

Leveraging Javanese Proverbs in Video Media to Strengthen Anti-Bullying Attitudes in Vocational Schools

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Abstract

Bullying remains a pervasive issue in schools, impacting students' academic performance, emotional well-being, and social development. This study explores the integration of Javanese proverbs (*unen-unen*) through video-based media as a contextual approach to anti-bullying education at SMK Brawijaya Ponorogo. Utilizing a descriptive quantitative method, the research involved 17 eleventh-grade students and employed observation sheets and questionnaires to assess their understanding of bullying concepts and the influence of Javanese proverbs on their social attitudes. Findings indicate that the video media effectively enhanced students' comprehension of bullying, with an average score of 4.35 for understanding bullying definitions and 4.47 for recognizing bullying as inappropriate. The proverbs fostered reflective attitudes, with 64.8% of students reconsidering their behavior toward peers. However, challenges arose for non-Javanese students due to unfamiliarity with the cultural context, necessitating adaptive strategies like group discussions to bridge understanding gaps. This approach not only improved students' moral awareness and rejection of bullying but also promoted cultural preservation and inclusive dialogue. The study underscores the potential of local wisdom-based education in creating transformative, culturally relevant learning experiences for addressing social issues in diverse school settings.

Keywords: Anti-bullying education, Javanese proverbs, Local culture, Video media

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1. Introduction

Bullying is a complex and systemic problem in schools, affecting not only the victims directly but also the social dynamics of the classroom and the overall learning climate. Bullying can take various forms, including physical, verbal, relational, and digital (cyberbullying) [1]. The impacts are devastating, ranging from decreased academic achievement to emotional distress and long-term trauma [2]. During adolescence, when students are in the process of developing their identity and strengthening their self-esteem, the experience of being a perpetrator, victim, or witness to bullying can have a significant impact on their moral and social development [3], [4]. Therefore, efforts to prevent bullying in schools must be systematic, comprehensive, and sensitive to the developmental circumstances of students [5]. One approach considered adequate is character education, which instils positive values in students from an early age. However, overly normative character education materials often feel distant from students' real lives and lack real-world relevance, making it challenging to foster reflective awareness [6]. Therefore, a contextual approach that utilises local cultural values is considered

more strategic for building emotional closeness and active student engagement [7].

Indonesia boasts a rich cultural diversity, and this cultural heritage holds various forms of moral values that have proven their relevance across generations. One such cultural treasure with potential for integration into learning is Javanese proverbs. Proverbs or *Unen-unen* are traditional proverbs or sayings that not only convey wise advice but also serve as a means of social control in community life [8]. In Javanese culture, "*unen-unen*" is used to convey subtle criticism, warnings, and guide someone in decision-making without offending [9]. Values such as cooperation, respect for others, and empathy for the suffering of others are deeply embedded in proverbs [10]. When proverbs is used in a learning context, particularly those related to social issues like bullying, students are encouraged not only to understand the literal meaning of the expressions but also to reflect on the values they contain [11]. Thus, the moral messages conveyed are not dogmatic but emerge from internal cultural understanding and experience [12]. This is a crucial pedagogical strength in supporting the goal of character education rooted in local culture.

The integration of Javanese proverbs in anti-bullying learning creates space for contextual, reflective, and meaningful learning [13], [14]. In this study, video media was used as a visual and auditory aid that conveyed proverbs in narrative and illustrative form, making it easier for students to digest. This video not only conveys information but also creates a social situation that enables students to identify and reflect on bullying in their everyday lives. When proverbs are linked to real-life cases in the form of sketches or stories, students more easily understand the relationship between cultural values and the social consequences of their behaviour [10]. This approach not only develops cognitive understanding but also fosters emotional sensitivity and social skills in students, enabling them to make informed decisions in social interactions [15]. Furthermore, the use of proverbs as an educational instrument also serves as an effort to preserve local culture, which is now beginning to be eroded by the current of modernisation [16]. This integration creates a synergy between cultural preservation and strengthening character education, making learning not only informative but also transformative in shaping ethical and cultured students.

