

Master's Students of Educational Psychology: Knowledge, Attitudes, and Their Perceived Skills in Promoting Prosocial Behavior in Bullying Situation

Nurra Gaia Dewiyanti¹, Tina Hayati Dahlan²

{nurragaia@upi.edu¹, tinadahlan_psi@upi.edu²}

Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia¹, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia²

Abstract. Bullying is a significant issue in schools globally, including in Islamic-based educational settings, where unique cultural and religious factors influence both the occurrence of bullying and the approaches to addressing it. This study investigates the reflections of master's students in educational psychology who facilitated a psychoeducation program at one Islamic junior high school in Cimahi, where bullying incidents among seventh and eighth graders prompted the need for intervention. The program aimed to educate 153 students on bullying prevention and prosocial behavior, emphasizing empathy, cooperation, and conflict resolution. Facilitators participated in a one-day preparatory training before leading classroom activities. This study explores facilitators' perceived knowledge, attitudes, and skills in delivering the program, along with the challenges they faced and the strategies they employed. Data were collected through open-ended reflection logs completed by 24 facilitators immediately after the program. Using manual coding and thematic analysis, reflections were analyzed to identify key themes related to facilitators' preparedness, attitudes toward bullying prevention, and classroom management skills. Findings reveal facilitators' positive attitudes toward prosocial education, improved understanding of bullying dynamics, and development in classroom facilitation. These insights underscore the importance of providing training in prosocial education and adaptable classroom techniques, particularly in religious and culturally diverse educational settings.

Keywords: Prosocial behavior, bullying prevention, educational psychology, facilitator reflections, Islamic junior high school.

1 Introduction

Bullying is a complex and pervasive issue in schools worldwide, affecting students' psychological, social, and academic development. Defined as intentional, repeated aggressive behavior that involves a power imbalance, bullying encompasses physical, verbal, relational, and cyber forms and has substantial negative effects on both victims and perpetrators. Victims of bullying often experience anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and impaired academic performance, while perpetrators risk long-term social and behavioral problems [1]. This issue is particularly significant in junior high schools, where developmental shifts, peer dynamics, and social hierarchies can intensify aggressive behaviors. Schools are increasingly recognizing

the need for effective interventions, particularly those that promote prosocial behavior—actions aimed at benefiting others—to counteract bullying and foster a positive school climate.

In Indonesia, bullying is an escalating concern, especially in secondary schools where students face various social pressures. Studies indicate that bullying in Indonesian schools often goes underreported due to cultural and social dynamics, and schools are seeking culturally relevant strategies to combat it effectively [2]. This challenge is also present in Islamic junior high schools, where religious values such as compassion, empathy, and respect are integral to the school's mission. Despite these values, bullying can persist as students encounter typical social pressures within the school environment [3]. Some students in religious schools may feel compelled to underreport bullying due to expectations of forgiveness and restraint, further complicating efforts to address the issue [4].

At one Islamic junior high school in Cimahi, West Java, the prevalence of bullying has raised concerns among administrators and educators. This school serves around 153 students in grades 7 and 8, and recent observations have shown that bullying, in its various forms, has negatively impacted student well-being and academic engagement. In response, the school implemented the Psychoeducation Program for Promoting Prosocial Behavior. The program was designed not only to prevent and address bullying but also to encourage empathy, cooperation, and constructive conflict resolution among students. Through psychoeducation, the program equips students with knowledge and strategies for identifying, preventing, and managing bullying situations, emphasizing the importance of prosocial behavior to build a safer and more inclusive school environment. The program's facilitators included 24 master's students in educational psychology from Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, who conducted sessions in groups of three per classroom. These facilitators led discussions and activities that emphasized the importance of prosocial behaviors aligned with Islamic values, aiming to create a meaningful cultural context for students to understand and prevent bullying. Durlak et al. [5] highlight that social-emotional learning programs like this can effectively reduce aggressive behaviors and promote positive interpersonal skills, creating a school environment where prosocial behavior is the norm rather than the exception.

