reducing bullying behavior among inmates in LPKA Bandung City after being given empathy training. Empathy is an important aspect in reducing bullying behavior. Previous research shows that a person's level of empathy has a positive effect on reducing bullying behavior.²⁶ Bullying prevention programs that focus on developing empathy and understanding other people's feelings have proven effective in reducing bullying cases. Aspects of empathy therapy have a significant impact in reducing the tendency for bullying behavior. The ability to recognize the feelings, motivations and intentions of others, be responsively empathetic, predict the impact of actions on others, and respect the dignity of other individuals, can all reduce the tendency for bullying behavior, including physical, verbal, relational and social forms.³⁵

Empathy training has been shown to be effective in reducing bullying behavior, especially when conducted over a longer period of time. Although the previous study was conducted within 7 days. However, a longer period of time allows participants to go deeper into the material, strengthen empathy skills, and implement behavior changes more consistently.²² Conversely, shorter interventions tend to produce a more limited impact, as participants have less time to reflect on and internalize the material provided.¹⁹ Longer duration provides an opportunity for participants to experience deeper emotional and behavioral transformation, so that long-term effects in bullying reduction are more assured.³⁶

In this study, there was a significant difference in bullying behavior between the control group and the intervention group after being given empathy training to prisoners in LPKA ($p < 0.001$) with a mean difference of 27.44. In a previous study with a sample of junior high school students, it was found that the p value = 0.016 which showed that there was a significant difference in bullying behavior.²⁴ The difference in p value can be caused by the baseline bullying behavior of students at moderate and low levels. In another study with a sample of adolescents aged 12–14 years, there was a difference in the level of bullying behavior with a p value = 0.004 with a mean difference of 16.56. The difference in mean difference is also influenced by the value of bullying behavior at the time of the pre-test, where in this study the average mean of bullying behavior was at a moderate level.²²

Empathy training for bullies is an important need because of the awareness that a person's empathetic abilities can continue to develop throughout life.²¹ The danger of bullying behavior that is not resolved can result in emotional problems such as a lack of empathy that are difficult to overcome.²² Previous studies have shown that the higher a person's level of empathy, the lower the likelihood of bullying behavior.³⁷ Empathy training has been proven to increase understanding and emotional engagement with training material, as well as being able to apply it to reduce bullying behavior in everyday life.³⁸

Based on the results of the research conducted, it was found that the experimental group experienced a significant decrease in bullying scores. This shows that empathy training is effective in reducing the intensity of bullying behavior in adolescents. This finding is in line with previous research conducted by Rachmawati et al, who also found that empathy therapy had a significant impact in reducing bullying behavior.³⁷ Other research also supports these findings by showing that empathy training can improve decision-making abilities to avoid bullying behavior, thereby reducing involvement in

reinforcing cyberbullying behavior.²² In contrast to other research which shows that there is no significant effect on elementary school students before and after empathy training intervention.³⁹ This was due to the training being carried out for only 7 days without any follow up and only providing education about empathy and bullying.

Empathy training is an intervention that has great potential to improve understanding and responses to bullying behavior. The combination of various activities in empathy training aims to develop various components of empathy, as well as increasing the individual's ability to respond positively to bullying situations.¹⁹ This approach has the primary goal of reducing the incidence of such behavior among the population targeted for training. Through a series of exercises, empathy training has been proven to change the social dynamics within their environment to be more inclusive and respectful of differences.⁴⁰

Education has an important role in increasing cognitive understanding and empathy as an effort to prevent bullying. With proper education and sensitivity to the issue of bullying, children can more easily understand the consequences of bullying and develop empathy towards victims.²² Effective education can help reduce bullying incidents in schools and increase awareness about the importance of equality and tolerance in society. Previous research states that education can increase knowledge related to bullying in adolescents.²¹

Educational activities about bullying in the context of empathy training have great potential to significantly reduce incidents of bullying behavior among children and adolescents. Through this approach, participants are given an in-depth understanding of various aspects related to bullying, including its emotional and psychological impact on victims.³⁹ Education has been proven to make participants more sensitive to the signs of bullying and more likely to take appropriate action to prevent it.⁴¹ Comprehensive education about bullying also includes learning about conflict resolution strategies, effective communication, and building healthy relationships, all of which contribute to creating a safer and more inclusive environment.⁴²

The empathy training carried out presented activities in the form of film shows about bullying. As the results of previous research show, watching films about bullying among young children can increase empathy in responding to conditions or circumstances experienced by other people.⁴¹ The film helps participants to better understand and recognize the existence of other people by feeling what they feel, creating a deeper sense of empathy.³⁵ This can illustrate the values of empathy and encourage more sensitive behavior towards others.