Although the use of proverbs in learning has great potential, the reality on the ground shows that the effectiveness of this approach is not without challenges, particularly related to the diversity of students' cultural backgrounds [17]. In a multicultural school environment like SMK Brawijaya Ponorogo, some students come from outside Java and are not yet familiar with local cultural values such as *unen-unen*. This creates gaps in understanding, both in terms of language, social context, and the symbolic meanings contained in the Javanese proverbs. Some students have difficulty interpreting the intended moral messages conveyed, because not all uses of direct or literal diction are, but are often metaphorical and contextual. To overcome this obstacle, learning strategies that are responsive to diversity are needed, such as the use of additional explanations, cross-cultural group discussions, and joint reflective activities. In practice, collaboration between Javanese and non-Javanese students has been shown to create a healthy and inclusive dialogue space. Students from local cultures can act as explainers or facilitators for their peers, which in turn not only strengthens shared understanding but also fosters mutual respect for cultural differences. Thus, the integration of Javanese proverbs not only provides value enrichment but also contributes to the creation of a collaborative and tolerant learning environment.

Bullying in schools has become not only a personal crisis for individual students but also a systemic educational issue that disrupts learning environments, affects school climate, and challenges educators to reimagine moral education. The rise of digital communication has further complicated bullying

dynamics, with cyberbullying now prevalent alongside traditional forms [1]. This phenomenon underscores the need for preventive and holistic educational strategies that are both theoretically grounded and practically relevant. During adolescence—a critical phase for identity development and moral socialization—students are highly impressionable and often navigate complex peer relationships. Therefore, anti-bullying education must aim beyond informing students about what constitutes bullying; it should also cultivate reflective moral judgment, emotional intelligence, and social responsibility [18], [19].

Character education is often seen as the moral arm of schooling, expected to inculcate values such as empathy, integrity, and respect. However, critiques of traditional character education note its prescriptive and often moralistic tone, which can result in superficial acceptance without deep internalization [20]. In many cases, students perceive these lessons as abstract or disconnected from their daily lives, reducing their impact. To address this, scholars have advocated for a shift from decontextualized value transmission to contextual moral learning, in which values emerge from culturally and socially grounded experiences. Such an approach aligns with constructivist theories of learning, which suggest that meaning is actively constructed when new information connects with prior knowledge, cultural background, and real-world contexts.

The incorporation of local cultural wisdom, particularly proverbs, presents a compelling model for contextual character education. Proverbs function as concise yet powerful carriers of moral insight, encapsulating generational experiences, ethical dilemmas, and collective memory. In Javanese culture, *unen-unen* operate not merely as idiomatic expressions, but as social instruments that mediate behavior, resolve conflicts, and signal moral expectations [21], [22]. These expressions are laced with metaphor, indirectness, and layered meanings, which invite contemplation rather than compliance. The ethical values contained in Javanese proverbs are deeply relational, emphasizing social harmony, empathy, and respect. When introduced in learning environments, *unen-unen* can serve as a mirror for students to reflect on their own behavior and relationships within the school community.

The pedagogical potential of proverbs increases significantly when coupled with media-based learning tools, especially video. Video media offers multimodal affordances—visual, auditory, narrative—that can animate cultural expressions like proverbs, making them more relatable and engaging for modern learners [23]. Videos can illustrate not only the literal interpretation of a proverb but also its application in real-life contexts through dramatization, storytelling, and character development. For students who may struggle with abstract moral concepts or metaphorical language, videos can provide scaffolding through visual

cues and emotional narratives. This aligns with dual coding theory, which posits that information presented both verbally and visually enhances comprehension and memory retention. Thus, video-based instruction serves as a bridge between the symbolic depth of proverbs and the cognitive needs of contemporary students.

