



## The Influence of Children's Literature on Addressing Bullying in Tebel Village Library, Indonesia

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of children's literature on overcoming bullying in traditional libraries in Tebel Village. This study applied a quantitative method with a quasi-experimental research type using a one-group pre-test and post-test design. The results showed that literacy activities based on children's literature had a significant effect on increasing participants' understanding and changing their behavior, as seen in the increase in the average post-test score compared to the pre-test. After participating in the intervention, participants showed increased awareness, empathy, and ability to manage emotions in dealing with social situations. These results prove that children's literature is effective as a therapeutic literacy medium that can reduce bullying behavior while strengthening children's positive character in the library environment. Thus, literacy activities based on children's literature have been proven to have a positive effect on increasing participants' knowledge and understanding.

**Keywords:** *Children's Literature; Bullying; Village Library; Influence*

### Introduction

Education determines the future existence of a nation (Zulwisli et al., 2022). Through education, humans will be educated in cognitive, psychomotor, and affective aspects. In an educational environment, character taught in schools encourages polite behavior (Iwan, 2020). Children's attitudes are also influenced by their surrounding environment. When the internal environment is not conducive to a child's development, the child will develop negative behavior as an adult. One example of such behavior is bullying. Bullying is a psychosocial problem that involves demeaning others, thus having a negative impact on the victim (Fitriana & Fauzi, 2023). Bullying is considered a serious problem (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017; Borualogo & Gumilang, 2019; Ramadhanti & Borualogo, 2020; Suriani et al., 2025). Furthermore, bullying is a common occurrence in schools (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017; Moyano & del Mar Sanchez-Fuentes, 2020). This assumption refers to data from the Indonesian Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection in 2025, with the number of victims increasing year by year. The percentage of victims by age group is highest dominated by teenagers aged 13-17 years with a percentage of 35.2%, followed by ages 6-12 years at 19.6%, then ages 18-24 years at 10.7%, and the remainder are adults (Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia, 2025).

The following is a percentage diagram of data from the Indonesian Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection:

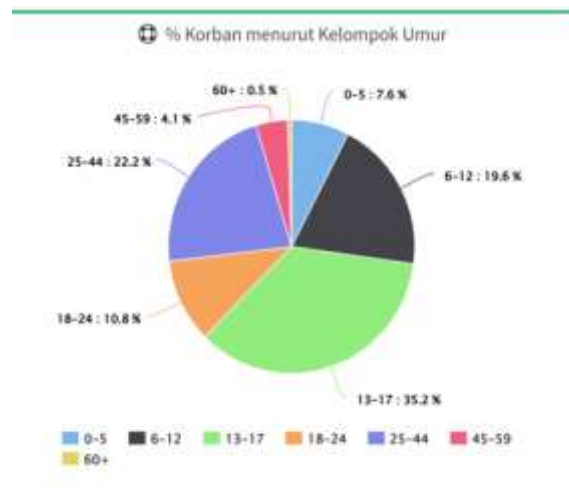


Figure 1.1 Diagram of Victims by Age Group

Data shows that the rate of violence against children and adolescents under the age of 17 is higher than that against those over 17. Children tend to be unstable and highly emotional. Furthermore, the data shows that females account for 80.6% of the victims of violence, while males account for 19.4%. Interestingly, the perpetrators by gender are predominantly male, at 87.7%, and females at 12.3%.

The following diagram shows victim data by gender:

