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REVIEW

Empathy's Crucial Role: Unraveling Impact on Students Bullying Behavior - A Scoping Review

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Abstract: Bullying behavior among students is a serious problem in the educational context and has an impact on victims and perpetrators. Bullying has serious impacts, both emotionally and psychologically, especially for victims who are vulnerable to stress, depression, and even in extreme cases, can lead to suicidal tendencies. Empathy is a key factor in responding to bullying situations. So empathy is an important aspect in reducing bullying behavior. The aim of this research is to explore the role of empathy in bullying behavior in students. The scoping review method was used in this research. The keywords used are empathy, bullying, and students. Search for articles in three databases, namely CINAHL, PubMed, and Scopus. The inclusion criteria in the article search were samples are students (elementary schools students until high schools students) English language, discussion of empathy, publication of articles in the last 10 years (2014–2023), and original research. Grey literature excluded in this scoping review. Data analysis using thematic analysis. The authors found 13 articles that discussed the influence of empathy on bullying behavior in students. Findings from the articles analyzed highlight the complexity of the interactions between affective and cognitive empathy and students behavior in the context of bullying. Students with high levels of empathy tend to be more active in defending victims of bullying, while low levels of empathy tend to reinforce bullying behavior or passive bystander attitudes. Intervention programs that include social and emotional skills training, awareness campaigns, and learning approaches that promote tolerance and respect for diversity can have the potential to reduce the incidence of bullying in students. Increasing understanding and empathetic responses can be an effective strategy in addressing bullying problems in schools and communities.

Keywords: bullying, empathy, students

Introduction

Bullying is persistent and deliberate aggressive behavior carried out by one or more individuals with the aim of dominating or injuring others who are considered weaker or vulnerable.[1] The problem of bullying among students covers various forms, including verbal, physical, relational and cyberbullying.[2] Bullying is a destructive social process, characterized by an imbalance of power influenced by social and institutional norms.[3] The process is often repetitive and manifests itself as unwanted interpersonal behaviors that cause physical, social, and emotional harm to the targeted individual or group, as well as the wider community.[4] Bullying can create an unsafe school environment, affect students' psychosocial well-being, and hinder the learning process.[5] This phenomenon often involves an inequality of power, with perpetrators using their dominance to harm victims. Bullying at school is a dominant social problem worldwide and refers to repeated attacks that cause physical and psychological harm to the victim.[6]

Data from the National Center for Educational Statistics (2016) shows that more than one in every five (20.8%) students report being bullied.[7] The International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) reports that 84% of Indonesian children experience violence in the school environment.[8] The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) stated that in 2021 there were 42,540 confirmed cases of bullying globally and there were 2790 cases of bullying in Asia.[9] There are 40 countries where bullying cases have been reported, one of which is Indonesia, which is in first place in ASEAN

with 84% of bullying cases.[10] The number of cases of bullying in Indonesia (84%) is higher than Vietnam (79%), Nepal (79%), Cambodia (73%), and Pakistan (43%).[11] In a survey conducted by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), 50% of students aged 13–15 years in Indonesia experienced bullying at school.[12]

The impact caused by this action is very wide in scope. Teenagers who are victims of bullying are more at risk of experiencing various health problems, both physically and mentally.[13] The problems that are more likely to be suffered by children who are victims of bullying include the emergence of various mental problems such as depression, anxiety and sleep problems.[14] The mental health problems can carried over into adulthood, physical health complaints, such as headaches, stomach aches and muscle tension, feeling unwell, safe when in the school environment, and decreased enthusiasm for learning and academic achievement.[15]

The occurrence of bullying among students can be influenced by a number of complex factors. Environmental factors such as a school culture that supports or even allows aggressive behavior, as well as a lack of supervision in the school environment, create opportunities for bullies to act without restraint.[16] Interpersonal dynamics between students, such as intense competition or the formation of certain social groups, can also trigger bullying behavior.[17] Individual student factors, such as a lack of social skills or low levels of empathy, can increase the likelihood that they will engage in bullying behavior.[18] However, a factor that may play a crucial role is a lack of empathy for the perpetrators of bullying. Their inability to understand or feel the victim's emotions can be the basis of aggressive behavior, where the power of dominance is prioritized without considering the psychosocial impact that the victim may experience.[19]