In addition, video media supports inclusive pedagogy, particularly in culturally diverse classrooms. In many Indonesian schools, including SMK Brawijaya Ponorogo, students come from various ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. While Javanese proverbs may resonate deeply with native Javanese students, others may struggle to grasp their meanings due to linguistic unfamiliarity or cultural distance [24]. Here, the challenge lies in making cultural learning accessible without diluting its authenticity. This requires teachers to adopt adaptive strategies such as pre-video cultural briefings, guided group reflections, and peer mentoring. As noted by [25], effective multicultural education does not avoid cultural difference—it embraces it as a resource for learning. In such a setting, students can co-construct meaning through dialogue, with Javanese students offering explanations that reinforce their own understanding while helping non-Javanese peers engage with the material meaningfully.

Moreover, the integration of *unen-unen* within anti-bullying education addresses two critical objectives simultaneously: fostering ethical behavior and promoting cultural sustainability. As globalization accelerates and youth are increasingly influenced by mass media and digital culture, local traditions risk marginalization. Embedding cultural wisdom in school curricula helps counter this trend by demonstrating the continued relevance of indigenous knowledge systems. Rather than treating culture as an artifact to be preserved passively, this approach revitalizes it through active participation, discussion, and reinterpretation. As [26] argues, culture becomes most potent when it is not only remembered but lived and reimagined within present social realities.

Based on these conditions, this research aims to explore two main focuses: first, to evaluate the extent to which educational videos based on Javanese proverbs can improve students' understanding of the concept of bullying; and second, to assess the extent to which the moral values within *unen-unen* can influence students' social attitudes toward bullying behavior in the school environment. This research positions local culture-based media as an alternative pedagogical approach that is not only informative but also transformative.

2. Methods (10 PT)

This research uses a descriptive quantitative approach. This approach aims to describe students' understanding of bullying after participating in a video lesson featuring Javanese proverbs. This study was not intended to test a hypothesis, but rather to systematically describe students' responses and levels of

understanding based on quantitative data. The study was conducted in June 2025 at SMK Brawijaya Ponorogo, a senior high school in Ponorogo. The target of this study was to explore bullying through video media, drawing on the Javanese concept of proverbs. The subjects were 11th-grade students. Seventeen students participated in this study per class.

The research instruments used included an observation sheet and a questionnaire. The observation sheet was used to record student activities during the learning process [27]. Aspects observed included engagement, attention, responses to video content, and social interactions in the classroom. Observations were conducted directly by the researcher using a checklist format. The questionnaire contained 10 statements regarding the concepts of bullying, Javanese proverbs, and media integration in student understanding. The questionnaire was designed as a multiple-choice or simple Likert scale with a score of 1-5 to objectively and quantitatively measure student understanding.

The research procedure was carried out in several stages: preparation, implementation, data collection, and data analysis. Preparation began with the creation of video media, as well as the development of questionnaire instruments and observation sheets. During the implementation stage, the research team presented material on bullying through a video featuring Javanese *unen-unen*, which was shown in a structured manner in class. Data collection was conducted through observations during the learning activities to record student activity and engagement. At the end of the learning activities, a questionnaire was administered to students. After data collection, the data from the observations and questionnaires were analyzed to determine students' level of understanding of bullying. The data obtained were analyzed descriptively quantitatively with the following steps: (1) Recapitulation of observation results in the form of percentage of attendance of student involvement indicators, (2) Scoring of student questionnaires, by giving a value to each response, (3) Categorization of student understanding levels (low, medium, high) based on the total questionnaire score obtained, and (4) Presentation of data in the form of tables and diagrams to facilitate interpretation of the results.

3. Results and Discussions (10 PT)

A. Respondent Characteristics

This study involved 17 eleventh-grade students at SMK Brawijaya Ponorogo. The respondents ranged in age from 15 to 20, representing the age group from late adolescence to early adulthood. During this age range, students are generally in the process of forming their self-identity, developing moral values, and expanding their social understanding, making these subjects relevant to studies on character education, particularly

in the context of anti-bullying education. The following graph depicts the respondent data.