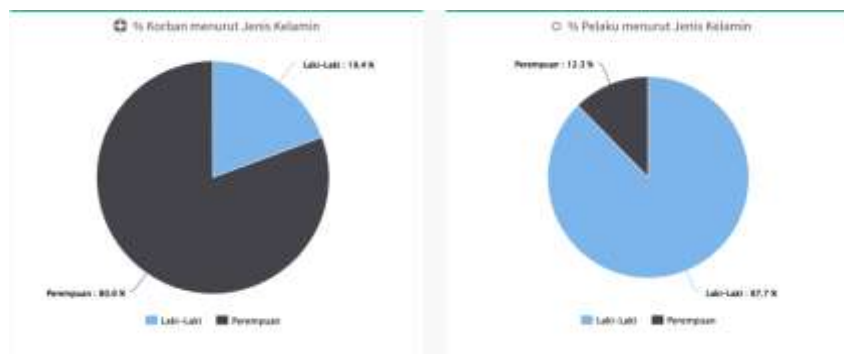


Figure 1.2 Diagram of Victims and Perpetrators of Violence Based on Gender

Bullying occurs because bullies attempt to exert their power over all children (Bakar, 2021). Bullying often occurs in groups, and if it becomes severe, schools may struggle to intervene (Rigby, 2020). Furthermore, repeated bullying, whether verbal or non-verbal, can also contribute to a child's mental health.

Schools can also play a role in this violence (Saskia et al., 2025). In addition to schools, the role of the community, including villages and the establishment of village libraries as places for children to learn and play, is an effective solution to prevent bullying.

Research was conducted in four European countries in the Nordic region, including Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. The results showed that children who experienced bullying tended to have difficulty concentrating, experience sleep disturbances, headaches, stomachaches, feelings of tension, dizziness, and sadness (Källmén & Hallgren, 2021).

A children's literature approach based on therapeutic literacy offers a solution to this problem. Children directly address their own problems with therapy techniques through literary media integrated with the Problem Based Learning model. Based on an analysis of environmental conditions and Focus Group Discussions, children at the Tebel Village Library, specifically in the Tapak Kali Bendo Literacy Village, Tebel Village, Sidoarjo Regency, engage in bullying, especially verbally. Therapy using case studies based on children's literature will raise children's awareness of the importance of mutual support. Library empowerment by integrating various complex aspects such as therapy, children's literature, and counseling allows children to enjoy a new world with a hegemonic approach and the gradual spread of good ideologies. Literature contains moral values of life (Arifin, 2019; Agustina, 2015). By studying literature, children play a role in managing emotions and learning from mistakes. That is why literature is interesting to study (Hapriyanto & Ahmadi, 2025). With good language, awareness can grow better because language plays a vital role (Hapriyanto et al., 2024). Based on the description, the problem formulation taken is that children's literature as a literacy-based therapy medium plays a role in preventing bullying practices in educational environments and society.

### **Approach and Problem Solving**

Children's literature refers to literary works created with language and themes tailored to a child's world, focusing on their experiences, psychological development, and moral values (Agustina, 2015). In Indonesia, children's literature has evolved since the Dutch East Indies era through children's short story magazines, encompassing traditional folktales, realistic stories, and fantasy fiction (Indarwaty et al., 2024).

Beyond entertainment and education, children's literature serves as a medium for social and emotional reflection and holds potential as literary therapy (child literary therapy) to support healing and character building in children, including victims of bullying (Anggara et al., 2021). In literacy development, teachers and facilitators introduce literary works through educational methods that engage the affective domain, encouraging children to emotionally recognize characters, conflicts, resolutions, and moral messages (Asip et al., 2019).

Through this approach, library storytime sessions are optimized as creative and inclusive spaces to foster empathy, courage, and the ability to confront social conflicts. Thus, children's literature functions not merely as an educational tool but also as a psychosocial empowerment instrument for early bullying prevention and character strengthening (Praditama et al., 2023).

### **Reader-Response Theory and Literary Discussion**

Reading literature involves exploring texts through emotional engagement to construct meaning based on the literary background (Mart, 2019). Meaning is formed through direct transactional interaction between the reader and the text, utilizing the reader's knowledge. This reader-text transaction manifests the reader's assumptions, beliefs, and expectations into a unique perspective on the text (Spirovska, 2019). This process stimulates reflective and creative thinking in classroom literary discussions and motivates children to engage with literature, thereby enhancing their language proficiency (Kunjuman & Aziz, 2021). Literary learning for children encompasses various aspects of personal and intellectual enrichment, such as literature's capacity to reflect life within the text, mirroring societal realities.

The literary learning experience aims to provide children with a means of expression. During their developmental stages, literary studies in education foster children's interest in literacy through creative approaches, which subsequently impact their social interactions and stimulate cognitive

development (Langer, 1991). This role forms the foundation for creating a literary learning atmosphere where instructors provide prompts to initiate classroom discussions. These discussions serve as a method to encourage children to express emotions by verbalizing their thoughts and opinions regarding the ideas or stories encountered.

