

## Implementing Emotional Intelligence to Prevent and Manage Bullying in School-Aged Adolescents

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### Abstrack

The rampant bullying in schools has become a serious problem that needs to be addressed immediately. This situation prompts the author to offer an effective solution grounded in emotional intelligence theory. This research aims to offer a solution to tackle the widespread bullying in schools. The research method used is a PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses). Based on the method, 4 scientific journals were found that met the inclusion criteria and were relevant to this research. This study provides implications for schools to take a more serious approach in addressing the widespread phenomenon of bullying, thereby reducing its prevalence in school settings. The findings of this study are the application of the five main areas of emotional intelligence to address bullying in schools. These applications are divided into five parts according to the five main areas of emotional intelligence (self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills).

**Keywords:** bullying, teenagers, school, emotional intelligence, Daniel Goleman

### Abstrak

Maraknya bullying di sekolah menjadi masalah serius yang harus segera diatasi. Hal tersebut mendorong penulis untuk memberikan solusi yang efektif menggunakan teori kecerdasan emosional. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memberikan solusi dalam mengatasi maraknya bullying di sekolah. Metode penelitian yang digunakan ialah PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses). Berdasarkan metode tersebut, didapatkan 4 jurnal ilmiah yang telah melewati tahap identifikasi, penyaringan, kelayakan, dan penyertaan. Penelitian ini memberikan implikasi bagi sekolah untuk lebih serius dalam menangani maraknya fenomena bullying sehingga dapat menekan angka bullying di sekolah. Hasil penelitian ini ialah penerapan-penerapan pengembangan lima wilayah utama kecerdasan emosional untuk mengatasi bullying di sekolah. Penerapan tersebut dibagi menjadi lima bagian sesuai dengan lima wilayah utama kecerdasan emosional (kemampuan mengenal emosi diri sendiri, kemampuan mengelola emosi, kemampuan memotivasi diri sendiri, empati, dan kemampuan membangun relasi dengan orang lain).

**Keywords:** bullying, remaja, sekolah, kecerdasan emosional, Daniel Goleman

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## INTRODUCTION

Bullying behavior has become a serious issue in various social environments (Nugraha, et al, 2019; Permata & Nasution, 2022). This repetitive violent behavior not only negatively impacts the victims but also affects the perpetrators and the social environment as a whole. Victims of bullying often experience psychological trauma (Pradana, 2024), difficulties in social interaction (Trisanti, Nisak, & Azizah, 2020), lack of self-confidence (Triana et al, 2021), and even a higher risk of developing long-term mental health issues (Febriana & Rahmasari, 2021). Bullying is also prevalent in school environments (Wibowo et al, 2021). Schools serve as broader social environments for adolescents than their home settings do. Schools should be a place for adolescents to learn cognitive knowledge as well as psychomotor and behavioral skills (Salirawati, 2021). However, in reality, many cases of bullying occur within schools. This is often because adolescents join certain groups whose behaviors are deviant (Risya et al, 2024).

There are several causes of bullying in adolescents. One cause is the sense of superiority that leads them to look down on others (Hardi et al, 2019). Bullying can manifest in verbal forms (such as teasing, swearing, and gossiping) (Herawati & Deharnita, 2019), physical forms (such as hitting, slapping, and extorting) (Hamzah et al, 2023), and psychological attacks (such as intimidation, exclusion, and discrimination) (Agisyaputri et al, 2023). Additionally, bullying is often caused by a lack of emotional regulation in adolescents (Munawaroh & Setiyowati, 2024). This emotional regulation is referred to as emotional intelligence.

The development of emotional intelligence can be one solution to the widespread phenomenon of bullying. Emotional intelligence emphasizes the importance of developing the ability to process one's own emotions (personal competence) and manage relationships with others (social competence) (Jeffrey & Handayani, 2024; Utomo et al, 2024). This is particularly relevant for adolescents, whose emotions are often unstable. Adolescents need to manage their emotions properly in order to address bullying behavior effectively.

According to Jayanti & Indrawati (2019), emotional intelligence and bullying behavior among grade XI students at Vocational High School X Semarang have a significant relationship. Those with lower emotional intelligence tend to exhibit higher levels of bullying behavior. Conversely, the higher an individual's emotional intelligence, the lower their tendency to engage in bullying behavior.

According to Yunia et al. (2019), emotional intelligence and juvenile delinquency in students at Sudirman Islamic Vocational High School, Semarang District, are related, with a p-value of  $0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$ . Juvenile delinquency is caused by adolescents' inability to manage their emotions, recognize their feelings, empathize, and lack clear goals. Furthermore, the school environment and peer influence also affect adolescent delinquency.