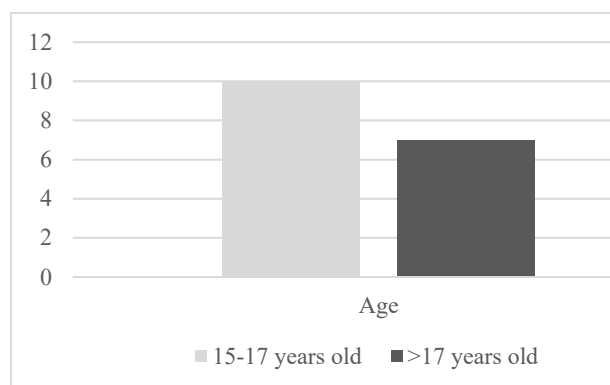


Figure 1. Respondent criteria based on age

The majority of respondents were male, consistent with the observed class characteristics. Cultural diversity was also evident in the student body, with several students from outside Java. This cultural difference creates a unique dynamic in the learning process, particularly when students are exposed to material containing local values, such as Javanese proverbs. This situation is significant in the context of this research because it highlights the challenges and opportunities involved in integrating local cultural values into inclusive and meaningful learning for students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

B. Observation Results

The majority of respondents were male, consistent with the observed class characteristics. Cultural diversity was also evident in the student body, with several students from outside Java. This cultural difference creates a unique dynamic in the learning process, particularly when students are exposed to material containing local values, such as Javanese proverbs. This situation is significant in the context of this research because it highlights the challenges and opportunities involved in integrating local cultural values into inclusive and meaningful learning for students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Based on observations of the use of Javanese proverbs videos in anti-bullying lessons at SMK Brawijaya Ponorogo, most students responded positively to the learning activities. When the videos were shown, students paid close attention, demonstrating interest and enthusiasm in the material presented. This was demonstrated by their active participation, such as asking questions and providing positive comments throughout the learning process.

Although most students were able to follow the material well, some challenges arose related to their cultural backgrounds. Some students from outside Java struggled to understand the content of the advice, particularly regarding the language and implied cultural meanings. This hampered their ability to relate the video

content to their personal experiences or their surroundings. However, these challenges were overcome through group discussions, where native Javanese students helped explain the meaning of the advice to their peers from other regions. This collaboration demonstrated a spirit of cooperation and strengthened cross-cultural understanding in the classroom.

During the question-and-answer session, students provided appropriate and logical answers related to the video content. They demonstrated the ability to distinguish between bullying behaviour and casual joking and were able to identify various types of bullying. This demonstrates that the video lectures were not only effective in conveying cultural messages but also successfully instilled educational values regarding bullying.

Although the classroom atmosphere was generally conducive, there were a few moments where students, all male, exhibited unruly behaviour such as pushing each other during discussions, which caused slight disruptions in focus. However, these disruptions were short-lived and were managed by the teacher.

Students were also able to retain the content of the lectures conveyed through the videos, indicating that the medium used was quite effective in conveying learning messages. Furthermore, students' empathy for the issue of bullying was evident in their seriousness in watching the videos and during the discussions. They not only understood the moral message but also demonstrated attitudes that reflected their rejection of bullying.

C. Questionnaire Data Interpretation

1) Understanding the Concept of Bullying

Participants' understanding of the concept of bullying is a crucial aspect in preventing such acts in the school environment. The first four questions in the questionnaire measured respondents' understanding of the definition of bullying, their ability to distinguish it from teasing, and their rejection of bullying behaviour after watching the educational video. The results from this group of questions provide an initial overview of the video's effectiveness in building basic awareness about bullying; the data is presented in Figure 2.

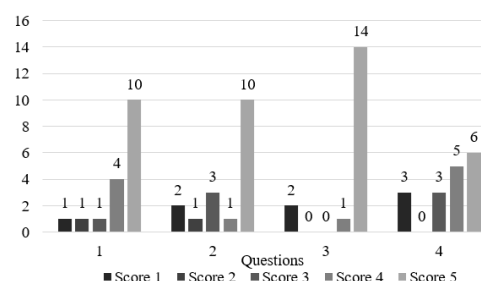


Figure 2. Question Chart for Understanding Bullying

Statement 1, "I understand what bullying is after watching the video," received an average score of 4.35 on a scale of 1 to 5. Fourteen respondents (82.3%) agreed with statement 1, while the remainder stated they did not understand. Three respondents (17.7%) of the total were children from outside Java, so they did not understand the context of bullying conveyed through the Javanese unen-unen. From this data, it is clear that most respondents felt the video effectively conveyed the definition of bullying. The high average score indicates that the video provided a basic understanding of the concept of bullying, including recognising that this act involves repeated verbal, physical, or psychological violence.