Based on several studies, it has been found that there is a positive relationship between bullying behavior and low empathy abilities.[20,21] Increasing empathy skills can reduce bullying behavior. In addition, bullies are characterized by dominating others through violence, and they show little or no empathy for their victims. Bullies' inability to feel their victims' pain allows them to tell themselves lies to justify their behavior.[13,22] Additionally, previous research suggests that students with high levels of empathy are more likely to engage in advocacy by others during bullying situations at school. Most studies define empathy as understanding another person's emotions and sharing their emotional state.[23,24]

Empathy is one of the basic elements in a relationship, which is described as a multidimensional construct involving cognitive and affective (emotional) components.[25] Empathy is often defined as sharing feelings with another person emotionally. Empathy as the ability to know how other people feel.[26] Empathy as the ability to place oneself in the feelings or thoughts of another person without having to actually be involved in that person's feelings or responses.[27]

Empathy is a key component in understanding and addressing bullying behavior among students. It is important to distinguish between empathic responses to victims and empathy developed in perpetrators, as developing empathy in perpetrators can increase their emotional awareness and help them understand the negative impact of their actions.[28] Empathetic reactions from the surrounding environment can provide positive behavioral models and reinforce social norms against bullying, thus creating healthier social interaction dynamics and reducing the incidence of bullying in the school environment.[29] This study focuses on knowing the relationship between empathy and bullying behavior in students.

Previous research may show a lack of analysis of the role of empathy in the context of bullying behavior in adolescents, only focusing on bystander bullying rather than bullying behavior.[27,30] Previous research focused on the relationship between empathy and adolescent interpersonal relationships, not focusing on bullying behavior.[27] Additionally, some studies do not explicitly highlight the role of empathy in responses to bullying behavior, leading to a lack of thorough understanding of how empathy influences bullying dynamics.[30,31] Therefore, a scoping review that focuses on the role of empathy in bullying behavior among adolescents can fill this knowledge gap by providing a comprehensive analysis of existing literature and highlighting the importance of empathy in holistically addressing the problem of bullying among adolescents. Based on this, the aim of this scoping review is to explore the role of empathy in bullying behavior in students.

Materials and Methods
Design
The authors used a scoping review design to review empathy for bullying in students. This scoping review had a clear conceptual range to explore various findings that were in line with the research objectives. The authors used the

framework of Arksey and O'Malley, which defined a scoping review as a literature synthesis method used to present and identify the scope of research on a particular topic.[32] This method was more flexible, allowing the investigation of complex and diverse research issues. Scoping reviews aimed to describe research progress, identify knowledge gaps, and detail the conceptual framework of a topic. This approach involved systematic steps, such as detailing the research question, determining inclusion and exclusion criteria, conducting a comprehensive literature search, evaluating and managing the collected data, and presenting the findings in a systematic form. PRISMA Extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) was used by researchers as a guide developed to provide systematic guidance in reporting the results of scoping reviews.[33] The main function of PRISMA-ScR was to improve transparency and quality of reporting in research scoping reviews.

Search Methods

The databases used for searching articles are CINAHL, PubMed, and Scopus. Article searches using databases such as PubMed, CINAHL, and Scopus were chosen because of their respective strengths in providing scientific literature relevant to research on the relationship between empathy and bullying behavior. PubMed as a leading resource in the fields of medicine and health, provides access to significant medical and mental health research. CINAHL, which focuses on nursing and the health sciences, provides specific resources related to nursing and mental health. Meanwhile, Scopus provides cross-disciplinary coverage, covering literature from various fields of knowledge, including sociology, psychology, and education, which is important for a holistic understanding of social and behavioral aspects in the context of empathy and bullying. The combination of these three databases is expected to provide a comprehensive knowledge base to support the development of a more holistic conceptual framework and intervention solutions. The authors searched for articles in July-August 2023. The major keywords used in this research were "empathy" AND "bullying" OR "bullying act" OR "bullying behavior" OR "bullied" OR "bully" OR "bullies" AND "students". The question in this scoping review is what is the role of empathy in bullying behavior in students?