According to Nabila et al. (2024), bullying behavior and emotional intelligence in adolescents at State Junior High School 17, Jambi City, in 2023 have a significant relationship. This is evidenced by the correlation coefficient  $r_{xy} = -0.558$ , indicating that higher bullying behavior is associated with lower emotional intelligence, and vice versa.

Previous studies have emphasized the link between bullying and emotional intelligence theory without providing effective solutions. Unlike previous research, this study focuses on the application of emotional intelligence to address bullying among adolescents in schools. It also explains how to develop the five main areas of emotional



intelligence to combat bullying. The author also sees the need for more solution-oriented implementations in tackling bullying using emotional intelligence theory.

## METHOD

This study employs the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) method. PRISMA is a tool that helps researchers improve the quality of reporting systematic reviews and meta-analyses, aiming to address shortcomings in the methodology of well-documented reviews in published articles (Edward Purssell & McCrae, 2020). This method is divided into four stages: (1) Identification, (2) Screening, (3) Eligibility, and (4) Inclusion. Below is the process for filtering scientific journals from identification to inclusion.

In this stage, the researcher identifies scientific journals from Google Scholar on emotional intelligence and bullying among adolescents at school. The selected journals span the last 6 years (2019-2025). The keywords used are the influence of emotional intelligence on adolescents, bullying in adolescents, and the application of emotional intelligence in adolescents.

In the identification stage, 951 journals were identified on Google Scholar using the keywords "the influence of emotional intelligence on adolescents" and "bullying in adolescents". Once the identification stage was completed, these journals moved on to the screening stage.

According to Page et al (2021), researchers must define the characteristics of the studies and reports to be screened, including publication type, language, year, and all relevant components. Based on this statement, screening was conducted according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria outlined in the table below.

**Table 1**

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria of Scientific Journals

Domain	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Population	Adolescents aged 10-19 years	Participants younger than 12 or older than 18 yaers
Intervetion	Studies addressing emotional intelligence	Studies not involving emotional intelligence
Outcome	Studies reporting on bullying behavior and or emotional outcomes	Studies that do not asses bullying related outcomes
Study Design	Empirical research: qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods	Editorials, letters, opinion pieces, or theoretical papers without empirical data
Language	Articles published in Indonesian language	Articles published in other languages
Publication Type	Accredited and indexed SINTA ( <i>Science and Technology Index</i> )	Not accredited and indexed SINTA ( <i>Science and Technology Index</i> )



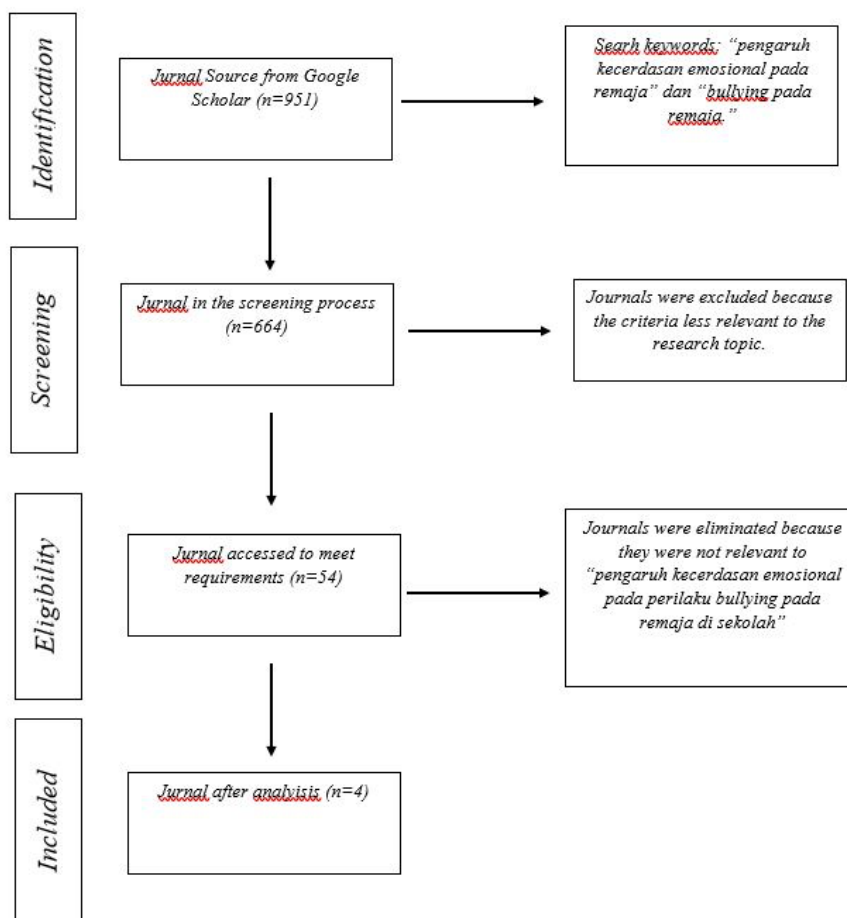
Publication Year	Published between 2019 – 2025	Published before 2019
Availability	Full-text articles available	Abstract only or inaccessible full text

