

# Transforming Vocational Schools: Socialization and Motivation for Effective Bullying Prevention

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## Abstract

Bullying remains a pervasive issue in vocational high schools, adversely affecting students' psychological well-being, academic performance, and social development. This study aims to implement socialization and training programs to prevent bullying by raising awareness, enhancing peer relationships, and equipping students and educators with effective prevention strategies. Using qualitative methods, the study identifies challenges such as the trivialization of bullying and the influence of social media, and evaluates the effectiveness of school-based interventions. The findings suggest that comprehensive, community-involved approaches are essential to foster safer and more inclusive educational environments.

## 1. Introduction

Bullying remains a significant psychosocial problem in educational settings worldwide, including vocational high schools, where it adversely affects students' psychological, physical, and social well-being (Wardah et al., 2024). Despite increased awareness, bullying incidents continue to occur frequently, often leading to trauma, anxiety, and decreased academic performance among victims (Gaffney et al., 2019). Vocational high schools, characterized by diverse student populations and unique social dynamics, present particular challenges in bullying prevention and intervention (Mahapatro et al., 2025; Wang et al., 2020). Recent high-profile bullying cases in Indonesia have underscored the urgent need for systematic and effective approaches to address this issue in schools. For example, physical assaults among junior and senior high school students, some recorded and circulated on social media, have drawn national attention and highlighted the severe consequences of unchecked bullying (Wardah et al., 2024). These incidents emphasize that bullying is not merely harmless teasing but a serious problem requiring comprehensive prevention strategies.

Research indicates that bullying in vocational schools manifests in various forms, including verbal, physical, and cyberbullying, with causes rooted in individual, familial, and social factors (Wardah et al., 2024; Rohmana et al., 2020). Adolescents' developmental stage, including emotional regulation difficulties and peer pressure, further complicates prevention efforts (Rohmana et al., 2020; Sarfika et al., 2025). Additionally, the rise of social media has amplified bullying behaviors by providing anonymity and a platform for rapid dissemination of harmful content, making detection and intervention more challenging (Wardah et al., 2024). One major obstacle identified in vocational schools is the trivialization of bullying by students themselves, who often perceive it as joking or normal peer interaction rather than harmful behavior (Wardah et al., 2024). This perception creates a barrier to prevention efforts, as victims may be reluctant to report incidents and perpetrators may not recognize the severity of their actions. Educators and counselors also face challenges in changing these attitudes and fostering a school culture that does not tolerate bullying.

To address these challenges, schools have begun implementing multi-faceted prevention programs that include socialization and training components. Socialization efforts aim to raise awareness about the forms and consequences of bullying, while training programs equip students, teachers, and staff with communication, empathy, and conflict resolution skills (Chan et al., 2015; Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). Moreover, integrating technology such as WhatsApp hotlines for confidential reporting has shown promise in improving incident management and encouraging victim support (Wardah et al., 2024). Cultural and religious values also play a crucial role in shaping students' attitudes and behaviors toward bullying. In

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Indonesian Islamic educational contexts, principles such as empathy, solidarity, respect for diversity, and fairness are emphasized to build character and foster inclusive school environments (Järvisalo et al., 2024; Sholeh, 2023). Collaborative initiatives involving government bodies, schools, parents, and organizations like UNICEF demonstrate the effectiveness of comprehensive, community-based approaches in reducing bullying and promoting positive school climates (Wardah et al., 2024; Simms-Ellis et al., 2025). Given the complexity of bullying behavior and its deep-rooted causes, this study aims to explore the challenges and solutions related to bullying prevention in vocational high schools in Banjarmasin, Indonesia. By focusing on socialization and training strategies, this research seeks to contribute to the development of effective policies and programs that create safer, more supportive educational environments conducive to students' academic success and personal growth.

## 2. Method

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore bullying prevention efforts in vocational high schools. Participants included guidance counselors, teachers, and students from SMK Favorit Pungging Indonesia. Data collection involved semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. Thematic analysis was used to identify key challenges, strategies, and perceptions regarding bullying prevention. Ethical considerations included informed consent and confidentiality.