Research emphasizes the value of facilitators' self-reflection on their knowledge, attitudes, and skills in effectively addressing bullying. The reflections of facilitators are key to understanding how well they perceive their own abilities in promoting prosocial behavior. Educators' self-perceptions in implementing school-wide bullying prevention programs were explored in [6], where it was noted that many facilitators faced challenges in maintaining student engagement and managing classroom behaviors. Their study highlighted the need for additional training in conflict resolution and emotional regulation techniques, as facilitators often reported feeling underprepared to deal with the real-world dynamics of bullying despite having received theoretical training. Research has found that while student teachers often recognize bullying as a serious issue, they tend to view physical bullying as more severe than other forms, highlighting the need for training that encourages reflection on biases toward different bullying types [7].

Similarly, gaps in pre-service teachers' confidence and intervention abilities have been identified, underscoring the importance of reflection-based training to enhance self-awareness and intervention readiness [8]. Sung et al. [9] advanced this by implementing an Online Video-based Simulation Training (OVST) that allowed pre-service teachers to reflect deeply on their own responses and intervention strategies. Their study showed that OVST, particularly when

combined with debriefing, supported facilitators in critically evaluating their own skills and bridging the gap between theoretical understanding and practical application. However, these studies lack a focus on facilitators' direct reflections on their self-perceived knowledge, attitudes, and skills in real-world bullying interventions—a gap this paper aims to address by exploring facilitators' insights into their own preparedness and effectiveness in handling bullying situations.

This paper specifically aims to explore the reflections of Educational Psychology master's students serving as facilitators in a psychoeducational program at one Islamic Junior High School in Cimahi. By analyzing these facilitators' reflections on their knowledge, attitudes, and perceived skills, this study seeks to understand the ways in which they engaged students in promoting prosocial behavior, the challenges they encountered, and their perceptions of effectiveness in reducing bullying. Through this exploration, the study hopes to inform future facilitator training programs and highlight strategies that may optimize psychoeducational interventions for prosocial behavior development in junior high schools, particularly within faith-based educational contexts.

2 Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method focused on exploring facilitators' reflections on their knowledge, attitudes, and perceived skills in promoting prosocial behavior within a bullying prevention context. Data collection techniques include open-ended reflection logs completed by facilitators who participated in the psychoeducational program. These logs allowed facilitators to reflect deeply on their experiences, focusing on their preparedness, attitudes, skill development, and any challenges faced in facilitating the program.

Reflection logs were collected from 24 master's students in educational psychology who served as facilitators. Each facilitator was responsible for delivering the program to small groups of seventh and eighth-grade students, fostering discussions and activities designed to encourage empathy, cooperation, and conflict resolution. This approach provided detailed insights into facilitators' abilities to effectively promote prosocial behavior as part of a bullying prevention initiative in a junior high school setting.

The data obtained were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key themes and patterns in facilitators' responses. This approach allowed for an in-depth understanding of facilitators' perceptions of their own knowledge, attitudes, and skills in handling bullying situations and promoting prosocial behavior among students. Thematic analysis was selected for its effectiveness in identifying meaningful patterns in qualitative data, as recommended in educational and psychological research [10].

3 Results and Discussion

Results

The psychoeducation program aimed at fostering prosocial behavior and raising awareness about bullying among junior high students was reflected upon by facilitators who reported their experiences across multiple aspects.