Implementing a reader-response approach connected through literary discussions positively influences the continuity of student learning. Discussions provide opportunities to examine and reflect upon situations or values arising from the reading activity (Reilly et al., 1981). Such discussions function as a vehicle for moral education, enabling children to interpret literature as a reflection of life. From this viewpoint, literature is seen as a complete entity formed from words, reactions, and messages, all interconnected (Shillam & Samundeswari, 2017). This process also constitutes a cognitive exercise that encourages children to perceive literature as containing meaningful lessons for their development, demonstrating how literature builds literacy and imagination through children's literature.

Previous research was conducted by Bazzi (2012) in an internationally published study titled "The effect of bullying-themed literature on the bullying behavior of upper elementary students in Lebanon." The findings indicated that during the intervention phase, follow-up activities related to multiple intelligences were integrated into literature-based learning. This enhanced the learning process and promoted active student participation in a supportive, non-threatening environment. However, methodological limitations in data collection restricted the analysis to descriptive statistics. The literature-based intervention showed a slight decrease in victimization scores from pretest to posttest, although students' average bullying scores did not change significantly post-intervention. Furthermore, slight decreases were observed in students' average scores on scales measuring perceptions of assertiveness and adult responses, while scores for bystander responsibility remained relatively stable, and a small increase was noted in the acceptance of bullying scores. Consequently, data collection constraints prevented definitive conclusions regarding the intervention program's effectiveness.

The previous study examined the influence of bullying-themed literary texts on the bullying behavior of elementary school students in Lebanon. The similarity between that study and the current research lies in the use of bullying-themed literature. The difference lies in the current study's incorporation of diverse children's literature forms including books, videos, films, folktales, and poems themed around children designed to impact bullying reduction efforts among children at the Tebel Village Library in Sidoarjo, Indonesia. Another distinction is the cross-country focus: the previous study concentrated on children in Lebanon, whereas the current study focuses on children in Indonesia, enabling a cross-national comparative analysis.

Children's literature, as a medium familiar and enjoyable to the child's world, offers strategic potential for addressing bullying. According to Nurgiyantoro (2019), children's literature is not merely entertaining reading but also an effective medium for value education, as it can convey moral messages indirectly through stories, characters, and conflicts faced by the characters. Previous research by Vlachou et al. (2019), in a study titled "The Use of Children's Literature in Addressing Bullying: A Thematic Analysis," specifically found that children's stories designed with anti-bullying themes could enhance students' understanding of various forms of bullying and their consequences, while also encouraging attitudes toward reporting such actions. Similar findings were reported by Dwiningsih et al. (2021) in their study "The Effectiveness of Picture Storybooks on Bullying Prevention in Elementary School Children," which demonstrated that using picture storybooks significantly increased knowledge and negative attitudes toward bullying among elementary school students in Surabaya.

The mechanism of children's literature in this context can be explained through Reader-Response Theory. Rosenblatt (1995) emphasizes that literature constitutes a dynamic transactional experience between the reader and the text. When children read or listen to a story, they are not passive. They actively engage in constructing meaning, identifying with characters, and connecting story events with their own life experiences (Lukens, 2013). This process allows literature to function as a simulation tool for understanding complex social dynamics, such as bullying, within a safe and controlled environment.

By identifying with victim, bystander, or even perpetrator characters, children can develop empathy and insight into the consequences of their actions without experiencing direct negative outcomes.

This study aims to investigate the influence of children's literature in addressing bullying at the Tebel Village Library in Sidoarjo Regency, Indonesia. The research outcomes will examine the impact of various children's literary works including children's poetry, folktales, films, short stories, and rhymes on reducing bullying behavior among children.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of non-conventional intervention models for addressing bullying through children's literature. The findings enrich the discourse on bibliotherapy and Reader-Response Theory by providing empirical evidence of children's literature's effectiveness as a psychosocial intervention medium within local community contexts in Indonesia.