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The authors used the PRISMA flow diagram as a guide in searching for articles (Figure 1).[34] Previously, the authors determined the inclusion and exclusion criteria first to determine articles that met the research objectives. Apart from that, the authors also used PCC's framework to formulate a search strategy to answer the research objectives:

Patients: Students (elementary school students until high school students)

Concept: empathy

Context: Bullying Behavior, bullying act (among perpetrator and bystander)

Inclusion and exclusion criteria were determined by the authors to select articles. The inclusion criteria in this research are original research articles, research conducted on students, full-text, and the latest research, and period of publication is last 10 years (2014–2023) to get a new insight from previous study. The exclusion criteria applied in the article search were gray literature, only abstracts, and not discussing empathy for bullying.

Data Extraction

The data extraction process was carried out independently by two researchers who have expertise in their fields. Extracted data were selected by the authors to describe the findings that address the role of empathy in bullying behavior in students. Previously, a data extraction protocol had been created which included Title, Outcome, Country, Sample, Empathy variables, and Result. This research involved experts in the field to ensure the accuracy and relevance of the extracted data. When there are differences of opinion between researchers, discussion and deliberation efforts are carried out to reach a decision. If the debate could not be resolved in this way, then a third researcher was invited to carry out data extraction. This third author was invited to make additional assessments so as to agree on decisions in the data extraction process.
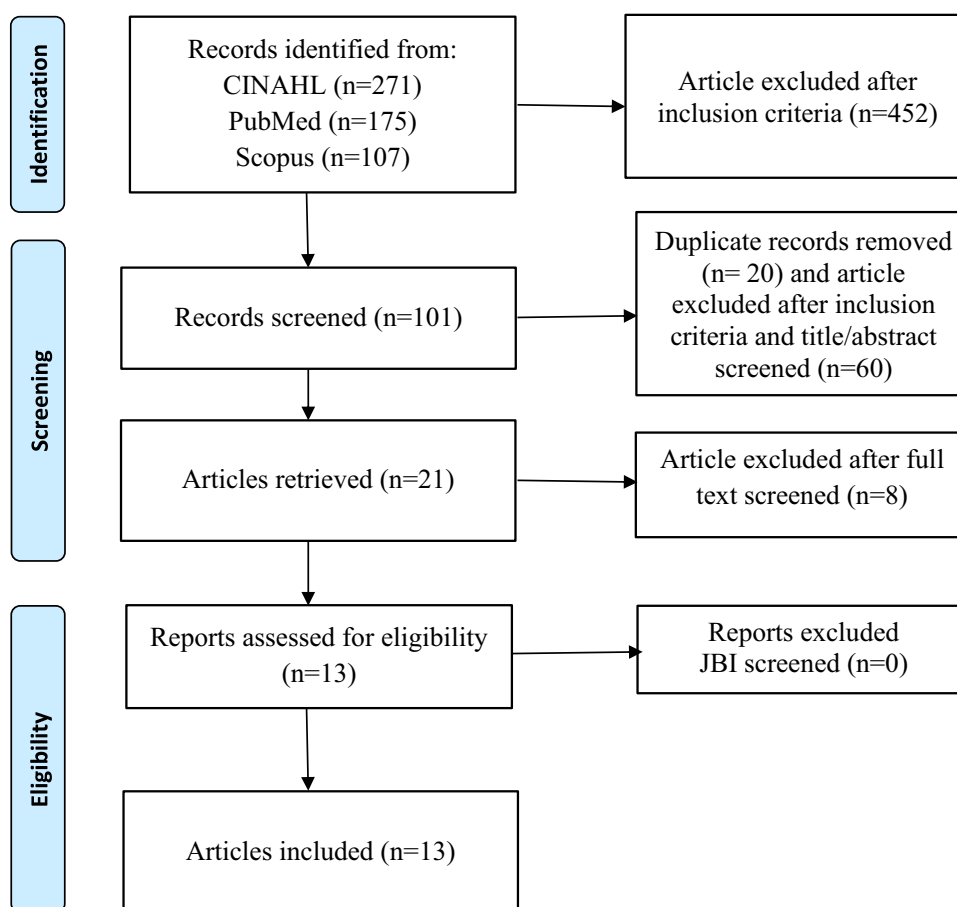
Figure 1 PRISMA Flow Diagram.
Notes: Adapted from Page MJ. The PRISMA 2020 statement: an updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ*. 2021; Available from: https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n71.[34].

