

## The Hidden Pearl Storybook: Bullying Intervention Strategy

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**Abstract:** Bullying merupakan permasalahan serius dalam dunia pendidikan yang telah merambah hingga tingkat sekolah dasar dan berdampak negatif tidak hanya pada korban, tetapi juga pada pelaku dan saksi. Masalah ini memerlukan intervensi yang efektif dan sesuai dengan karakteristik perkembangan siswa sekolah dasar. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis efektivitas penggunaan buku cerita "Mutiarra Yang Terpendam" sebagai alat intervensi anti-bullying pada siswa sekolah dasar. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan pra-eksperimental dengan desain pretest-posttest satu kelompok yang melibatkan 28 siswa kelas II. Data mengenai sikap anti-bullying dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara, dokumentasi, serta pretest dan posttest. Hasil analisis menunjukkan peningkatan signifikan rata-rata skor posttest sebesar 12,5 poin (34,8%) dibandingkan dengan pretest, dengan nilai  $t = -13.132$  ( $p < 0,001$ ). Nilai effect size pada Cohen's  $d$  mencapai 1,85, mengindikasikan bahwa intervensi berbasis literasi ini sangat efektif dalam mengubah sikap siswa terhadap bullying. Intervensi menggunakan buku cerita "Mutiarra Yang Terpendam" terbukti efektif sebagai strategi anti-bullying di sekolah dasar. Proses membaca sebagai interaksi dinamis antara pembaca dan teks berkontribusi pada peningkatan pemahaman dan perubahan sikap siswa. Hasil penelitian ini memberikan implikasi penting bagi pengembangan intervensi berbasis literasi sebagai alternatif strategis dalam memitigasi perilaku bullying di lingkungan sekolah dasar.

**Keywords:** Anti-Bullying, Buku Cerita, Bullying, Karakter, Sekolah Dasar

## INTRODUCTION

Bullying has become one of the suffocating problems in all institutions, including educational institutions (Arhuis-Inca et al., 2021). Data from (UNESCO, 2023) confirms that 32% of students experience disturbances in bullying victims, which comes from the perpetrators, namely peers in their school environment. In addition, according to the latest data from KPAI (Indonesian Child Protection Commission) from January 2023 to September 2023, there were 1,800 complaint cases related to the fulfillment of children's rights and special protection for children. Of these, 68.7% (or 1,237 cases) are related to the fulfillment of children's rights, while 31.3% (or 563 cases) are related to special child protection (KPAI, 2023). The most common cases are cases of swearing and ridicule, which in this case makes the victim of bullying psychologically (Oppliger & Davis, 2015). Another impact in bullying cases other than on victims is on perpetrators and witnesses resulting in climate disturbances in the learning process at school (Basillici et al., 2022).

Saptono (2022) Explained the 5 factors that cause bullying in elementary schools, including power inequality, victim weakness, feelings of inferiority, physical differences, and disadvantaged economic conditions. Intervention in problem-solving in this problem is a must to be solved slowly. The interactive story literacy method is one of the methods to increase their awareness and understanding of cognitive and emotional conflicts (Tsai et al., 2011). This method can increase students' awareness of bullying and encourage them to express their thoughts in depth, which in terms of cognitive and emotional aspects students will develop slowly. Research on bullying in academia (Corbett et al., 2024) shows that bullying behavior is often directed at minority groups through the process of exclusion, which is similar to the dynamics of "othering" in children in elementary school. However, (Rigby, 2020) also shows that school interventions against bullying are effective in the vast majority of cases, but less successful if the emotional impact of the victim is severe or the bullying is carried out by the group. In addition, (Manesis et al., 2022) that the

use of De Bono's six-topic thinking technique as a teaching scenario can be effective in changing the attitude of grade 6 students towards bullying, as well as encouraging creative and critical thinking to find comprehensive solutions. (Basuki & Wulansari, 2024) also shows that the application of a cultural literacy-based guidance model is effective in increasing students' character values, which is relevant for anti-bullying interventions in elementary schools.

Based on the results of observations on February 23, 2024 – June 2, 2024, it was found that there were students who gave their friends names with inappropriate calls. Events like this are repeated significantly and with greater conditions. Several other cases make the victim, the perpetrator, and the sanction not feel comfortable and safe in the existing learning process. Problem solving has been carried out by teachers but students do not understand the problem-solving rhetoric given. The results of observations and interviews conducted with classroom teachers found the same problem, namely students do not understand the meaning of bullying and the impact of all behaviors carried out. So that students are still doing something that is not good, and has an impact on learning. The cause of this happening is excessive use of gadgets when students are at home so that the content seen by students on their respective gadgets gives meaning to what students must do without knowing which is good and bad.