In the screening stage, 664 journals met the inclusion criteria and 287 journals that met the exclusion criteria were identified. Once the screening stage was completed, the 664 journals that met the inclusion criteria advanced to the eligibility stage. Eligibility. In this stage, the remaining journals were further eliminated by assessing their relevance to "the influence of emotional intelligence on bullying behavior in adolescents at school." After this stage, 54 scientific journals remained. Once the eligibility stage was completed, these 54 journals advanced to the inclusion stage.

At this stage, the journals were analyzed in greater depth and aligned with the context of this research. This process resulted in 4 scientific journals that were deemed relevant to the context. The journal selection process, from identification to inclusion, is depicted in the following graph.

**Graph 1.**

Literature Collection and Selection Process



## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The scientific journals that have passed the screening process are presented in a table. The table includes the author's name, title, journal name, and the research findings obtained. These journals are used to support and strengthen this research.

**Table 2**  
*Result of Literature Selection*

No	Authors	Title	Journal	Findings
1.	(Aprilia et al S., 2023	Hubungan antara kecerdasan emosional dengan perilaku bullying peserta didik	G-Couns: Jurnal Bimbingan Dan Konseling (SINTA 2)	Emotional intelligence and bullying behavior among 12th-grade students at SMK PGRI 2 Salatiga have a significant negative correlation.
2.	(Jayanti & Indrawati, 2019	Hubungan antara kecerdasan emosional dengan perilaku bullying pada siswa kelas XI SMK X Semarang	Jurnal Empati (SINTA 4)	Emotional intelligence and bullying behavior among 11th-grade students at SMK X Semarang have a significant correlation.
3.	Rachman et al, 2023	Pengaruh Keterampilan Mengelola Emosi terhadap Resiliensi Remaja Awal untuk Mencegah Perilaku Bullying di Kota Kendari	Media Publikasi Promosi Kesehatan Indonesia (MPPKI) (SINTA 4)	Students' emotion management skills are generally low, making them more likely to engage in bullying behavior.
4.	Yunia et al, 2019	Hubungan kecerdasan emosional dengan kenakalan remaja pada siswa	Jurnal Ilmu Keperawatan Jiwa (SINTA 3)	Emotional intelligence and juvenile delinquency among students at SMK Islam Sudirman, Semarang Regency, are significantly related ( $p = 0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$ ).

Based on the table, it can be concluded that emotional intelligence has a significant negative correlation with bullying behavior. Individuals with lower levels of emotional intelligence tend to exhibit higher levels of bullying behavior. Conversely, the higher an individual's emotional intelligence, the lower their tendency to engage in bullying.

In the first study, conducted by Aprilia et al. (2023) the researchers, 84 twelfth-grade students from PGRI 2 Salatiga Vocational High School participated in the research in the 2022/2023 academic year. The data were analyzed using Kendall's tau-b correlation test with the assistance of IBM SPSS 25.0. The results showed a significance value ( $p$ ) of  $0.000 < 0.01$  and a correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) of  $-0.556$ , indicating that emotional intelligence significantly influences bullying behavior. This study aimed solely



to determine the significance of the relationship between emotional intelligence and bullying behavior, resulting in a discussion focused predominantly on data analysis rather than on in-depth solutions to the problem.

The second study Jayanti & Indrawati (2019) examined 146 eleventh-grade students from X Vocational High School in Semarang using a cluster-random sampling technique. The data were analyzed using simple regression. The findings indicated a significant negative relationship between emotional intelligence and bullying behavior ( $r_{xy} = -0.352$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ). Similar to the first study, the aim was limited to identifying the correlation between emotional intelligence and bullying behavior among respondents. As a result, the study lacked depth, focusing only on field data analysis without further exploration.

