

Pencak Silat and Traditional Games to Prevent Bullying in Elementary Schools

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Abstract

Violence and bullying in schools are serious issues that threaten student safety and character development. Physical Education teachers play a strategic role in building student resilience through appropriate approaches. This community service activity aims to equip teachers with physical and mental skills to deal with violence through pencak silat and traditional sports training that instill values of empathy, resilience, and self-control. The activity methods include coordination, socialization, material development, a pretest, two days of theoretical and practical training, three weeks of mentoring, a posttest, and a final evaluation. Data collection was conducted using an online questionnaire to measure participants' understanding. The activity was attended by Physical Education teachers from the Gunungpati sub-district, with results showing an increase in participants' understanding and skills in addressing bullying and violence in the school environment. This program also encourages teachers to become agents of change capable of creating a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment for student character development. The conclusion of this activity demonstrates the effectiveness of a culture-based self-defense approach in character education.

Keywords: pencak silat, traditional sports; bullying, elementary school

INTRODUCTION

Schools address aggression and violence through internal norms such as verbal warnings, suspensions, transfers, and expulsions, which may not effectively address the root causes (De Figueiredo et al. 2023; candra Kurniawan et al. 2022). Violence in schools is influenced by factors such as hierarchy, institutional structure, and policy, and schools need to develop integrated policies to address this issue (Yu, Houlbert, and Mantuhac 2024; Soenyoto et al. 2025). Anti-violence programs should acknowledge the embedded nature of aggression and its positive psychological and moral functions, rather than eliminating it, to reduce student dissatisfaction and increase their attachment to school (Sun et al. 2024; Jiddan and Adi 2025). Resilience training effectively reduces violent radicalization among Muslim adolescents and young adults by enhancing self-esteem and empathy, but also reduces narcissism (Liu, Wang, and Wang 2025; Meilani and Adi 2025).

Victims of bullying often lack the skills to protect themselves, both physically and mentally. Peer defense in offline and online contexts is influenced by girls who have high empathy, low moral disengagement, and supportive relationships with parents, teachers, and schools (Stamenković et al. 2022; Jiddan and Adi 2025). Anti-bullying programs should focus on enhancing the motivation of defenders by addressing perceptions of the victim's group status and observer anxiety levels (Nur Alif et al. 2024; Aliriad et al. 2024).

Self-defense training, as part of simulation-based education, develops critical thinking, clinical

reasoning, and self-confidence, although the optimal method for enhancing self-confidence remains unclear (Brzoska, Kupczynski, and Murphy 2024). The debriefing process allows for reflection on actions, which is crucial for students to internalize lessons learned during simulations and apply them in real-world scenarios (Sellberg, Lindwall, and Rystedt 2021). Effective debriefing interactions should encourage student participation and self-reflection, minimizing instructor dominance to create a safe learning environment (Mohammad 2023; Adi, Rohidi, and Rustiadi 2023; Adi, Da'i, and Cahyani 2020; Artazila and Adi 2024). Additionally, combining self-briefing with instructor-led briefing has been shown to improve team effectiveness, communication, and coordination among health science students, indicating that a balanced approach to briefing can enhance learning outcomes and prepare students for collaborative environments (Rueda-Medina et al. 2021).

Traditional sports can play an important role in helping students overcome bullying by creating an environment that promotes social harmony, inclusion, and resilience. Participation in sports can reduce aggression and social tension among students, as it encourages a healthy lifestyle and self-development, which are crucial in countering bullying behavior (Sağın, Uğraş, and Gullu 2022). Well-designed sports programs can enhance self-esteem and self-worth, giving adolescents a sense of ownership and mastery, which is important in transforming their social role from being seen as a problem to becoming agents of positive change (Pill and Slee 2023). Additionally, sports can offer practical strategies for bullying prevention, as they provide a structured environment where young athletes can learn to address bullying, understand the roles of victims and bystanders, and develop resilience against the negative impacts of bullying (Nery et al. 2020). For students with disabilities, participation in sports has been shown to reduce the negative impact of bullying on interpersonal relationships, improve their personal relationships with family and friends, and reduce the severity of bullying's effects (Bills and Mills 2023).