## 3. Result and Discussion

The program "Transforming Vocational Schools: Socialization and Motivation for Effective Bullying Prevention" at SMK Favorit Pungging was implemented through a series of socialization activities, training sessions, and motivational reinforcement involving the entire school community. The main findings from the implementation of this program are as follows:

- **Increased Awareness and Understanding:**

Through socialization involving students, teachers, and parents, there was a significant increase in understanding of various forms of bullying, their impacts, and the importance of prevention. Workshops and interactive discussions helped participants realize that bullying is not merely "joking around" but a behavior with serious psychological and social consequences.

- **Internal Student Motivation:**

Motivational sessions delivered by counselors and external speakers encouraged students to report bullying cases and become agents of change within the school environment. Students also participated in peer support programs, where they supported each other and fostered a culture of mutual respect.

- **Implementation of Preventive Strategies:**

The school implemented various strategies, such as establishing a safe reporting system (e.g., WhatsApp hotline), training teachers on handling bullying cases, and strengthening clear rules and sanctions. These activities were reinforced by integrating character values into the curriculum and involving parents in anti-bullying education.

- **Changes in School Climate:**

After the program was conducted, internal surveys indicated a decrease in reported bullying incidents and an increase in students' sense of safety and engagement in school activities. Relationships among students became more positive and inclusive, with greater participation in anti-bullying initiatives. The results of the program implementation show that transforming the culture of vocational schools for bullying prevention requires a holistic approach involving all school elements. Key points from this discussion include:

a. Effective socialization not only increases knowledge but also shapes new perceptions that bullying is a serious issue that must be prevented together. These activities should be conducted regularly and innovatively so that anti-bullying messages remain ingrained among students and teachers.

b. Strengthening students' internal motivation has proven effective in reducing bullying behavior. Through motivational approaches, students are encouraged to develop empathy, courage, and care for others. Peer support programs and student leadership training enhance their roles as pioneers of change.

c. Successful prevention programs involve collaboration between schools, families, and the community. Parental involvement through workshops and intensive communication helps extend anti-bullying messages to the home environment. Trained teachers become role models and key facilitators in creating a safe and supportive learning environment.

d. Regular evaluations through surveys, group discussions, and incident reports serve as the basis for adjusting prevention strategies. Program adaptations are made based on feedback from students, teachers, and parents, ensuring interventions remain relevant and effective in facing the social dynamics of vocational schools.

### **Positive Impact on School Climate:**

The transformation of school culture through this program has resulted in increased feelings of safety, open communication, and the reinforcement of character values. Students are more confident in reporting bullying cases and demonstrate more respectful behavior, contributing to a conducive and inclusive learning environment.

The transformation of vocational schools in bullying prevention at SMK Favorit Pungging confirms that real change can occur through consistent socialization, motivational reinforcement, and collaborative strategies. This program can serve as a model for other schools to create a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment that optimally fosters students' character development.



Picture 1. Bullying Prevention

## **4. Conclusion**

Based on the implementation and evaluation of the "Transforming Vocational Schools: Socialization and Motivation for Effective Bullying Prevention" program at SMK Favorit Pungging, it can be concluded that effective bullying prevention requires an integrated approach involving all elements of the school community. Continuous socialization successfully increased awareness and understanding among all school members about the dangers of bullying and the importance of creating a safe and inclusive environment. Strengthening students' internal motivation through training, mentoring, and peer support programs proved effective in encouraging positive behaviors and the courage to report and prevent bullying. Collaboration among teachers, students, and parents is a key factor in building a supportive, open, and responsive school culture toward bullying issues.

The systematic implementation of preventive strategies, such as providing safe reporting channels, teacher training, and integrating character values into the curriculum, had a tangible impact on reducing bullying incidents and improving the school climate. Regular evaluation and program adaptation based on feedback from all stakeholders ensure the sustainability and relevance of bullying prevention efforts in the vocational school environment. Therefore, this program can serve as a model for other schools to create a safe, inclusive, and conducive learning environment that optimally supports students' character development and academic achievement.

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