The third study, conducted by Rachman et al. (2023), involved early adolescents aged 10–13 years at Insatama Integrated Islamic Elementary School in Kendari City. The research employed an analytical method with a cross-sectional design and used purposive sampling to select participants. The findings indicated that the students' emotional management skills were relatively low, which increased their tendency to engage in bullying. Furthermore, a relationship between emotional intelligence and bullying behavior was established. This study aimed to explore emotional skills as a preventive measure against bullying. Although the study addressed the topic comprehensively, it lacked a detailed discussion regarding data processing and findings. The data analysis results were only briefly mentioned in the final discussion and conclusion sections.

In the fourth study, Yunia et al. (2019) researchers conducted a study on 76 students from Sudirman Islamic Vocational High School, located in Ungaran Barat District, Semarang Regency. The study employed a descriptive-correlational research method with a cross-sectional approach. The sample was selected using proportional random sampling, and data were collected using a questionnaire. The data were analyzed using the Kendall Tau statistical test. The results showed a  $p$ -value of  $0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$ , indicating a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and juvenile delinquency among students, which may also manifest as bullying behavior.

All four studies predominantly employed quantitative research methods, which inherently have certain limitations. These include a lack of depth in the findings, a focus on measurable variables, limited flexibility, limited suitability for complex topics, a risk of misinterpreting numerical data, and potential dishonesty in respondents' answers. Quantitative research emphasizes numerical data and statistical analysis, thereby often overlooking deeper meanings, perceptions, or emotional dimensions. The data obtained are limited to what is collected through the research instruments, which tend to be rigid and inflexible. Furthermore, statistical results may be misleading if not carefully processed and interpreted. Additionally, respondents may provide socially desirable responses rather than truthful ones.

### Several Cases of Bullying Among Adolescents in Schools

Violence against children in schools has also attracted the attention of the People's Welfare Commission (Commission VIII) of the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR RI). This concern is documented in a PDF file entitled "Violence Against Children in Educational Institutions." In the first paragraph of the document, data on cases of violence against children from various sources are presented, which the author has compiled into the following table (Fahham, 2024).



**Table 3**  
 Data on Cases of Violence Against Children

Data Source	Time Period	Number of Cases
SIMFONI-PPA	January–February 2024	1,993
National Commission for Child Protection (Komnas PA)	Throughout 2023	3,547
Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI)	January–August 2023	2,355

Based on the table, it is evident that cases of violence have increased during the first two months of 2024. This is a deeply concerning trend that demands serious intervention. In response, the author presents several case examples sourced from kompas.id to illustrate the severity of bullying among adolescents in schools.

A bullying incident occurred at State Junior High School 13, Balikpapan City. The assault, perpetrated by S (15) and several other students, was captured in a 2-minute 49-second video. The victim, R (15), was initially grabbed by the hair by S, then punched in the head. Subsequently, other classmates began hitting R, kicking him in the head, and striking him on the back. The incident took place in the classroom during break time, with no teacher present (Sucipto, 2024).

The students involved were taken by police to the Women and Children Protection Unit (PPA) of the Balikpapan Police Department on Saturday, March 2, 2024. The perpetrators' homeroom teacher, Nasrun, was also present at the PPA. He stated that the matter had been resolved amicably within the school.

The perpetrators, both those who assaulted and those who recorded the incident, were subjected to a mandatory reporting requirement for three months at the PPA Unit. In addition, the Balikpapan Police's PPA Unit collaborated with the Child Protection Division of the City's BP3AKB Office to provide psychological support to the students. This measure was taken to prevent potential depression in the victim and other affected students.

A fatal bullying case occurred on Wednesday, May 29, 2024, in Batu, East Java, involving a 14-year-old victim, RKW. The victim was beaten to death by five peers, identified by their initials: AS (13), MI (15), KA (13), MA (13), and KB (13). The assault was recorded by one of the perpetrators. As all the assailants were minors, they are being processed in accordance with juvenile justice procedures (Werdiono, 2024).

The incident occurred around 1:30 PM local time on Jalan Cempaka, Pesanggrahan, Batu City. The victim was picked up by KA on a motorcycle and taken to MA's residence before proceeding to Jalan Cempaka, where MI, KB, and AS were waiting. The victim was forced off the motorcycle, and MA challenged him to a fight. When the victim refused, MI struck him on the left side of his head, and MA kicked his back and face and dragged him. The incident was recorded by KA. After the assault, KA and AS took the victim home but abandoned him at a gas station on Jalan Lahor.