The focus of this study is on the use of storybooks as an anti-bullying intervention for elementary school students. emphasized that the problem of bullying in primary schools must be carried out with coordinated interventions and designed to develop positive social and emotional attitudes and skills that originate in students' cognitive interventions so that they can reduce bullying cases and increase the success of treatment. Although later schools still need to intervene reactively when cases are reported, active interventions that arouse students' confidence can still be carried out (Rigby, 2020). The effectiveness of understanding in storybooks that are associated with experiences regarding bullying problems can be implemented. This research is expected to contribute to the world of education to reduce bullying cases through a storybook method about bullying. This literacy media can help schools in designing anti-bullying interventions in Indonesia.

One approach that can be used for intervention is through storybook-based literacy. The book *The Hidden Pearl* can be an effective intervention tool because the stories presented can help students understand the concept of bullying cognitively and emotionally. According to reader response theory (Rosenblatt, 1938) the reading process involves the interaction between the reader and the text, where meaning is constructed from the student's personal experience. Thus, this book is expected to be able to increase students' awareness and empathy towards bullying behavior, underlining that when reading, readers "transact" with verbal symbols in the text by utilizing their experiences, knowledge, emotions, and literary background. Transacting in reading provides new constructs for students to understand storybooks and is applied in the process of student culture. The reading process itself involves continuous interaction between the reader and the text, so that the meaning of the text is socially shaped by the existing internal and external contexts (Wee et al., 2022). The 6 hats of thinking method is able to intervene in bullying cases at school by inviting people to look at the problem from various perspectives: collecting data and facts (White Hat), understanding the emotions involved (Red Hat), analyzing risks (Black Hat), finding positive solutions (Yellow Hat), developing creative ideas (Green Hat), and organizing solutions (Blue Hat). This approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding and more effective solutions (Manesis et al., 2022). Vytgosky's theory in (Durgunoğlu et al., 2003) also explains that in the social process applied to learning, teachers are one of the sources that are able to play a role in creating an environment that is able to support dialogue and activities that are in accordance with students' interests. Understanding anti-bullying through storybooks is a cultural development tool for solving problems and understanding students' culture in accordance with the culture of each student.

Learning with picture storybook media is one of the effective ways to provide experience and stimulation to students, which begins with reading (Utomo, 2018). This is a solution to the increase in hostile behavior that occurs in elementary schools with gender among both male and female students (Zhou et al., 2024). Bullying intervention programs can minimize the occurrence of bullying in schools (Ulfah &

Gustina, 2020). This is in accordance with the explanation in Social Bandura learning stating that children learn behavior through observation and imitation that are intervened in learning (Rustika, 2016). Using storybooks as an anti-bullying intervention tool is in line with this theory, where characters in stories can be models of positive behavior. Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory can also be implemented in the use of stories for understanding social context. This emphasizes social interaction in a cultural context on students' cognitive development (Fitriani & Maemonah, 2022)

Education is a place to realize good behavior in students and be able to provide an understanding of the strategy of meaning "philosophy of life" to students (Purwandari & Suardiman, 2013). An analysis of the effectiveness in implementing the storybook 'Hidden Pearls' as an anti-bullying intervention tool can change the attitudes and behaviors of elementary school students towards bullying. Meanwhile, this study offers a new perspective on the use of literacy media based on local values in bullying cases as an intervention in dealing with bullying in elementary schools. A study on students' social-emotional processing (Tinsae et al., 2024).

## METHOD

### Time and Place of Research

This research was conducted in the 2024/2025 academic year at an elementary school in Central Java. The research location was selected based on interviews with class teachers, which revealed instances of bullying at the school.

### Population and Sample

The population in this study was all 28 students in class B at the elementary school. According to (Sugiyono, 2013) a population is a generalization area consisting of objects or subjects that have certain qualities and characteristics determined by the researcher to be studied, and then conclusions are drawn. Given the relatively small population (28 students), this study used a total sampling technique, where all 28 students in class B were used as the research sample. The selection of class B as the research subject was based on the results of interviews

with the homeroom teacher, who indicated there were indications of bullying cases in the class.

### Research Procedure

The research procedure consisted of the following stages:

1. Preparation Stage: Obtaining research permits, preparing instruments, and conducting interviews with teachers.
2. Implementation Stage: Conducting a pre-test to measure students' initial understanding and anti-bullying attitudes, providing intervention through storytelling sessions using the book "Hidden Pearls," and observing student behavior.
3. Evaluation Stage: Posting and collecting observation notes and interview data to measure changes in student understanding and behavior.

Data collection techniques used were interviews, observations, pre-tests, and post-tests.

### Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was carried out using the following steps:

1. Data Normality Test  
The Shapiro-Wilk test will be used to determine whether the data is normally distributed.
2. Hypothesis Testing  
If the data is normally distributed, a paired t-test will be used. If the data is not normally distributed, a Wilcoxon Signed Rank test will be used. This second test aims to determine significant differences between pre-test and post-test results.
3. Effect Size Calculation  
This will be conducted to determine the magnitude of the effect of the "Hidden Pearl" storybook intervention on students' anti-bullying attitudes. Effect sizes will be calculated using Cohen's d for t-tests or r for Wilcoxon tests (L. Cohen et al., 2017).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

To obtain a general overview of student scores before and after the intervention, a descriptive statistical analysis was conducted on the pretest and posttest results. The results can be seen in the following Table 1:

**Table 1.** Test Results Analysis Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Pretest Anti-Bullying	28	26	51	35.96	5.224	1.393	.858
Posttest Anti-Bullying	28	37	56	48.46	4.872	-.566	.858
Valid N (listwise)	28						

Descriptive statistical analysis provides an overview of the change in scores from pretest to posttest. The average score of the pretest (35.96) and posttest (48.46), showed a positive difference after students understood and studied storybooks as an anti-bullying intervention tool. This increase is 12.5 points with a percentage of 34.8% of the average pretest score. The minimum score increased significantly from 26 on the pretest to 37 on the posttest, suggesting that the participants with the lowest scores experienced a significant improvement. The maximum score also increased from 51 to 56, although the

increase was not as large as the minimum score. The standard deviation decreased slightly from the pretest (5,224) to the posttest (4,872), suggesting that the variability of scores between participants decreased slightly after the intervention. This could indicate that the program was successful in standardizing participants' understanding of anti-bullying. Before conducting a paired t-test, the data were first tested using a normality test to ensure that the data distribution met the parametric assumptions. The results of the normality test are presented in the following Table 2:

**Table 2.** Test Results of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pretest Anti-Bullying	.140	28	.169	.963	28	.400
Posttest Anti-Bullying	.127	28	.200*	.961	28	.360

\*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.  
 a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The normality test is performed to ensure that the data meets the assumptions of normal distribution, which is important for subsequent parametric analysis. For pretest and posttest data, this study focuses on Shapiro-Wilk with pretest ( $p = 0.400$ ) and posttest ( $p = 0.360$ ) which shows

that the data is normally. After the data were determined to be normally distributed, further descriptive statistical analysis was performed on the pretest and posttest scores to compare the averages in more detail. The results are shown in the following Table 3:

**Table 3.** Test Results Paired Samples Statistics

Pair 1		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
	Pretest Anti-Bullying	35.96	28	5.224	.987
	Posttest Anti-Bullying	47.07	28	6.705	1.267

The average increase from 35.96 in the pretest to 47.07 in the posttest shows that the anti-bullying intervention carried out (through the book "The Hidden Pearl") has a positive impact on students' anti-bullying attitudes which states that this increase is quite significant. But further

analysis was carried out to find out the average difference in the study. To determine whether there was a significant difference between the pretest and posttest results, a paired sample t-test was conducted. The results of the analysis are shown in the following Table 4:

**Table 4.** Test Results *Paired Samples Test*

		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pretest Bullying - Posttest Anti-Bullying	-12.500	5.037	.952	-14.453	-10.547	-13.132	27	.000

Significant differences in pretest and posttest scores in this study, paired sample t-test was conducted with a sample size of 28 (based on  $df + 1$ ). The results of the analysis showed a highly significant difference between pretest and posttest scores. A mean difference of -12.500 (SD = 5.037, SE = 0.952) was found between pretest and posttest scores. This score is negative, indicating that posttest scores are consistently higher than pretest scores. The 95% confidence interval for this difference ranges from -14.453 to -10.547, which does not include zero, strengthening confidence in the significance of the difference. The t-test yielded a t-value of -13.132 with a degree of freedom (df) of 27. A very small probability value ( $p < 0.001$ ) indicates that the difference between pretest and posttest scores is statistically significant. The large t-score and small p-value provide strong evidence that the increase in scores from the pretest to the posttest was not a result of chance, but rather a real effect of the anti-bullying intervention program. Test the effect size with Cohen's d to find out how much effect the intervention has. In this case, the effect size was analyzed using *the Effect Size Calculator for T-Test*, with Cohen's d value stated by (J. Cohen, 1988).

**Table 5.** Test Results Effect Size

Cohen's d	0.2	Small effects
Cohen's d	0.5	Medium effect
Cohen's d	0.8	Great effect

The effect size results in the context of the t-test that has been carried out, that Cohen's  $d = 1.85$  show a very large effect of the story-based intervention. The association with the t-test can be explained by the fact that the t-test shows a significant difference between the pretest and the posttest, with a  $p < 0.001$ , further supporting Cohen's d. This means that the results of this very significant t-test are supported by a large effect size, strengthening the validity and credibility of the research results.