1. **Increased Awareness and Knowledge of Bullying and Prosocial Behavior** Facilitators noted a significant improvement in their understanding of bullying and the roles that individuals can play in either perpetuating or preventing it. Many reported that they gained insights into the importance of promoting prosocial behavior as a method for creating a more positive school environment. One facilitator mentioned, "I learned that bullying isn't just about the bully and victim; upstanders play a crucial role in prevention." This awareness highlights the program's effectiveness in equipping facilitators with knowledge that they could then impart to students.
2. **Positive Attitude Toward the Educational Impact** Facilitators expressed a strong, positive attitude toward the program's goals and their role in it. They saw the psychoeducation sessions as an opportunity not only to address bullying but to cultivate empathy and social responsibility among students. Many facilitators appreciated the emphasis on social-emotional learning, with one stating, "This experience has motivated me to provide students with more awareness about bullying behavior." Such reflections reveal facilitators' commitment to promoting prosocial behavior beyond the current program, indicating the potential long-term impact of the psychoeducation initiative.
3. **Development of Facilitation Skills and Classroom Management** Reflecting on their performance, facilitators assessed their abilities in various aspects of classroom facilitation, such as initiating sessions, managing discussions, and maintaining student engagement. While most felt confident in their skills, some acknowledged areas needing improvement. For instance, facilitators highlighted challenges in time management, with one facilitator noting, "We exceeded the time limit during psychoeducation, which affected the flow of the session." This self-reflection suggests that facilitators became more aware of the practical aspects of delivering psychoeducation, an essential step for professional development in educational settings.
4. **Challenges Faced During Facilitation** The program presented several challenges, notably in keeping students focused and engaged, especially toward the end of the school day. Facilitators encountered difficulties in maintaining students' interest, with one noting, "It was challenging to keep students attentive, especially in the late hours." Such challenges underscore the importance of flexible facilitation strategies and highlight areas where further support may be beneficial.
5. **Problem-Solving and Adaptability** To address these challenges, facilitators adapted their approach by introducing interactive methods, relatable examples, and personal encouragement. Some facilitators used strategies such as incorporating group discussions or calling on students to participate actively. For instance, one facilitator shared, "I encouraged students to share their thoughts, which helped make the atmosphere more engaging." These adaptive strategies reflect the facilitators' commitment to making the learning experience meaningful and accessible, demonstrating their ability to navigate classroom dynamics and foster an inclusive environment.

Discussion

The findings reveal that the psychoeducation program successfully enhanced facilitators' understanding of bullying and prosocial behavior, equipping them with the knowledge and motivation to engage students in meaningful ways. This aligns with previous research indicating

that facilitators' attitudes and perceptions significantly impact their effectiveness in delivering social-emotional learning programs (Bradshaw et al., 2013). The facilitators' reflections demonstrate that they valued the opportunity to promote positive behavioral change and recognized the role of prosocial education in preventing bullying.

Challenges in classroom management and student engagement emphasize the need for practical facilitation skills and adaptable teaching methods. Facilitators' problem-solving approaches, such as fostering a positive environment and using active participation techniques, highlight the importance of flexibility in teaching styles. These strategies align with findings on the importance of adaptive facilitation for student engagement, suggesting that such skills are vital for effective program implementation [11].

The facilitators' experiences suggest that psychoeducation programs not only impact student behavior but also contribute to the professional growth of facilitators. By reflecting on their own strengths and areas for improvement, facilitators developed a deeper understanding of both prosocial behavior and the demands of classroom facilitation. This dual benefit highlights the program's broader educational value, fostering positive social change within schools while simultaneously building facilitators' professional skills.

Overall, this study underscores the effectiveness of using psychoeducation to address bullying through prosocial behavior promotion, demonstrating that facilitators, when well-prepared and adaptable, can make a significant impact in school environments. Future training programs for facilitators may benefit from a greater emphasis on classroom management techniques and student engagement strategies, which were identified as key areas for further support.

4 Conclusions

This study provides insights into the reflections of educational psychology master's students who facilitated a psychoeducational program aimed at promoting prosocial behavior to address bullying at an Islamic Junior High School in Cimahi. The findings highlight several key areas of development, including facilitators' enhanced understanding of bullying dynamics, positive attitudes toward prosocial education, and the acquisition of facilitation skills necessary for effective classroom management. Facilitators reported increased confidence in guiding discussions on empathy, cooperation, and conflict resolution, aligning with the program's goals of equipping students with the tools to recognize and address bullying.

However, facilitators also encountered challenges, such as maintaining student engagement and managing time effectively, which underscore the need for additional training in adaptive teaching strategies. The study suggests that integrating targeted training on classroom management and engagement techniques could enhance the effectiveness of similar programs. Overall, this research underscores the dual benefit of psychoeducational programs in both preventing bullying and fostering the professional growth of facilitators. Future implementations of such programs could leverage these insights to improve facilitator training and, consequently, program outcomes in culturally diverse educational settings.

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