The role playing method in empathy training is carried out to reduce bullying behavior. During its implementation, researchers observed that initially participants often felt confused in practicing the scene according to the given scenario. Some even have difficulty using appropriate language. The use of appropriate language is important to increase teenagers' understanding of the information conveyed.⁴³ However, when given the freedom to use language that is comfortable for them, participants begin to feel more free in developing the given scenarios and putting them into practice. Empathy training through role playing can provide encouragement for participants to better perceive and understand what victims of bullying feel.⁴⁴ This is what was done by Midgett et al, (2022) which shows that the role playing method of training empathy can reduce the level of bullying that occurs in the school environment.⁴⁵

Self-reflection activities related to empathy and bullying play an important role in increasing awareness about the dangers of bullying and the importance of empathy as an effort to prevent bullying. Individuals can understand how they themselves can become victims or perpetrators of bullying, and how they can play a role in preventing and stopping bullying.²⁶ Through the reflection process, individuals can increase awareness about the importance of empathy and tolerance in interacting with other people, as well as understanding the consequences of bullying which can cause trauma and stress in the victim.⁴⁶ Self-reflection activities can help increase awareness and self-awareness, as well as increase an individual's ability to prevent and stop bullying.

Empathy training for juvenile prisoners is essential in creating a more effective rehabilitation environment. Juvenile prisoners who are trained in empathy will be able to balance the emotional and psychological aspects of prisoners, and help minimize aggressive behavior and resistance to unpleasant events.⁴⁷ Nurses are the health workers responsible for health in LPKA, including addressing the problem of bullying. As health professionals with expertise in physical and mental care, nurses can be agents of change in creating a safer and more supportive environment.⁴⁸ Empathy training guided by nurses can help prisoners understand the feelings and perspectives of others, which is key to reducing bullying behavior. Through nurses' efforts to increase emotional awareness and empathy skills, prisoners can learn to respond to

conflict in a more constructive way and reduce aggressive behavior.⁴⁹ In addition, nurses can facilitate group discussions and simulations that allow prisoners to experience the impact of bullying, thus creating a deeper understanding of the importance of mutual respect and tolerance.

Research Limitations

The limitations of this research are the scheduling of the research process and research time. Scheduling related activities has been carried out during discussions with LPKA. However, the scheduling continues to be adjusted one week and several days before the activities are carried out, because there is a visit from the Ministry of Law and Human Rights so it is not possible to carry out activities on the predetermined schedule. Apart from that, when the activities are to be carried out, there is a time delay because some of the inmates have to take part in the activities, especially at LPKA first. This causes activities not to match the specified schedule.

This research is at risk of bias because it does not use randomization in the research process and the research results can be influenced by other co-founding factors that influence bullying behavior such as daily activities carried out by inmates, namely spiritual, intellectual development, national insight, society, and sports and arts. Apart from that, students can also be influenced by environmental factors, namely social interactions with prisoners in LPKA Bandung City. This could be a risk of bias in the effectiveness of this empathy training. During the activity process, several participants were also asked to leave the room because there was a special session for several participants with LPKA officers, so that several participants in the intervention group did not participate in a few minutes of the series of activities.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings on the impact of empathy training on bullying behavior among child prisoners at LPKA Bandung City, it can be concluded that this training effectively reduces bullying behavior. The intervention group showed a significant decrease in bullying behavior after the training based on the Wilcoxon test with p value <0.05 , while the control group did not exhibit notable changes. Statistical tests confirmed the effectiveness of the empathy training in reducing bullying behavior based on Mann–Whitney test with p value <0.05 , demonstrating its potential as a valuable intervention for juvenile prisoners.

Empathy training is one of the interventions that can be done to improve mental health and awareness of adolescents related to bullying so that it can reduce bullying behavior. These findings indicate that interventions that emphasize developing empathy can change negative behavior to be more positive, which is in accordance with the theory that empathy can reduce bullying by increasing the ability to understand and feel other people's feelings. The implication of this research is that correctional institutions may consider including empathy training programs as part of the rehabilitation of juvenile inmates to create a safer and more supportive environment. For future research, it is recommended to expand the sample to other LPKAs in various regions to test the effectiveness of this program in different contexts. Additionally, further research could examine the optimal duration and intensity of empathy training and explore combinations with other interventions to maximize rehabilitation outcomes.

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