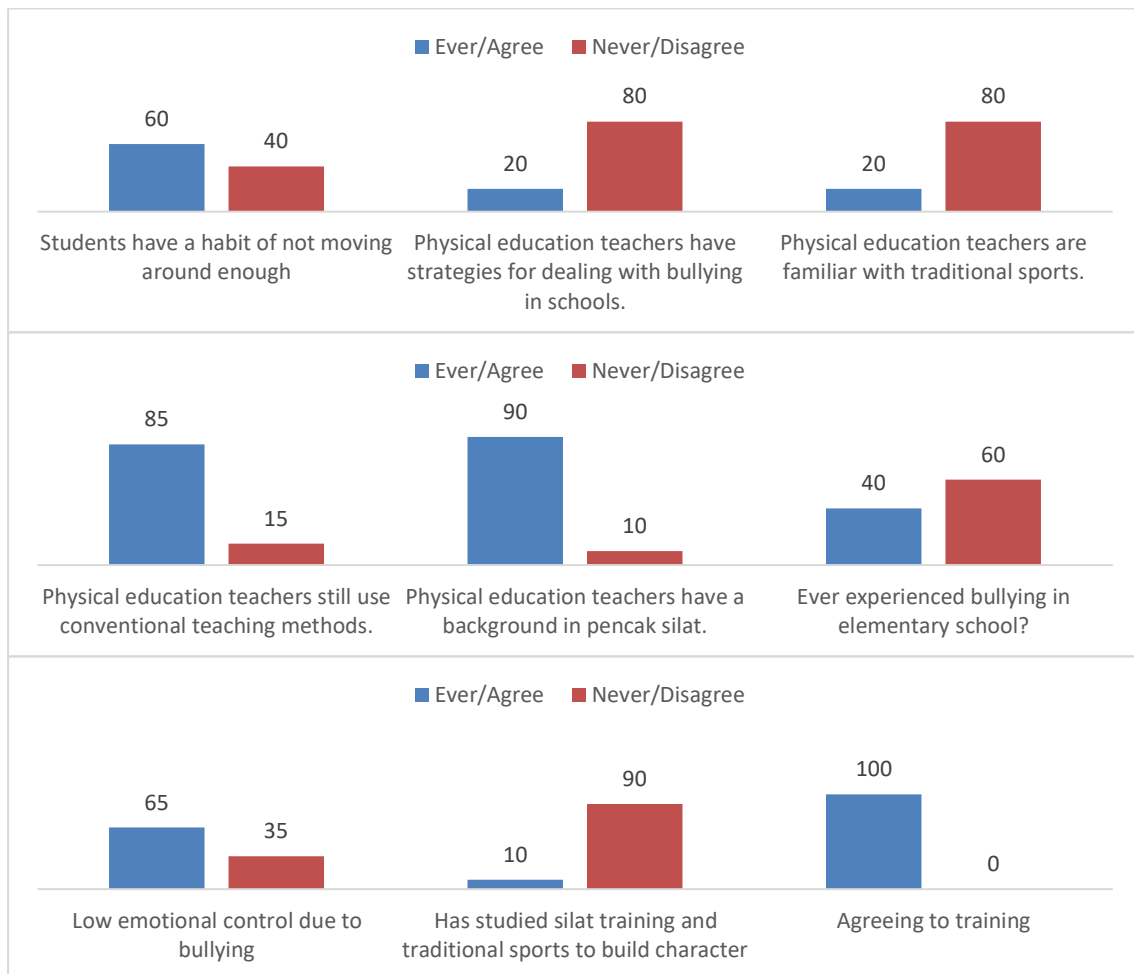


Figure 1: Graph of Observation Results for Physical Education Teachers

The objectives of this activity are as follows: To equip young people with the physical and mental skills necessary to face life's challenges, particularly in terms of violence and bullying. Pencak Silat, as a martial art and character education, can be a highly relevant approach in creating a safe school environment and

supporting the overall personal development of students.