Quality Appraisal

Quality appraisal or assessing the quality of studies was a critical stage for evaluating the reliability and acceptability of scientific evidence. This process used quality assessment instruments from the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI)JBI was chosen by the authors because it provides various assessments for various designs of previous research articles. The authors carried out an independent assessment of each statement in accordance with the design of the included articles in this scoping review. In general, assessments were carried out by considering a number of certain criteria. The quality appraisal process was carried out by 2 authors independently. If there was a debate between authors, deliberations and discussions were held to determine the decision. However, if there was no decision yet, the third author was invited to carry out a critical assessment using the JBI questionnaire. The standard JBI score in this scoping review was a minimum of 70%.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process in the scoping review using the thematic analysis method was carried out by two authors independently as a critical step in understanding and summarizing the main themes of the collected literature. Thematic analysis was used to describe the role of empathy in bullying behavior in students from included articles.[35] The first and second authors conducted initial coding of relevant quotations from the literature and then identified themes that emerged from the coding. The results of data analysis were in the form of broader categories, and themes were consolidated to form an organized analysis structure. Thematic analysis was conducted independently by both authors without prior interaction to ensure objectivity. Once the results of the independent analyses were obtained, the authors together compared their findings, sought consensus, and resolved disagreements. Intensive discussions helped in

identifying the most relevant and significant themes. This process culminated in the preparation of an analytical narrative detailing the main themes, categories, and key findings. Validation from other parties was also involved to ensure the accuracy and objectivity of the findings. Collaboration between researchers in this thematic analysis resulted in a robust and detailed interpretation of the surveyed literature, providing a comprehensive understanding that supported the research objectives of the scoping review. During data analysis, if there was disagreement between the two authors, then they conducted deliberation and discussion. If there was still no decision, a third author was invited to carry out data analysis. Based on the results of data analysis, the authors described the findings obtained.

Results

Based on the results of searching for articles in three databases, namely CINAHL, PubMed, and Scopus, the authors found 553 articles. After that, the authors eliminated articles based on inclusion criteria which included elimination of year of publication, sample, type of article, and research design. The authors found 101 articles after elimination of inclusion criteria. The authors screened duplicate articles using the Mendeley application, there were 20 duplicate articles. Then, the authors carried out elimination based on the title and abstract, the authors got 21 articles. Then, the authors carries out elimination by reading the full text to find out the content of the article. The authors found 13 articles that were in line with the research objectives and discussed empathy for bullying. Articles were assessed for quality using instruments from the Joanna Briggs Institute with a standard score of 70%.

Based on country characteristics,4 articles from the USA, 2 articles from Spain, 2 articles from Finland, 2 articles from Italy, 1 article from Mexico, 1 article from the Netherlands, and 1 article from Australia. The number of samples in this study was in the range of 108 to 6708 children and adolescents with an age range of 9.8 to 18.16 years, The sample is made up of students from elementary schools to high schools. The authors found that there are two types of empathy that influence bullying behavior, namely cognitive empathy and affective empathy.

Research results from a number of articles show that the level of empathy, both affective and cognitive, has a different impact on defensive or oppressive behavior. Additionally, factors such as popularity at school and relationships with peers also influence how teens respond to bullying situations. This shows the complexity of the interaction between individual characteristics, social environment, and adolescent behavior in the context of bullying (Table 1).