Practically, this research yields a children's literature-based intervention protocol implementable by village library managers and community reading centers. For children, the program enhances understanding of bullying dangers, develops empathy, and builds social skills. For stakeholders, the findings can inform policy formulation and budgeting for library empowerment programs as sustainable centers for child character development.

## ***Research Methods***

This study employed a quantitative method with a quasi-experimental research type, employing a one-group pre-test and post-test design. The sample group was measured and observed before and after an intervention (Valencia et al., 2024). This design allows researchers to determine the effect of a treatment on a specific variable without a control group.

Quantitative research is an approach that focuses on collecting and analyzing numerical data to test hypotheses or answer research questions (Sawitri, n.d.). According to Sugiyono (in Irfan Syahrani et al., 2022), quantitative research methods are used to examine a specific population or sample using quantitative or statistical instruments and data analysis to test hypotheses.

This research was conducted in Tebel Village, Gedangan District, Sidoarjo Regency. This location was chosen because it was relevant to the context of the research problem and supported the implementation of experimental activities with participants who met the research criteria. The study was conducted from July to September 2025.

The study population included all participants in children's activities in Tebel Village, with a sample size of 28 children.

The sampling technique used simple random sampling, a technique in which each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected. This technique is considered effective in obtaining an unbiased representation of the population (Subhaktiyasa, 2024).

Data collection involved pre-tests and post-tests using a standardized questionnaire. The pre-test results were administered before the intervention, while the post-test was administered after the intervention to determine changes in the levels of the variables studied.

Data analysis used a paired sample t-test, a testing method used to assess the effectiveness of a treatment, indicated by differences in the mean before and after treatment (Ayu Rahmani et al., 2025).

## Results and Discussion

### Result

To determine the participants' initial condition before the children's literature activity, researchers conducted a pretest on 26 children at the Tebel Village Library. The pretest data results are presented below.

No	Pretest Score	No	Pretest Score
1	80	14	80
2	80	15	80
3	90	16	90
4	80	17	80
5	90	18	60
6	90	19	70
7	80	20	80
8	80	21	90
9	80	22	90
10	70	23	90
11	80	24	40
12	80	25	80
13	90	26	70

Table 3.1. Pretest Data

After the entire series of children's literature activities were completed, a posttest was conducted on 26 children at the Tebel Village Library to measure the changes that had occurred. The posttest data are presented as follows:

No	Posttest Score	No	Posttest Score
1	90	14	100
2	80	15	90
3	100	16	90
4	90	17	80
5	100	18	100
6	80	19	100
7	100	20	80
8	100	21	100
9	90	22	100
10	80	23	80
11	100	24	90
12	100	25	100
13	100	26	90

Table 3.2. Posttest Data

Based on data analysis conducted using SPSS version 23, the results of the Paired Sample T-Test were as follows:

### Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	pretest	79.6154	26	11.12862	2.18250
	posttest	92.6923	26	8.27415	1.62269

Table 3.3. Paired Samples Statistics

The analysis results in the Paired Samples Statistics table show that the average pretest score was 79.62 with a standard deviation of 11.13, while the average posttest score was 92.69 with a standard deviation of 8.27. These results indicate an increase in the average score of 13.07 points after participants were given treatment or intervention. These results indicate an increase in the average score of 13.07 points after participants received treatment in the form of children's literature intervention. This means that there was a significant increase in understanding and behavioral changes after children participated in children's literature-based literacy activities.

### Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	pretest & posttest	26	.055	.789

Table 3.4. Paired Samples Correlations

The results in the Paired Samples Correlations table show a correlation value between the pretest and posttest results of 0.055 with a significance value (Sig.) of 0.000. This low correlation indicates that the increase in posttest scores was not solely influenced by the participants' initial abilities (pretest), but rather was more due to the influence of treatment through children's literature activities such as storytelling, reading children's poetry, and literacy discussions.

### Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	pretest - posttest	-13.07692	13.49644	2.64687	- 18.52825	-7.62559	-4.941	25	.000

Table 3.5. Paired Samples Test

The test results displayed in the Paired Samples Test table obtained a t-value of -4.94 with a degree of freedom (df) of 25 and a significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) of 0.000. A significance value smaller than 0.05 ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ) indicates that there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest results. Thus, the hypothesis stating that there is a difference in learning outcomes before and after treatment on "children's literature has an effect on reducing bullying behavior in the Tebel Village Library" can be accepted. These results indicate that the treatment or intervention given has a real influence on improving participant outcomes. The higher average posttest score compared to the pretest strengthens the conclusion that the activities carried out are effective in increasing participants' knowledge, abilities, or understanding.

## Discussion

Based on the results of the Paired Sample T-Test conducted on the participants' pretest and posttest scores, the calculated t-value was -4.94 with a significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) of 0.000. This significance value is less than the established significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), thus concluding that there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores.

This difference indicates that the treatment or intervention provided prior to the posttest had a positive impact on improving participants' outcomes. This is evident from the average pretest score of 79.62, which increased to 92.69 at the posttest. Thus, the intervention was proven effective in improving participants' understanding and abilities in accordance with the objectives of the activity or training provided.

Furthermore, the direction of the difference indicates that the posttest scores were higher than the pretest scores, thus interpreting this improvement as a result of the learning process, training, or activities that successfully strengthened participants' knowledge and skills. These results also align with learning theory, which states that structured interventions or treatments can provide meaningful learning experiences and improve learning outcomes. Based on statistical test results and the increase in average scores, it can be concluded that the treatment provided successfully had a significant impact on improving participant outcomes, indicating that the objectives of the activity or program were effectively achieved.

The results of the study indicate that the application of children's literature as a therapeutic literacy medium significantly influenced the resolution of bullying behavior at the Tebel Village Library in Sidoarjo. The increase in posttest scores reflects changes in participants' social awareness, empathy, and emotional management skills, which are important indicators in preventing bullying.

Literacy activities involving reading and discussing children's literature provide a space for children to express their feelings, understand moral values, and emulate the positive behavior of characters in the stories. This aligns with Reader-Response Theory (Rosenblatt, 1978), which states that readers construct meaning in texts through emotional and reflective interactions with the content. Through these interactions, children not only understand the content but also internalize social values that shape prosocial behavior.

The therapeutic literacy approach at the Tebel Village Library also facilitates children's dialogue and discussion about their experiences. This process helps children identify forms of bullying they have experienced or perpetrated and find ways to overcome them through reflection on the characters and storylines in literary works.

The results of this study align with Bazy's (2012) findings in Lebanon, which showed that literature-based learning on the topic of bullying can reduce victimization rates in elementary school students. However, the study in Tebel Village demonstrated stronger results because it used a variety of forms of children's literature (fairy tales, poetry, and short stories) and implemented an interactive approach based on group discussions. This enriched the children's learning experiences and made the intervention more effective.

Furthermore, literacy activities in the library helped create an inclusive environment and social togetherness that reduced group dominance or aggressive behavior. The library is not only a place for reading but also a safe space for building children's character. Children's literature, with its moral and social values, plays a crucial role in building empathetic awareness, strengthening social bonds between children, and preventing the reproduction of bullying behavior.

Thus, the results of this study confirm that children's literature can be an effective medium for bullying prevention programs in educational and community settings, particularly in village libraries.



Literacy-based interventions not only increase children's knowledge but also foster social character, empathy, and positive peer communication.

## Conclusion

Bullying is a deliberate and repeated attempt to harm. Children are one of the largest contributors to bullying data. Through children's literature, children will reflect on themselves and avoid bullying by using storytelling approaches in the form of fairy tales, videos, storybooks, and socialization, as well as knowledge about the impact of bullying. The analysis showed a significant improvement in participants' learning outcomes after participating in the children's literature intervention. The results showed that literacy activities based on children's literature had a significant effect on increasing participants' understanding and changing their behavior, as seen in the increase in the average post-test score compared to the pre-test. After participating in the intervention, participants showed increased awareness, empathy, and ability to manage emotions in dealing with social situations. These results prove that children's literature is effective as a therapeutic literacy medium that can reduce bullying behavior while strengthening children's positive character in the library environment. Thus, literacy activities based on children's literature have been proven to have a positive effect on increasing participants' knowledge and understanding.

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