METHOD

1. Permits and coordination with the Korsatpen Kec. Gunungpati
2. Socialization with physical education teachers
3. Preparation of materials by the community service team in coordination with the Korsatpen Kec. Gunungpati
4. Pre-test of activities
5. Implementation of activities by the community service team
6. Post-test
7. Evaluation and dissemination of community service activities.

The data collection instrument is a questionnaire to measure the understanding and knowledge of physical education teachers in community service activities. The target audience for this community service is physical education teachers. This instrument will be sent via Google Forms.

The method in this activity involves three stages, as follows: a) preparing training needs such as the venue for the activity and activity materials, b) arranging the activity schedule. The activity is carried out in the form of theory-based mentoring (lectures) and practice, c) presenting training materials, d) presenting the “Pantas” training material, e) conducting Pencak Silat and traditional sports practice, f) finally, to assess the training outcomes, a questionnaire will be distributed to participants regarding their understanding of the activity, and h) the percentage of training outcomes will be documented in a report to be submitted to the school and participants.

The Korsatpen of Gunungpati District actively participated in activities to improve the quality of physical education teachers by conducting these activities with physical education teachers and becoming agents of change for these issues. Communication, information, and education provided to physical education teachers through discussions and focus group discussions will foster motivation and the ability to create a solid team for management in improving understanding.

The activities were conducted using offline methods. The activity partners provided materials that would later be used in the service. The materials provided were tailored to the needs of the students taught by the teachers. The activity materials were delivered through various methods and discussions over 6 (six) hours x 2 days with mentoring activities for 3 weeks. A total of 22 days of activities.

The target of the activity is for the partner, the teacher, to apply their understanding and improve their skills in addressing bullying. The outcome of this activity is for the partner, who is a teacher, to have an understanding and competence in addressing bullying through local culture.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

After conducting community service, the following results were obtained:

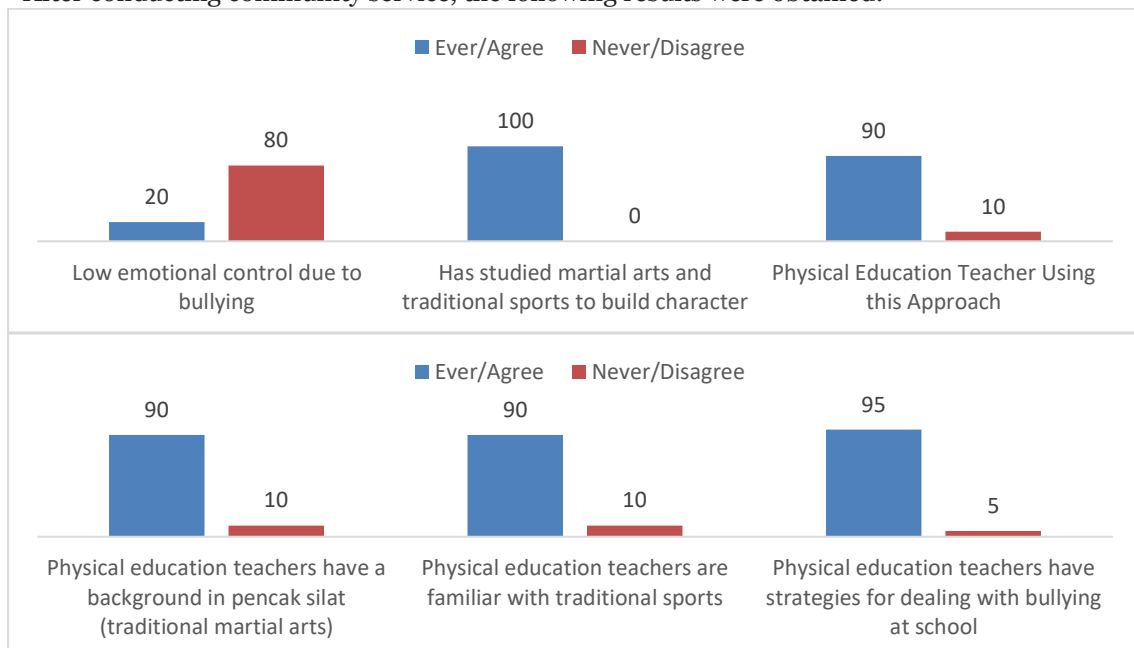


Figure 2: Graph of Observation Results on Physical Education Teachers

Strong correlations with school violence include antisocial behavior, deviant peers, antisocial attitudes, victimization, and peer rejection (Turanovic et al. 2022). The causes of school violence include gender inequality, personal factors, school organization, and evaluation (Karakuş 2022). Schools can engage in violence in symbolic, structural, and physical forms (Hughes, 2019). Male students are involved in physical violence, while female students are involved in verbal violence, which has a significant impact on students' mental well-being and declining academic performance (Bamalan et al. 2023; Aliriad et al. 2023). Violence in schools is often related to rejection and the inability to find the right words to express feelings (De Figueiredo et al. 2023; Soenyoto et al. 2025).

There is a trend in school violence, including bullying, violence, gang involvement, and drug-related violence, and prevention strategies emphasize the role of teachers, parents, and social workers. Bullying during childhood and adolescence is associated with a higher risk of developing mental health issues, such as depression and self-harm without suicide (Bhatia 2023; Rumini, Adi S, and Kusuma 2024). Engagement in bullying among secondary school adolescents is associated with an increased likelihood of anxiety and depression, and mental well-being and emotional regulation skills partially mediate this relationship (Mashari and Adi 2021; Aliriad et al. 2024). Bullying shows a strong association with non-suicidal self-harm and suicidal behavior, and is associated with an increased likelihood of developing emotional disorders and personality disorders (Saifulloh et al. 2024; Hakim and Adi 2025).

Physical activity before, during, and after school has been shown to enhance social relationships, self-esteem, and reduce depressive symptoms, which are crucial in mitigating the effects of bullying and cyberbullying (Rusillo-Magdaleno et al. 2024; Adi S et al. 2025). Specifically, engaging in regular sports can reduce the likelihood of sadness and suicidal thoughts among students who are bullied at school, although it appears to be less effective for those who experience cyberbullying (Sibold et al. 2020; Arbanisa and Adi 2025). Promoting physical activity and a healthy lifestyle can also reduce aggression and social tension, fostering a more supportive environment for self-realization and personal development among students (Sağın, Uğraş, and Gullu 2022; Adi S, Arbanisa, and Winoto 2023). Physical Education classes offer a unique opportunity to integrate anti-bullying strategies, such as cooperative learning and a motivational climate, which can foster empathy and respect among students (Sillero et al. 2020; Adi and Soenyoto 2023). Furthermore, Positive Youth Development programs that incorporate physical activity have shown promise in reducing bullying behavior by promoting life skills and personal growth, thereby enhancing adolescents' psychosocial development (Majed et al. 2021; Azzaria et al. 2023; Guntur Firmansyah et al. 2022). These findings suggest that structured physical activity programs, particularly those that incorporate elements of Positive Youth Development, can be effective in reducing bullying and supporting students' overall well-being.

CONCLUSION

This activity aims to equip physical education teachers with skills to deal with violence and bullying through pencak silat and traditional sports. This approach not only improves teachers' understanding but also strengthens their role as agents of change in schools. Through theory- and practice-based training, participants are encouraged to internalize the values of resilience, empathy, and self-control. The program is expected to create a safe, inclusive learning environment that supports student character development. The results of the activity show an increase in participants' understanding, with the hope that this can be passed on to students in effectively and sustainably preventing bullying. The activity was attended by physical education teachers from Gunungpati District. In the future, it needs to be carried out at a higher level and with a broader scope.

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DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors states that there is no conflict of interest in the publication of this article.

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