This research also highlights the influence of interpersonal relationships and emotional responses on the dynamics of social relationships among adolescents. Findings suggest that emotional responses such as empathy may moderate the relationship between the social environment and adolescent behavior, such as responses to bullying. In addition, the influence of popularity at school and involvement in friendships also plays a role in students' responses to bullying. These findings underscore the importance of understanding the complexity of interactions between individual and social environmental factors in understanding adolescent behavior in the context of bullying cases.

Affective empathy refers to a person's ability to feel and empathize with the emotions of others directly.[26,41,47] It involves the ability to perceive and feel the same feelings as those experienced by another individual, thereby creating a strong emotional connection between them.[36,40,44] For example, when someone sees someone who is suffering, they feel deep sympathy or sadness in response to the experience.[37,43] Affective empathy is often considered a strong emotional drive to help others and can motivate individuals to act proactively in helping those who need support.[38,42]

Meanwhile, cognitive empathy involves the ability to understand and interpret other people's feelings rationally and cognitively.[37,39,41] It involves the ability to identify and understand another person's perspective, even without feeling the same emotions they do.[42,46] For example, individuals with high levels of cognitive empathy may be able to understand the reasons behind someone's actions or feelings, even if they do not feel the same emotions.[43,44] This ability allows individuals to be more rational and objective in helping others, by considering the various factors and perspectives involved in a particular situation.[45,47]

Discussion

This research provides in-depth insight into how empathy plays a role in responses to bullying behavior on students, by analyzing 13 articles that reveal the relationship between empathy and bullying behavior among students. These findings highlight the complexity of the interaction between empathy, both affective and cognitive, and adolescent behavior in the

Table 1 Association of Empathy on Bullying Behaviors of 13 Studies Articles

No	Authors, Year	Outcome	Country	Sample	Empathy Variables	Result
1.	(Ma, 2020)[26]	This study aims to assess the readiness of adolescent bystanders to offer assistance and their specific responses, considering individual traits (such as gender, empathy, victimization experiences) and situational factors (including the bystander's relationship with the victim and the presence of other bystanders).	USA	730 seventh graders (49% girls, mean age 12.8 years)	affective	The findings demonstrate that while both individual traits (such as gender and empathy) and a situation-specific factor (the participant's relationship with the victim) influenced adolescents' readiness to assist, only individual traits determined their specific help actions, such as reporting to the teacher, intervening to stop the bully, and providing comfort to the victims.
2.	(Valdés-Cuervo et al, 2018)[36]	The study explored the connections between restorative parental discipline, family atmosphere, parental support, moral emotions (empathy and shame), and the involvement of defenders in instances of bullying.	Mexico	1224 adolescents were randomly selected (p =0.5, q= 95%); 54.1% were female, and 45.9% males with aged between 11 and 15 years old (M = 13.5, SD = 1.02)	affective	A structural equation model was computed, revealing that restorative parental discipline, family climate, and parental support were directly and indirectly linked to empathy, shame, and the inclination towards taking on a defender role in instances of bullying.
3.	(Fredrick et al, 2020)[37]	The study explored the relationships between cognitive empathy, affective empathy, internalizing problems, and the five steps of the bystander intervention model (noticing bullying events, interpreting them as requiring intervention, accepting responsibility for intervening, knowing how to intervene, and taking action).	USA	336 fourth and fifth grade students (58.9% boys)	Cognitive and affective	Affective empathy was found to significantly predict the act of intervention, with significant interactions indicating a positive association with perceiving bullying as requiring intervention at low and moderate levels of internalizing problems, but not at high levels.
4.	(Lucas-Molina et al, 2018)[38]	The study investigated whether the impact of empathy on children's roles in bullying scenarios - whether as bullies, defenders, or outsiders - was moderated by their social status in the classroom, and whether this moderation varied based on gender.	Spain	2050 Spanish primary school children (50.80% girls) from grades 3–6 (Mage = 9.80 years; SD = 1.24)	affective	The study found that while the effect of empathy on bullying behavior was moderated by sociometric ratings only in girls, both empathy and social ratings influenced defending behavior.
5.	(Smith, 2015)[39]	Examined empathetic distress associations with friendship quality, depression, and anxiety.	USA	Adolescents (N= 300, ages 12–18)	Empathetic distress, and empathetic joy	Results showed that girls reported higher levels of empathetic distress and empathetic joy compared to boys, suggesting that while empathetic distress may positively impact youths' friendship adjustment, it may negatively affect emotional well-being.

