

Changes in bullying behavior through agents of change using the balinese fable animation "Tat Twam Asi" in Jembrana regency

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Abstract

Bullying was a pervasive and urgent issue, often referred to as an iceberg phenomenon, with many cases remaining hidden beneath the surface. Its consequences, including mental health deterioration, physical harm, and, in extreme cases, death, highlighted the critical need for effective intervention, particularly among adolescents. This study aimed to develop and evaluate the effectiveness of change agents—students empowered to influence

their peers—using the Balinese fable animation «Tat Twam Asi» to reduce bullying behavior in schools. A mixed-methods approach was employed. The qualitative phase focused on the development of change agents through animation media, emphasizing cultural relevance and student engagement. This was followed by a quantitative phase, involving 930 students across 23 selected schools. A one-group pre-test and post-test design was implemented to assess changes in students' understanding of bullying before and after the intervention. The analysis was conducted in two stages and statistical analysis using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test, following a normality test of the data. The intervention using the «Tat Twam Asi» animation significantly improved students' understanding of bullying. This improvement was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). The use of culturally grounded animation media to develop change agents proved effective in enhancing students' awareness and bullying prevention behaviors. This type of intervention had not previously been implemented in Indonesian elementary schools, particularly in Bali, and showed promising results.

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Key word: animation; media; bullying; Bali.

Conflict of interest: there is no potential conflict of interest among authors.

Ethical approval and consent to participate: this study was approved by the Ethics Committee of STIKes Buleleng, Indonesia (certificate 7670824-KEPK). During the study, the researcher paid attention to the ethical principles of information to consent, respect for human rights, beneficence and non-maleficence.

Availability of data and materials: research data were generated and analyzed during the study and included in this article.

Funding: this research was funded by the DRTPM Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia under the fundamental research scheme.

Acknowledgements: the author would like to express gratitude to the DRTPM Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia for facilitating the research funds that were provided so that this research was successfully carried out until it was published. The author also expresses gratitude to the Head of Buleleng Health Sciences for supporting the facilities provided during the data collection. Furthermore, the researcher did not forget to express thanks to the Principal of the Elementary School in Jembrana Regency as the sample for this research.

Received: 12 December 2024.

Accepted: 31 March 2024.

Early view: 8 April 2025.

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Healthcare in Low-resource Settings 2025; 12(s2):13494

doi:10.4081/hs.2025.13494

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Introduction

Bullying, a prevalent issue among Indonesian students, has become a permissive culture with serious consequences for victims.¹ It often involves intimidation and seniority, both physically and psychologically, making schools a primary setting for such incidents.^{2,3} Recognized as a mental health concern, UNICEF data from 2014 revealed that eight out of ten Indonesian children experienced bullying, ranking the country fourth in child violence cases.⁴ The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to reduce child violence by 2030 and improve adolescent mental health⁵. Bullying has evolved globally, extending into cyberbullying.⁶⁻⁸ Many bullies were once victims themselves, learning intimidation through personal experiences.^{9,10} The contributing factors include school and social environments, peer influence, family dynamics, personality, and media exposure.¹¹⁻¹⁵ Jembrana Regency, with its diverse cultural and religious backgrounds, is particularly vulnerable, with reported cases in Bali. However, the absence of specific reporting tools makes it difficult and ineffective to address bullying.

Trend data from 2025 to 2020 show that the prevalence of bullying incidents in Indonesia has decreased from 50% to 41% of bullying cases in schoolchildren aged 15 years. These data indicate that the rate of bullying among school children in Indonesia remains relatively high.¹⁶⁻¹⁸ A 2016 study in Buleleng Regency showed that 53% of students in elementary, junior high, and senior high schools experienced verbal bullying from fellow students and school authorities, such as insults and derogatory remarks, from both fellow students and school authorities.¹⁹ Research in the Jembrana Regency found that 64.1% of children had experienced

bullying.⁹ Indonesian children face bullying emergencies with serious consequences if they are untreated. Reports have shown potential impacts, including decreased academic performance, suicide, smoking, drug use, alcohol consumption, and criminal activity.¹ This has also contributed to the increasing number of juvenile crimes.