The victim's parents brought him to Hastabrata Hospital on Friday, May 31, 2024, at 7:00 AM. The victim complained of pain in the back of his head and nausea. He was pronounced dead at 10:00 AM. The autopsy revealed a skull fracture on the left side, causing internal bleeding and a blood clot in the brain.



The five perpetrators were charged under Article 80(3) in conjunction with Article 76C of Law No. 17 of 2016 concerning the Stipulation of Government Regulation in Lieu of Law No. 1/2016 (the Second Amendment to Law No. 23/2002 on Child Protection), with a maximum sentence of 15 years' imprisonment.

A bullying case is under investigation by the Tambun Police involving a female student from Vocational High School November 10, South Tambun, Bekasi Regency. In this incident, the perpetrator, a male junior high school student from the same area, forced the victim to kiss his feet (Ato, 2020).

The case gained public attention after a video of the incident went viral on social media. In the video, the female student, wearing a black hijab and blue shirt, is seen squatting in front of the person recording. She is then verbally abused, kicked, and coerced into kissing the recorder's feet. The incident took place on July 24, 2020. According to Tambun Police Chief Commissioner Gana Yudha, the victim had undergone a medical examination. However, no formal report had yet been filed. As a result, police are awaiting an official complaint from the victim to proceed with a full investigation.

### **Analyzing Cases Based on Emotional Intelligence Theory**

The previously mentioned cases will be analyzed in this section using Daniel Goleman's theory of emotional intelligence. The discussion is structured around the five core competencies of emotional intelligence. According to emotional intelligence theory, the main perpetrator, identified as S, and his peers exhibit low levels of emotional intelligence. This is evident from their arrogant behavior and the fact that they were overwhelmed by anger, leading to acts of hair-pulling, punching, and kicking the victim. These actions reflect poor self-regulation and impulsivity. Furthermore, the perpetrators failed to recognize the suffering of another person, indicating a serious lack of empathy.

In this case, the perpetrators' prefrontal lobes appear to have failed in executing appropriate emotional control. The prefrontal lobe plays a critical role in managing emotional challenges, fostering empathy, self-motivation, and developing healthy interpersonal relationships. The observed behavior suggests an underdeveloped or poorly exercised prefrontal lobe, contributing to the deviant conduct.

Based on emotional intelligence theory, the five perpetrators, AS, MI, KA, MA, and KB, demonstrated significantly low emotional intelligence. They lacked the ability to recognize their own emotions, which led them to become consumed by anger. Their aggressive behavior reveals poor emotional self-management, while their impulsivity indicates a deficiency in self-motivation. Moreover, the perpetrators exhibited an inability to empathize with others, particularly the victim, and failed to establish or maintain a healthy relationship with him.

Based on emotional intelligence theory, the perpetrator, an SMP Junior High School student, demonstrated low emotional intelligence. The individual was unable to identify or manage their own emotions effectively, as evidenced by scolding, kicking, and coercing the victim to apologize by kissing their foot. These actions highlight impulsivity and a lack of intrinsic motivation. The inability to perceive the victim's suffering also reflects a lack of empathy. Furthermore, the perpetrator clearly failed to build a respectful and constructive interpersonal relationship with the victim.



### **Relevance Between Research Findings and Previous Studies**

Based on the analysis of the three aforementioned cases, it is evident that there is a significant negative correlation between emotional intelligence and bullying behavior (Jayanti & Indrawati, 2019; Yunia et al., 2019). Individuals with lower levels of emotional intelligence tend to exhibit higher levels of bullying behavior. Conversely, individuals with higher emotional intelligence are less likely to engage in bullying.

The three reported cases, when analyzed using emotional intelligence theory, produced consistent results. Adolescents with low emotional intelligence were more likely to commit acts of violence, have trouble managing their emotions, and struggle to establish healthy relationships with others. From this perspective, both the current research findings and previous studies indicate a negative correlation between bullying behavior and emotional intelligence. The lower the adolescents' emotional intelligence, the greater the tendency toward bullying behavior.

### **Developing Emotional Intelligence as a Solution to End School Bullying**

Goleman (2000), in his theory of emotional intelligence, emphasizes the importance of individuals' ability to recognize, understand, and manage their own emotions as well as to build healthy social relationships (Wipperman, 2007). This concept is particularly relevant to efforts to address bullying behavior. By enhancing emotional intelligence in both perpetrators and victims, bullying in schools can be reduced.