Statement 2, "I can distinguish between joking and bullying," received an average score of 3.94. Of the 17 respondents, 11 (64.7%) assessed themselves as able to distinguish between joking and bullying, while three (17.6%) chose a neutral answer, and three (17.6%) stated they were not yet able to do so. Despite the relatively high scores, the greater variation in responses suggests that some respondents still struggle to distinguish between joking and bullying. This highlights the need to emphasise the distinction between healthy joking and covert bullying.

Statement 3 is "I feel that bullying is wrong and inappropriate." With an average score of 4.47, 15 of the 17 respondents (88.2%) agreed with statement 3, but 2 chose to disagree. This statement received one of the highest scores. This indicates that after watching the video, the majority of respondents had a firm stance against bullying. This also reflects the success of conveying the moral message and the value of empathy for others.

Statement 4 is "After watching the video, I am more sensitive to bullying around me." With an average score of 3.65, 11 respondents (64.8%) agreed with this statement, while 3 (17.6%) chose neutral, and the remaining 3 (17.6%) disagreed. Awareness of bullying in the community has increased, but not as much as theoretical understanding. This suggests that there is potential for improvement in fostering proactive attitudes and social sensitivity through real-life experiences or further discussions.

2) Understanding of Javanese Proverbs

As part of the local cultural introduction, the videos shown featured several Javanese unen-unen aimed at instilling moral values. Two questions in the questionnaire were designed to determine the extent to which students understood the content of the unen-unen and their understanding of the types of unen-unen presented. Analysis of this group provided insight into the respondents' cultural background and their readiness to receive local wisdom-based moral education materials. The following data is presented in Figure 3.

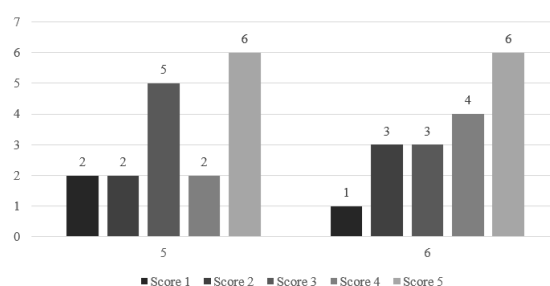


Figure 3. Question Chart for Understanding of Javanese proverbs

The data description will continue from the previous discussion point. Question 5, "I found this Javanese unen-unen video easy to understand," had an average score of 3.47. The data obtained showed that eight respondents (47.1%) stated that they understood the context of the video, while five respondents (29.4%) chose a neutral position, and four respondents (23.5%) disagreed. Understanding of the unen tended to be moderate. Some respondents may have had difficulty understanding the language, philosophical meaning, or cultural context of the proverbs presented. This suggests the need for an additional explanation or cultural introduction before playing the video.

Question 6, "I understand the Javanese proverbs discussed in the video," had an average score of 3.65. Ten respondents (58.8%) agreed with this statement, three respondents (17.6%) chose a neutral position, and four respondents (23.6%) disagreed. Their prior knowledge or introduction to the proverbs discussed was relatively adequate, but not comprehensive. Efforts are still needed to connect local wisdom to the context of modern life, so that its meaning becomes more relevant and deeply understood by the younger generation.

3) Integration of Javanese Proverbs on Bullying in the Media

The integration of cultural values into modern social issues, such as bullying, represents an innovative approach to character education. The following two questions assessed how the Javanese proverbs in the video influenced respondents' perspectives on social behaviour and the extent to which they considered these 'unen-unen' relevant for inclusion in school curricula. The results reflect respondents' views on the power of traditional values in shaping social awareness. The data are presented in Figure 4.