6.	(Nickerson & Mele-Taylor, 2014)[40]	Explored the connections between gender, empathetic responsiveness, perceived group norms, prosocial affiliations, and roles in bullying.	USA	262 fifth-through eighth-grade students (n = 141 males; n = 121 females, Mean Age=12.2)	Affective	Empathetic responsiveness significantly predicted defending behavior and inversely predicted outsider behavior, while gender also predicted defending behavior, with boys exhibiting a higher likelihood of defending compared to girls.
7.	(Peets et al, 2015)[41]	Explored if classroom norms regarding bullying would moderate associations between intra- (cognitive and affective empathy, self-efficacy beliefs) and interpersonal (popularity) factors and defending behavior.	Finland	6708 third- to fifth-grade children (49% boys; Mage=11 years)	Affective and cognitive	Multilevel modeling revealed that children were more likely to defend when experiencing affective empathy in high-bullying classrooms, while popular students were inclined to support victims in classrooms where bullying had social costs, emphasizing the importance of understanding interactions between individual and contextual factors in shaping defending behavior.
8.	(Pozzoli et al, 2017)[42]	Explored the links between various empathic dimensions and bystanders' actions in bullying situations.	Italy	398 adolescents (Mage = 12 years, 3 months, 47.2% girls)	Affective and cognitive	Path analysis confirmed both the direct and indirect effects, mediated by empathic anger, of empathic concern and perspective taking on bystanders' behavior, with the exception of the insignificant direct association between perspective taking and passive bystanding.
9.	(Ploeg et al, 2017)[43]	Anticipated that defending victims of bullying would not lead to an increase in perceived popularity among peers.	Finland	(N = 4209 students from 210 classrooms and 38 schools; Mage 11.25; 50% boys)	Affective and cognitive	Over time, affective empathy and students' self-efficacy beliefs predicted defending behavior, while cognitive empathy did not. Furthermore, defenders experienced an increase in popularity among their peers, with no significant differences found between victims and non-victims.
10.	(Estévez López et al, 2016)[44]	To investigate the connections between family and classroom environments and the development of individual characteristics such as empathy level, attitude towards institutional authority, and perceived social reputation, and how these traits may influence aggressive behavior.	Spain	1319 Spanish adolescents and 1494 Mexican adolescents	Affective and cognitive	The results generally showed that empathy level, social reputation, and attitude towards authority partially mediated the link between perceived environments at home and school and aggressive behavior among both boys and girls in both samples.

(*Continued*)

Table 1 (Continued).

No	Authors, Year	Outcome	Country	Sample	Empathy Variables	Result
11	(Rieffe & Camodeca, 2016)[45]	Aimed at gaining a better understanding of the individual differences contributing to feelings of empathy in adolescents	Italy	182 adolescents aged between 11 and 16	Affective and cognitive	The study revealed that higher levels of affective and cognitive empathy were associated with evaluating one's and others' emotions and receiving more defending nominations, whereas maladaptive emotion appraisal linked to internalizing symptoms was related to empathic distress, and outsider behavior was associated with a self-focused orientation, while more bullying was negatively correlated with cognitive empathy.
12	(Meuwese et al, 2017)[46]	To investigate how two forms of peer status, preference and popularity, are related to positive and negative friendship quality in mid-adolescence	Netherlands	430 (215 dyads of same sex best friends; 54% female) M aged= 11.91–18.16	Affective empathy, cognitive empathy, and prosocial motivation	The findings indicate that adolescents with friendships involving more preferred and popular peers report higher friendship quality, partially mediated by their own prosocial behavior and their friends' empathy levels. Additionally, higher levels of empathy in one's friends and one's own lesser preference for equity explain why adolescents are more satisfied in friendships with highly preferred peers.
13	(Ciarrochi et al, 2017)[47]	Empathy's impact on friendship is anticipated to be gender-dependent: girls are expected to nominate empathic boys as friends, while boys may not nominate empathic girls as frequently.	Australia	(1970 (993 boys, 977 girls with M aged= 15.70	Affective empathy, and cognitive empathy	Multilevel models revealed that boys high in cognitive empathy received 1.8 more girl friendship nominations than their low empathy counterparts, while empathic girls did not attract more opposite-sex friends; also, boys felt more supported by friends with increased nominations, unlike girls.

