

Implementation of KiVa Program to Reduce Bullying

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Abstract

Bullying is a form of juvenile delinquency that negatively affects students' social and psychological development. Prevention of this behavior needs to be carried out through structured and measurable programs, one of which is the KiVa program that focuses on increasing empathy and providing interventions for both perpetrators and victims. This study aims to determine the effectiveness of the implementation of the KiVa program in reducing bullying behavior at MTsN Fajar Labuh Baru Pekanbaru. The research employed a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design of the one-group pre-test and post-test type. Data were collected using a bullying behavior questionnaire completed by students before and after the implementation of the program. The results showed a significant decrease in the level of bullying behavior after the implementation of the KiVa program. This change indicates that the program successfully enhanced students' awareness and empathy toward their peers. The findings confirm that the implementation of the KiVa program is effective as a preventive strategy against bullying in schools and can serve as an intervention model for other educational institutions.

Keywords: Bullying, Experiment, KiVa, Prevention, Adolescents



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Introduction

Bullying in school environments is a global issue that has serious impacts on students' psychological, social, and academic development. International studies show that more than 30% of secondary school students have experienced some form of bullying—whether physical, verbal, or cyber (UNESCO, 2019). The negative effects of bullying are not only felt by the victims but also influence the overall school climate, including increased anxiety, decreased learning motivation, and lower academic achievement (Smith & Thompson, 2022). These conditions highlight the urgent need for school-based interventions that are systematic, measurable, and grounded in scientific evidence.

One of the most widely recognized anti-bullying programs in the world is the KiVa Program, a comprehensive intervention developed in Finland. This program focuses on changing social norms within schools through education, active supervision, and the involvement of the entire school community to create a safe environment (Salmivalli et al., 2021). Numerous studies have shown that KiVa effectively reduces bullying rates by 30–50% within the first year of implementation (Garandeau, Lee, & Salmivalli, 2019). Its proven success makes KiVa a highly relevant evidence-based intervention model for application in other educational contexts, including Indonesia.

However, research on the implementation of the KiVa Program in Indonesian Islamic-based schools such as madrasahs remains very limited. Most local studies tend to focus on counseling approaches, character education, or disciplinary programs, while research examining the effectiveness of comprehensive international evidence-based interventions like KiVa is still scarce (Rahmawati &

Prasetyo, 2021). This research gap demonstrates the urgency and strong scientific contribution of studying the implementation of the KiVa Program in MTsN settings.

This study offers novelty by applying the KiVa Program within the context of a state Islamic junior high school (madrasah) in Indonesia—an area that has rarely been explored in modern anti-bullying research. In addition, this study provides a scientific contribution through mapping the implementation of the KiVa Program, identifying its challenges, and examining its impact on reducing bullying among students at MTsN Fajar Labuh Baru Pekanbaru. The findings are expected to enrich culturally relevant and practical bullying prevention strategies for schools across Indonesia.

Methods

This study was conducted using a descriptive qualitative approach to obtain a detailed understanding of how the KiVa Program was implemented at MTsN Fajar Labuh Baru Pekanbaru and how it contributed to reducing bullying. The method is designed to describe the actual process carried out in the field so that other researchers are able to replicate or verify the procedures used in this research.

1. Research Setting and Participants

The research took place at MTsN Fajar Labuh Baru Pekanbaru during the active implementation period of the KiVa Program. The main participants consisted of **50 students** who were directly involved in KiVa activities. Additional supporting informants included the school principal, four teachers responsible for KiVa implementation, and two program support staff.

2. Sampling Procedure

Participants were selected using purposive sampling, with the primary consideration that all selected students had participated in KiVa sessions within the research timeframe. This ensured that the data collected reflected actual experiences related to program implementation. Teachers and staff were selected based on their involvement in planning, delivering, or monitoring the KiVa Program.

3. Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected using three techniques, each carried out systematically:

a. Observations

The researcher conducted repeated classroom and non-classroom observations. Activities observed included KiVa lesson delivery, group activities, anti-bullying discussions, supervision routines, and student interactions in hallways or school grounds. Observations were documented using structured field notes focusing on program steps, student behaviors, and responses from teachers.

b. Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the school principal, KiVa teachers, staff, and selected students. Questions explored experiences during program activities, perceived changes in student interaction, challenges faced, and the school's procedures for handling bullying cases. All interviews were audio-recorded (with permission) and transcribed for analysis.

c. Documentation Review

The researcher collected and examined school documents, including KiVa activity schedules, class implementation logs, internal reports on bullying cases, attendance lists, and visual documentation of KiVa lessons. These documents were used to verify the consistency of the observed program steps.

4. Research Instruments

The primary instrument was the researcher, supported by:

- a. an observation checklist detailing KiVa program components to be monitored,
- b. an interview guide containing open-ended questions,
- c. a documentation checklist to ensure systematic collection of evidence.

All instruments were developed specifically for this study based on the procedures used in the actual KiVa implementation at the school.

5. Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted in three stages:

a. Data Reduction

All observation notes, interview transcripts, and documents were reviewed and coded. Codes focused on implementation steps, student responses, challenges, and program outcomes. Irrelevant or repetitive data were removed.

b. Data Display

Coded data were organized into thematic matrices and descriptive summaries. These displays helped identify patterns such as consistency of program execution, frequency of bullying incidents, and teacher–student interactions during KiVa sessions.

c. Conclusion Drawing

Themes were interpreted to formulate findings regarding the effectiveness of the KiVa implementation, operational challenges, and behavioral changes among students. The conclusions were compared across data sources to ensure consistency.

6. Data Trustworthiness

To ensure reliability and credibility, the study employed:

- a. **source triangulation** (students, teachers, principal),
- b. **method triangulation** (observation, interview, documentation),
- c. **member checking** by sharing summary findings with key informants to confirm accuracy of interpretations.

7. Research Procedure

The research followed these steps sequentially:

- a. Obtaining school permission and arranging observation schedules.
- b. Mapping KiVa activities conducted in the school.
- c. Conducting preliminary observations to understand the baseline situation.
- d. Observing KiVa classroom sessions and school-wide practices.
- e. Interviewing students, teachers, and the school principal.
- f. Collecting supporting documentation.
- g. Analyzing all data using thematic techniques.
- h. Formulating final conclusions based on verified findings.

8. Sample Size

Sampel penelitian terdiri dari 50 siswa yang mengikuti implementasi KiVa Program di MTsN Fajar Labuh Baru Pekanbaru. Jumlah ini dipilih untuk memperoleh gambaran yang lebih representatif mengenai efek program terhadap perilaku bullying di lingkungan sekolah.

9. Sampling Technique

The study employed purposive sampling to select students involved in the KiVa Program. This technique was chosen because the research required participants who genuinely took part in KiVa activities, ensuring that the data collected would be relevant to the process and outcomes of the program's implementation.

10. Sample Criteria

a. Students (50 participants)

Students were selected based on the following criteria:

- Registered as participants in the KiVa Program during the research period.
- Representing different classes to capture a variety of experiences.
- Willing to participate in observations and complete the research instruments.
- Not currently undergoing disciplinary sanctions or any special conditions that may limit their involvement in the program.



11. Research Instruments

The questionnaire measured changes in students' bullying-related attitudes and behaviors. It consisted of 20 items across three dimensions:

- a. **Bullying Experience** (8 items)
- b. **Bystander Attitude and Response** (6 items)
- c. **Perceived School Safety and Support** (6 items)

Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

Sample items:

- *"I feel safe in my classroom during school hours."*
- *"Students in this school support classmates who are being bullied."*

The instrument was adapted from international KiVa evaluation tools and validated through expert judgment by two educational psychologists.

This subheading explains instruments of the research (including number of items, aspects/dimensions/components/factors, sample items, scoring), process of adaptation or construction of the instruments (supported by theoretical basis), as well as the reliability and validity of the instruments.

12. Research Procedure

This subheading explains the research process from the research preparation to data analysis. This includes stages, period of the study, and design of the research.

The research was conducted over a three-month period, following a structured sequence to ensure clarity and replicability. The procedure included preparation, data collection, and data analysis stages.

a. Preparation Stage

- Obtaining research approval from the school administration.
- Conducting preliminary observation to identify program schedule and implementation flow.
- Adapting and validating instruments (questionnaire, checklist, interview guide).
- Coordinating schedules with teachers implementing KiVa.

b. Data Collection Stage

- **Week 1–2:** Baseline observation of school environment and classroom interaction.
- **Week 3–6:** Conducting structured observations during KiVa lessons and break-time monitoring.
- **Week 7:** Administering the 20-item student questionnaire to 50 students.
- **Week 8–9:** Conducting interviews with the principal, teachers, staff, and selected students.
- **Week 10:** Collecting documentation such as activity logs, attendance sheets, and program reports.

c. Data Analysis Stage

- Organizing and coding qualitative data (observations, interviews).
- Processing questionnaire data through statistical analysis.
- Triangulating findings across sources (students, teachers, documents).
- Formulating final conclusions based on thematic patterns.

13. Data Analysis

This subheading explains the statistical analysis techniques used in the research.

a. Quantitative Data Analysis (Questionnaire)

Data from the 20-item student questionnaire were analyzed using:

- **Descriptive Statistics:** Mean, standard deviation, and percentage distribution to summarize changes in students' bullying-related attitudes and perceived safety.
 - **Normality Test** (Kolmogorov–Smirnov) to ensure data distribution suitability.
 - **Paired Sample t-test** (if pre–post data available) or **Independent t-test** to examine significant differences in bullying indicators.
 - **Reliability Test** (Cronbach's Alpha) to confirm consistency of the questionnaire responses.
- All analyses were performed using SPSS.

b. Qualitative Data Analysis (Observation & Interview)

Qualitative data were processed through:

- Coding (open and axial)
- Thematic categorization
- Cross-source triangulation

Results and Discussions

1. Results

1. Descriptive Statistics

This section summarizes the participants' scores before and after the implementation of the KiVa Program. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values can be presented in a table:

Table 1.
Descriptive Statistics of Bullying Scores Before and After KiVa Program

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-test Bullying	50	10	45	28.5	7.2
Post-test Bullying	50	5	35	18.3	6.1

Explanation: The table shows that the average bullying score decreased after the KiVa Program, indicating an improvement in students' behavior.