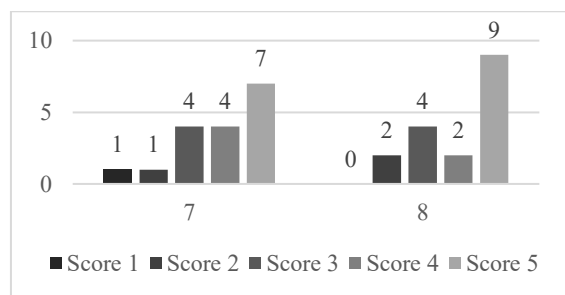


Figure 4. Question Chart for Integration of Javanese Proverbs on Bullying in the Media

The data for statement 7, "The Javanese proverbs values in the video made me reconsider my behaviour towards friends," had an average score of 3.88. Eleven respondents (64.8%) agreed with this statement, while four (23.5%) chose a neutral response. Two other respondents (11.7%) disagreed. This data indicates that unen-unen containing social values (such as mutual respect and empathy) can stimulate students' self-reflection. Although not yet fully established, most students are beginning to reexamine their social attitudes in everyday interactions.

The data for statement 8, "I feel Javanese proverbs can be used for moral learning in schools," had an average score of 4.06. Eleven respondents (64.8%) agreed with this statement, four (23.5%) chose a neutral response, and two (11.7%) chose to disagree. This indicates that respondents view proverbs values not only as a cultural heritage but also as an effective source of moral learning. This opens up opportunities for integrating culture-based character education into the school curriculum that is rooted in local culture.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the use of Javanese unen-unen-based video media in anti-bullying learning at SMK Brawijaya Ponorogo improved students' understanding of the concept of bullying and fostered moral awareness regarding social literacy in the school environment [28]. This finding aligns with a study by [29], which found that the presentation of animated videos increased students' knowledge of bullying, from a previous lack of understanding of the forms and types of bullying and their impacts. Furthermore, a study by [30], found that the application of educational video media on bullying increased knowledge, with 95.9% of respondents demonstrating a good level of knowledge about bullying.

Observations revealed that students demonstrated active attention and participation throughout the learning process. They were able to remember the content of the proverbs presented and demonstrated an understanding of its moral message. This finding supports the opinion [31], as is the tradition among many tribes and ethnic races in Indonesia, the meaning of words in proverbs was created to convey advice from

the elderly to the younger generation or from the government to their people. Proverbs also contains cultural meanings that implicitly require a broad and deep understanding. Furthermore, group discussions between students from different cultural backgrounds demonstrate that local culture-based learning also fosters inclusive cross-cultural dialogue. As noted by [32] communication based on local wisdom strengthens social resilience in diverse contexts.

However, the main challenge faced is the gap in understanding among non-Javanese students who are unfamiliar with the symbolism and context of unen-unen. This aligns with the findings of [33], who noted that learning activities such as storytelling and group discussions must be not only culturally relevant to students but also responsive to the needs and diversity of their environment. Therefore, a differentiated and adaptive approach is essential, for example, by providing an introduction to cultural context, strong narrative visualization, and facilitating intercultural dialogue in the classroom.

Thus, the results of this study demonstrate that integrating Javanese proverbs into learning is not only relevant for improving conceptual understanding of bullying but also capable of creating a meaningful, reflective, and tolerant learning space. In the future, similar strategies can be extended to other social themes by considering the cultural diversity of students as an integral part of the learning design.

4. Conclusions

This research demonstrates that integrating Javanese proverbs (unen-unen) into video learning media has a positive impact on enhancing students' understanding of the concept of bullying and fostering moral attitudes in addressing bullying behavior within the school environment. Most students were able to identify forms of bullying, distinguish between joking and bullying, and demonstrate rejection of such behavior after participating in video-based learning. The moral values within proverbs, such as empathy, mutual respect, and social responsibility, encouraged students to reflect on themselves and interact more civilly with others. Despite challenges related to students' cultural differences, particularly for those from outside Java, collaborative learning through group discussions proved to be an effective strategy for bridging this gap in understanding. This local wisdom-based learning not only contributes to achieving character education goals but also supports cultural preservation and the development of an inclusive learning environment rooted in national values.

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