context of bullying. One of the main findings is that affective and cognitive empathy play an important role in determining defensive or bullying behavior. Adolescents with high levels of empathy, especially in terms of feeling and understanding other people's emotions, tend to be more active in defending victims of bullying and displaying other pro-social behavior.[28]

The age and level of cognitive and emotional development of students play an important role in how they express empathy and engage in bullying behavior. At the elementary school level, children are in the early stages of empathy development and are often still learning to understand others' perspectives.[48] At this stage, bullying behaviors may be simpler and related to the inability to understand the impact of their actions on others. At the middle school level, adolescents begin to develop more complex empathic abilities, but they also face greater social pressure and group dynamics that can increase bullying behavior.[49] Interventions at this level need to focus more on emotional management and interpersonal relationships. At the high school level, students have a more developed capacity for empathy and a better understanding of social norms, but bullying can become more covert and related to issues of identity and social acceptance.[50] Empathy training programs tailored to the needs and developmental levels of students at each school level can help reduce bullying behavior more effectively, given the significant differences in how empathy is understood and expressed at each developmental stage.[51]

Empathy plays an important role in responses to bullying behavior, with affective and cognitive empathy being a major focus in research on how individuals respond to and respond to bullying situations. Findings suggest that individuals with high levels of empathy tend to be more active in defending victims of bullying and displaying other pro-social behaviors, while individuals with low levels of empathy may be more likely to be bullies or passive bystanders.[52] The importance of empathy in determining responses to bullying is also reinforced by the finding that interventions aimed at increasing adolescents' empathy can reduce levels of bullying in the school environment.[53] However, the role of empathy does not only depend on individual characteristics, but is also influenced by contextual factors, such as family and school environments.[53] Therefore, to deal with bullying problems effectively, it is important to understand the complexity of the interactions between empathy, social environment, and adolescent behavior in the context of bullying cases.[30]

Empathy is a crucial aspect that witnesses of bullying incidents must possess. When witnesses have a high level of empathy, they are more likely to take action to prevent or stop bullying behavior. However, low empathy among witnesses can lead them to remain passive and do nothing, thus allowing bullying to continue without intervention.[54] This lack of empathy can be attributed to various factors, including a lack of education about the importance of empathy and the impact of bullying, as well as fear of retaliation from the perpetrator. In fact, intervention by empathetic witnesses can be highly effective in reducing or even stopping bullying, as their actions can provide emotional support to the victim and alter the social dynamics that support aggressive behavior.[55] Therefore, it is essential to enhance awareness and empathetic skills among witnesses through educational programs and training that focus on developing empathy and the courage to act in bullying situations.[56]

Affective empathy plays a key role in responses to bullying behavior, focusing on an individual's ability to feel and empathize with the emotions of a bullying victim. Research shows that individuals with high levels of affective empathy tend to be more sensitive to victims' emotional experiences and are more likely to actively defend them.[57] They respond empathetically to victims' plight and feel a strong urge to help them.[28] These findings confirm that building affective empathy can be an effective strategy in reducing levels of bullying in the school environment.[58] However, it is important to remember that affective empathy responses can also be a source of emotional distress for individuals, especially if they are consistently exposed to bullying situations.[59]

Cognitive empathy plays an important role in responses to bullying behavior, with an emphasis on an individual's ability to understand and interpret the feelings of others rationally and cognitively.[60] Individuals with high levels of cognitive empathy tend to be able to recognize and understand the perspective of a bullying victim, even though they may not feel the same emotions directly.[58] By understanding the victim's perspective, individuals who have a high level of cognitive empathy can feel motivated to act rationally in helping and supporting victims of bullying.[37] These findings suggest that improving cognitive empathy skills may be an effective strategy in reducing bullying behavior and

promoting pro-social responses among adolescents.[57] However, it is important to remember that cognitive empathy can also have limitations, especially if it is not accompanied by adequate affective empathy.