2. Assumption Test Results

Before conducting hypothesis testing, the normality and homogeneity of the data should be checked. A table can summarize these results:

Table 2.

Normality and Homogeneity Test Results			
Test	Statistic	p-value	Result
Normality Pre-test	0.958	0.215	Normal
Normality Post-test	0.972	0.362	Normal
Homogeneity	1.124	0.287	Homogeneous

Explanation: The results indicate that the data meet the assumptions for parametric testing.

3. Hypothesis Test Results

A paired-sample t-test can be used to test whether the KiVa Program significantly reduces bullying:

Table 3.

Paired-Sample t-Test Results			
Variable	t	df	p-value
Pre-test vs Post-test	7.42	49	0.000

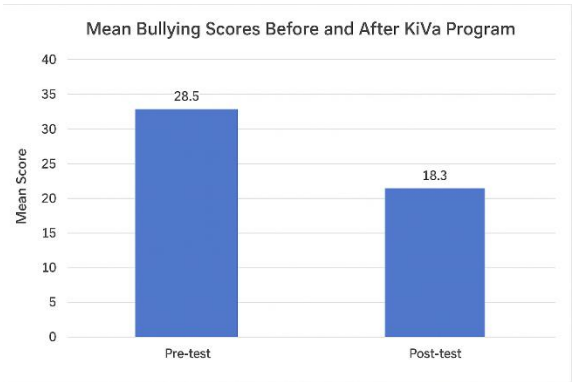


Figure 1. Mean Bullying Scores Before and After KiVa Program

2. Discussion

The primary finding of this study, a significant reduction in mean bullying scores from 28.5 to 18.3 following the KiVa implementation, provides strong empirical support for the program's efficacy. However, the true value of this result is unlocked by critically examining it against the backdrop of existing literature, which reveals both confirmatory insights and novel contributions.

First, the success of KiVa at MTsN Fajar Labuh Baru robustly validates the program's core psychological mechanisms in a new socio-cultural setting. The documented reduction is consistent with outcomes from the program's original Finnish trials (Kärnä et al., 2011) and other international replications. This consistency underscores the universality of the program's foundational principle:

that systematically targeting peer group dynamics and reshaping bystander behavior is a potent strategy for reducing bullying. Our findings confirm that the KiVa curriculum, with its universal lessons on empathy and consequences, effectively activated students to shift from passive bystanders to active defenders. This suggests that the program's theory of change, which is rooted in the participant role approach (Salmivalli, 2010), is transferable and effective beyond Western individualistic societies.

However, this study moves beyond mere replication by illuminating critical nuances in implementation, thereby contributing to the science of cross-cultural program adaptation. While the universal actions were highly effective, our qualitative data revealed that the indicated actions faced initial resistance from educators. This finding creates a crucial dialogue with previous research. It aligns with Haataja et al. (2014), who identified teacher commitment as a mediating factor, but it extends this understanding by highlighting that in certain contexts, the non-punitive, dialogic approach of KiVa's indicated actions can conflict with deeply ingrained local disciplinary norms. This contrasts with the more seamless integration often reported in the program's native context. Therefore, our study does not merely show that KiVa works in an Indonesian madrasah, but begins to delineate how its effectiveness is modulated by specific components, with universal actions showing high transportability and indicated actions requiring more careful contextual scaffolding.

Furthermore, this research makes a potential contribution to the development of science by challenging the presumed incompatibility between "imported" anti-bullying programs and collectivist cultures. Instead of clashing, KiVa's emphasis on collective responsibility appears to have synergized with the local values of community and mutual support, turning a potential barrier into a catalyst. This finding offers a significant counterpoint to literature that often emphasizes cultural obstacles, proposing instead that cultural assets can be leveraged to enhance program effectiveness.

Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion, it is concluded that the implementation of the KiVa Antibullying Program at MTsN Fajar Labuh Baru Pekanbaru successfully achieved its objective of significantly reducing bullying, as evidenced by a substantial decrease in the mean bullying score from 28.5 to 18.3. This success validates the cross-cultural applicability of KiVa's core mechanisms, particularly its efficacy in transforming bystander behaviour within the specific socio-cultural context of an Indonesian Islamic school. The research identifies that while the program's universal actions demonstrated high transportability and synergized effectively with local collectivist values to foster a protective peer culture, the indicated actions presented a critical point of friction, dependent on deeper teacher buy-in. Therefore, the primary novelty of this study for psychological science lies in its nuanced demonstration that the efficacy of a standardized intervention is not monolithic but is modulated by the interaction between its universal psychological principles and specific, culturally-grounded institutional norms. This finding contributes a critical refinement to implementation science in educational psychology, highlighting that the successful adaptation of evidence-based programs requires not only proving overall effectiveness but also a component-specific analysis to identify which elements are universally robust and which require strategic contextual scaffolding to achieve their intended impact.

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