Efforts and regulations to address bullying without early childhood prevention education remain insufficient, as both victims and perpetrators are children, requiring unique intervention approaches. Psychoeducation, empathetic therapy, picture storybooks, reproductive health education, and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT)-based counseling have been proven effective in reducing bullying behaviors in children.^{20–25} Programs like «Dat-e Adolescence» help reduce sexual harassment, while «Serious Games» enhance strategies against cyberbullying, fostering awareness and empathy.²⁶ In Indonesia, bullying prevention models include self-esteem building,²⁰ design thinking,²⁷ education, posters, games,¹ counselling booklets²⁸ and the «Roots» program, which targets junior high and high school students through online anti-bullying campaigns facilitated by UNICEF and the Peduli Indonesia Foundation.²⁹ Additionally, *The Sistem Informasi Anti Perundungan* (SIAP) program, currently in testing, aims to establish a student database for bullying reports in Buleleng Regency.³⁰ Globally, Spain's Cyberprogram 2.0, Cyberduca 2.0, and videogame raise awareness through interactive games,⁶ while Malaysia's Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) is also adopted in South Africa.⁵ In addition, machine learning aids in detecting cyberbullying through adolescent social media networks.³¹

One strategy to help children avoid bullying is to establish change agents among the students themselves. These change agents, drawn from the community, will introduce change through Balinese fables themed «Tat Twam Asi.» Fables are a long-standing tradition in Bali and are often conveyed through storytelling. These fables incorporate Balinese culture and folklore, conveying moral messages about good and bad behavior. They also aim to increase awareness of Balinese heritage among younger generations, which is gradually being neglected. The culture of storytelling is overshadowed by cartoons and animation. The rationale for choosing Balinese fables and their alignment with the local cultural philosophy of «Tat Twam Asi» because in Balinese people have tradition name was «Mesatua» and this integrated with curriculum elementary school in Bali. Tat Twam Asi as one of cultural and general philosophy from Sanskerta language was mean tolerance and make peace live

Unlike previous research, this study focuses on elementary school students and applies a behavioral change agent approach to create a database for reporting and classifying bullying incidents in the Buleleng Regency. While aligned with UNICEF's Roots program, it uniquely integrates a Balinese fable-based module in a video format, making it the only bullying prevention initiative in Bali that incorporates local wisdom. Rooted in the Balinese philosophy of *Tat Twam Asi*—which means «I am You»—this approach emphasizes empathy and cultural relevance. Bullying contradicts this philosophy, highlighting the need for interventions that reflect local traditions. However, no existing programs utilize Balinese storytelling (*meSatua*) or animation to prevent bullying, thus presenting a research gap. This study introduces an innovative intervention using fable-based animation to foster behavioral change among students, reinforcing the values of *Tat Twam Asi*.

Material and Methods

Design, population, and sample

This study employed a mixed-methods design, beginning with a qualitative approach to developing Balinese fable animation media, followed by a quantitative phase to assess its impact. The qualitative stage involved expert reviews and small-scale trials to validate animation media before its implementation. The quantitative phase utilized a one-group pretest-post-test design to evaluate the effectiveness of behavior-change agents in reducing bullying behavior. The study was conducted across 23 elementary schools in the Jembrana Regency and was selected using cluster random sampling. A total of 930 students (aged 10–12 years) participated in this study. Each school selected two students as behavior-change agents and one teacher as a facilitator. These agents received training on bullying prevention using Balinese fable animation «Tat Twam Asi.»

Variables

This study included both the independent and dependent variables. Independent Variables: Implementation of the «Tat Twam Asi» animation media, participation in behavior change agent training, and facilitator involvement. Dependent Variables: Changes in students' knowledge, attitudes, norms, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and bullying behavior.

Development of animation media

The development phase involved collaborating with animation media experts to create characters and storylines. The script was developed and refined using feedback from content experts, media specialists, and elementary school students. Five student enumerators assisted with dubbing the animation. The final product underwent a media expert test involving two content experts, five media experts, and a trial with ten elementary school children aged 10–12 years. Content validity was assessed using Gregory's formula, with a threshold of >0.6.

Data collection procedures

Stage 1

Stage 1 begins with creating animation media, which involves conducting expert reviews. Coordinating with the Jembrana District Education Office: This includes all 23 schools in Jembrana District. Meeting with school principals: This meeting discusses the formation of behavior-change agents. Each school sent two representatives to receive the Balinese fable animation and assess their bullying behavior before and after the intervention. Forming behavior change agents: These agents will be deployed to schools to deliver the Balinese fable animation «Tat Twam Asi.»

Stage 2

Stage 2 involves deploying the change agents. Agents are deployed in 23 randomly selected schools, with a total of 930 respondents. Pre-test: A pre-test questionnaire was administered to assess knowledge, attitudes, norms, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and bullying behavior before the intervention. Intervention: Change agents implement the Balinese fable animation «Tat Twam Asi.» Post-test: A post-test questionnaire was administered to reassess the same variables as in the pre-test.

Data analysis

Qualitative-quantitative (stage 1)

After collecting content validity data from experts and users, a qualitative review was conducted on media improvements for children aligning with their daily lives. This review assessed the validity in terms of content, language, visuals, and material delivery. Expert validity was evaluated using Gregory's formula with a score of >0.6 , and content expert validity was assessed using Lawshe's formula with the aim of $CVR >0.6$. The analysis involved two expert evaluations, two learner evaluations, and a small-group evaluation with 10 elementary school students. The questionnaire gathered feedback on media for improvement.