## Discussion

### 1. Improving Anti-Bullying Understanding and Attitude

To improve understanding and anti-bullying attitudes in students, the reader response theory put forward by Rosenblatt, 1938 reading is an active activity and will not be a passive activity, where this involves interaction between the reader and the text. This process allows students to form the personal meaning of the text read, which then influences their understanding and attitude toward social issues, including bullying. The storybook selected in this study aims to facilitate students' reflection on values related to anti-bullying behavior through an in-depth reading experience. The results showed an average increase in posttest scores of 34.8% compared to pretest scores, which indicated an increase in students' understanding and changes in attitudes towards bullying after reading the book. This increase underscores the positive and significant impact of the use of literary reading materials as an educational medium in strengthening anti-bullying values. Thus, storybooks not only serve as a tool to convey information, but also as a means to instill a positive attitude and a deep understanding of social issues among students.

### 2. Integration of Local Values to Build Character

The integration of local Indonesian values in the storybook "Mutuara yang Terpenpen" provides a unique approach in anti-bullying intervention, utilizing cultural wisdom as a character learning medium. This is in line with social theory (Vygotskii, 1934) which emphasizes that children's cognitive and social development is significantly influenced by social interaction and cultural tools around them. Vygotsky argues that culturally relevant learning experiences help children develop a deeper understanding, as they can relate new knowledge to values and contexts that are already familiar to

them. Integrating local values, such as mutual cooperation, togetherness, and respect in stories, the book "Hidden Pearls" not only teaches students about the concept of anti-bullying, but also builds a contextual understanding of morality. These values strengthen students' character by setting real examples that are appropriate to the local culture, so that anti-bullying values can be understood and applied in their daily lives. This approach adds a new dimension to anti-bullying interventions, as it connects the characters and cultural norms that already exist in students' lives with an understanding of positive behaviors and empathetic attitudes. In addition to functioning as an anti-bullying educational tool, this local value-based story also plays a role in shaping students' character in a more meaningful and relevant way. In the long term, the use of local values in such interventions has the potential to increase the effectiveness of character education programs in primary schools, by instilling concepts that are enduring and that can continue into adulthood.

### 3. Effectiveness and Sustainable Impact

This study shows that the use of the storybook "Hidden Pearls" as a story-based anti-bullying intervention has proven to be effective in improving anti-bullying understanding and attitudes in elementary school students. The results of the t-test on the pretest and posttest showed that there was a very significant difference scores ( $p < 0.001$ ), which was supported by a large effect measure (Cohen's  $d = 1.85$ ), indicating that this story-based approach had a strong influence on students' comprehension. These findings support previous research that underscores the effectiveness of cultural literacy in character education (Basuki & Wulansari, 2024) which empirically shows that the story-based literacy approach is a valid and effective method in instilling character values in students. In addition to improving understanding and attitudes, observations and interviews with teachers showed positive changes in student behavior, including a reduction in the frequency of bullying, an increase in empathy, and improvements in interpersonal communication. This indicates that story-based interventions not only have a temporary impact but also have the potential to influence students' prosocial behavior in the long term. The consistency between quantitative and qualitative data strengthens the validity of these findings, indicating that the

impact of these interventions not only increases knowledge but also shapes positive behaviors that support a safe and inclusive school environment.

Although the results show strong effectiveness, further evaluation is needed to test the long-term effects of these interventions, for example using control groups and more in-depth research methods. In addition, adapting these interventions to the diverse cultural contexts in Indonesia has the potential to expand their relevance and effectiveness. With a tailored local value-based approach, this intervention is expected to shape a more robust and sustainable anti-bullying attitude and behavior in students, providing a foundation for the development of a holistic character education program in the future. Thus, this research not only contributes to students' understanding of bullying but also provides a holistic framework for understanding students' social lives and encourages sustainable behavior change. The results of this study show that using story-based literacy media and local values can be a very powerful tool in educating the younger generation about the importance of empathy, responsibility, and respect for others.

### CONCLUSION

This study shows that the storybook "Hidden Pearls" is effective as an anti-bullying intervention tool in elementary schools, especially for grade II students. The use of this storybook increased students' understanding and attitude towards bullying behavior, which was shown by an increase in posttest scores of 34.8% compared to pretest scores, with significant t-test results ( $t = -13.132$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). An effect size of 1.85 (Cohen's  $d$ ) also indicates a very strong impact, suggesting that the intervention succeeded in instilling a positive anti-bullying attitude in students. The dynamic interaction between students and the text during the reading process helps students understand bullying cognitively and emotionally, facilitating the development of empathy and social awareness. This story-based literacy approach also emphasizes the importance of students' experiences and backgrounds in interpreting the meaning of stories, reinforcing changes in their attitudes. This study provides a new perspective on anti-bullying interventions through literacy media in primary schools, showing that story-based literacy can be an effective alternative in

tackling bullying and teaching positive values to students in Indonesia.

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