Additionally, research also highlights the role of contextual factors, such as family and school environments, in shaping empathic responses to bullying.[37] These factors may moderate the relationship between empathy and defensive behavior, by determining whether empathy will result in a positive response or not.[54] For example, a school environment that supports and promotes empathy can encourage adolescents to be more active in defending victims of bullying, while a less supportive environment can inhibit expressions of empathy and pro-social responses.[52]

Interventions to increase empathy for bullying are crucial in overcoming the problem of bullying in the school environment. Various intervention strategies can be used, including social and emotional skills training programs that aim to improve understanding and response to emotions, both affectively and cognitively.[61] These programs often involve teachers and school counselors providing training, discussions, and role-playing to help students develop their empathy.[62] Additionally, approaches that promote tolerance, respect for diversity, and cooperation among students can help create an environment that supports the growth of empathy.[29] The use of technology can also be an effective tool, with online bullying prevention programs and awareness campaigns designed to increase understanding of empathy and the negative impacts of bullying behavior.[63] It is important to ensure that these interventions are holistic and sustainable, and involve all stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers and school staff, to create lasting change in school culture that promotes empathy and reduces bullying.[64]

These findings have important implications for the development of effective anti-bullying interventions. Understanding the role of empathy in responses to bullying can help program developers to design more effective strategies for increasing youth empathy and reducing bullying behavior.[65,66] In addition, considering contextual factors, such as the family and school environment, is also important to create an environment that supports and promotes empathetic attitudes and pro-social responses in the face of bullying.[66,67] Thus, this research makes an important contribution to efforts to create safer and more inclusive environments for adolescents in schools and society in general.

Limitations

The limitation in this scoping review is that research is limited to the publication period of the last 10 years, even though the aim is to obtain the latest assessment, this research cannot be compared with previous studies. Then, the limitation of this research is that it does not discuss how much influence empathy has on bullying behavior, the researchers only explain the role of empathy on bullying behavior. This is also an important thing as an illustration for health workers to overcome the problem of bullying in teenagers.

Conclusion

The conclusions of this scoping review emphasize the importance of understanding the role of empathy in responses to bullying behavior among adolescents. We found 13 articles who discussed about the role of empathy in bullying behavior in students. Findings from various articles highlight the complexity of the interactions between affective and cognitive empathy and adolescent behavior in the context of bullying. Findings from various articles indicate that empathy, both affective and cognitive, plays a crucial role in determining defensive or bullying behavior. Students with high levels of empathy tend to be more active in defending victims of bullying and displaying other pro-social behavior, while low levels of empathy tend to reinforce bullying behavior or passive bystander attitudes. The interaction between empathy and contextual factors, such as family and school environments, is also highlighted, with environments that support and promote empathetic attitudes helping to reduce levels of bullying.

The implications of this research highlight the importance of developing intervention programs that focus on increasing youth's understanding and empathetic responses to bullying. These programs can include social and emotional skills training, awareness campaigns, and learning approaches that promote tolerance and appreciation for diversity. Additionally, this research highlights the need to involve all stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, and school staff, in designing and implementing effective anti-bullying interventions. In the context of bullying problems in various countries, a culture-based empathetic approach is needed in a country to overcome bullying problems.

Suggestions for future research are to continue exploring how contextual factors, such as family and school environments, moderate the relationship between empathy and adolescent behavior in the context of bullying. Additionally, more longitudinal research could be conducted to evaluate the long-term effectiveness of anti-bullying interventions that focus on increasing youth empathy. Further studies could also explore the role of technology in supporting and increasing empathy and responses to bullying among adolescents. Apart from that, empathy-based interventions are also needed to reduce bullying behavior in adolescents.

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