Goleman (2000), in his book *Emotional Intelligence*, he explains that childhood and adolescence are critical developmental periods. During childhood, different regions of the brain develop at varying rates. By the onset of puberty, the limbic system is generally mature; however, the prefrontal lobe, which governs self-regulation, understanding, and thoughtful responses, continues to develop until the end of adolescence (Buanasari, 2019).

Optimal development of the prefrontal lobe can significantly enhance an individual's emotional intelligence (Mahrita & Cahyono, 2022). This is because the prefrontal lobe is responsible for self-regulation, comprehension, and wise decision-making. Given that the prefrontal lobe continues to grow throughout adolescence, this period presents a valuable opportunity to cultivate emotional intelligence. After adolescence, emotional patterns become more entrenched, making it more difficult to alter emotional responses.

Adolescents who frequently engage in violence often exhibit weak prefrontal control. This underdevelopment is associated with higher levels of bullying behavior. Strengthening the prefrontal lobe can therefore help mitigate such behavior, especially given that it is still developing during adolescence. Failure to do so may result in individuals maintaining low levels of emotional intelligence into adulthood.

In summary, bullying behavior can be addressed by developing emotional intelligence. Both perpetrators and victims must be trained to understand, regulate, and respond to emotions appropriately. This conclusion aligns with the findings of Aprilia et al. (2023), Jayanti & Indrawati (2019), Yunia et al. (2019) all of which highlight a significant negative relationship between emotional intelligence and bullying.

### **Applying Emotional Intelligence to Address Bullying in Schools**

Bullying behavior can be addressed by developing the five core areas of emotional intelligence (Book, 2002). These five areas include recognizing one's own emotions,



managing emotions, self-motivating, recognizing others' emotions, and building relationships with others (Darlita, 2019; Fazlan, Ali, & Saputra, 2023; Laia, 2021).

This ability can be applied in several ways. First, teachers can help students become more aware of their emotional fluctuations. This is done to prevent students from becoming emotionally numb or disconnected. Teachers can incorporate interactive questions during lessons to encourage students to express how they feel. Second, teachers can reward students who can articulate their emotions. These rewards may include additional points, verbal praise, small gifts such as snacks, or any form of appreciation for their courage.

This skill can be developed through the following strategies. First, teachers can provide education about emotional regulation. Such education allows students to learn beyond academic knowledge, engaging their emotional awareness. Second, teachers should guide students involved in conflicts. This process is now more manageable with the support of school counselors (Guidance and Counseling teachers).

This can be fostered in a few keyways. First, teachers can help students discover their life goals. This can be facilitated through seminars, retreats, or recollection programs. Understanding their life purpose can reduce tendencies toward bullying. Second, schools can support students' talent development by offering relevant programs and extracurricular activities. These initiatives help students find motivation by aligning their goals with personal growth and talents.

Empathy can be instilled through several methods. First, schools can post educational posters or other media related to empathy throughout the campus. These materials serve as ongoing visual cues and educational tools to promote empathy. Second, schools can create programs or activities to enhance students' empathy, such as field trips, community service projects, and the implementation of the 3S approach—Smile, Greet, and Salute.

This can be encouraged through collaborative learning activities. First, teachers can assign group projects to foster student interaction and teamwork. Second, teachers can design classroom games that involve all students. These games not only engage students intellectually but also emotionally, as they are required to collaborate in order to succeed. Such activities develop students' interpersonal skills and emotional connections with peers.

Applying emotional intelligence in addressing the widespread issue of school bullying has several practical implications. Through education on emotional recognition and regulation, students learn to manage their emotions, understand others' feelings, and respond appropriately to social situations. This approach reduces student aggression, which is a major cause of bullying. The empathy component of emotional intelligence also contributes to creating a more caring, comfortable, and responsible school environment. Additionally, teachers must proactively observe and identify students' emotional states and intervene early to prevent issues from escalating. In the long term, fostering students' emotional intelligence will significantly reduce bullying in schools.

## CONCLUSION

The prevalence of bullying in school environments indicates a flaw in the current education system. Schools, which should serve as safe and nurturing spaces for growth and intellectual development, are instead becoming sources of traumatic experiences. Based on this concern, the author proposes a new approach to addressing bullying in schools by applying Goleman's theory of emotional intelligence. This study has



implications for schools: take the issue of bullying more seriously and implement more targeted interventions. The author also encourages future researchers to explore alternative, potentially more effective approaches to addressing bullying in educational settings.

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