Before being designated as change agents, they underwent a pre-post questionnaire analysis using a one-group pre-test-post-test design. Normality tests were determined using a parametric test if the p-value was >0.05 ; otherwise, a non-parametric Wilcoxon test was used.

Quantitative (stage 2)

Quantitative analysis using pre- and post-intervention questionnaires assessed the media's effectiveness in the student group. After data collection, the prerequisites for the homogeneity and distribution of the research data were tested. The data was not normally distributed ($p < 0.05$), necessitating the use of the non-parametric Wilcoxon test to examine differences in bullying actions before and after implementing the Balinese Satua-based behavior change agent «tat twam asi.» To address potential shortcomings of the Wilcoxon test, researchers conducted univariate and bivariate analyses, and tested differences in each independent and dependent variable.

Ethical consideration

This study was approved by the Ethics Committee of STIKes Buleleng in Indonesia (KEPK ID 7670824).

Results

Stage 1: development of Balinese fable animation media

This research consists of two stages: the development of Balinese animation media used form behavioral change agents and teacher facilitators. The result of developing the media used Balinese Satua animation. The e-module provided during the behavioral change agent and teacher facilitator training used a flip PDF-based e-module. The media can be accessed online, where viewers can directly watch the Balinese Satua animation used for forming the change agent.

The results of the media expert test show that the Balinese Satua animation was evaluated by two media experts, yielding a Gregory test validity score of 0.78, indicating high validity for the media tested by a Balinese media expert. After the media expert test, the researcher also conducted a content or subject matter expert test for the Balinese Satua animation. The content expert test results showed that expert 1 found the clarity of voice and the accuracy of writing and information in the animation video to be somewhat lacking. Furthermore, expert 2 noted that the accuracy of the writing and information in the animation video, as well as the layout and design, were still somewhat inadequate.

From the calculation above, a result of 0.78 was obtained, indicating that the media has high validity based on the expert evaluation.

Following the media expert test, the researcher also conducted a content test, which was analyzed by four experts in their respective fields, including psychology and psychiatric nursing experts. The results showed a CVR value of >0.6 .

The form of the developed media is an e-module, which also includes the Balinese Satua animation to help clarify students' understanding in bullying prevention. This module starts with a cover that depicts the characters in the animation story. It is followed by a certification page and module content. Each module contains a Balinese Satua animation video related to bullying prevention.

Based on the validity results from the media and content experts, the behavioral change agents were then formed. These change agents were created in accordance with the planned sample size, forming 46 change agents from 23 schools.

The analysis results in Table 1 show that the average age of a behavioral change agent is 11 years, with the majority being female, accounting for 69.6%. Most of the participants are in grade 5, comprising 60.9%. The pre-test results, or the test given before participating in the behavioral change agent training, had an average score of 81.3. After receiving the training, the score increased to 82.6. This indicates that the participants, as behavioral change agents, have improved their understanding of bullying in schools, peer relationships, and the actions they can take as behavioral change agents through the Balinese Satua animation media.

Stage 2: media effectiveness test

This stage began with the formation of Behavioral Change Agents in 23 schools, with each school sending 2 students, resulting in 46 behavioral change agents for this study. The results of the univariate analysis and effectiveness test of the training show that most of the behavioral change agents were in the age range of 11 years, with the majority being female at 69.6%. Of the selected agents, 60.9% were in grade 5, and 39.1% were in grade 6. The criteria for participating as a change agent in the selected schools were that two students from either grade 5 or 6 had to be chosen.

Next, a knowledge difference test was conducted before and after becoming a change agent, following a normality test of the data. The results showed a p-value of <0.05 , indicating that the data did not follow a normal distribution. Therefore, the analysis used was the Wilcoxon test.

The knowledge difference test before and after participating in the Behavior Change Agent program reports the results of the knowledge difference test before and after receiving training as a Behavior Change Agent (Table 2). The results were statistically significant with a p-value < 0.05 . Subsequently, an effectiveness test was conducted to assess the impact of Behavior Change Agents in schools. This stage aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the provided module and the formed agents. A total of 930 samples were collected, distributed across 23 schools according to the distribution data.

Table 3 reports that the majority of students in stage 3 are female, accounting for 55.1%. Most students are in the 6th grade of elementary school, making up 37.8%. Univariately, 32.7% of students reported having been victims of bullying at school, while 17.3% reported having been perpetrators of bullying. Next, the effectiveness of the pre- and post-tests was examined by comparing the conditions before the introduction of Behavior Change Agents and the *Satua Bali* animation module with the conditions after their implementation. Before conducting the analysis, a normality test was performed. The results indicated that the pre- and post-test data were not normally distributed, as the p-value was <0.05 . Therefore, a non-parametric test using the Wilcoxon analysis

sis was applied to assess effectiveness. The results in Table 4 indicate that students' understanding of bullying improved after the introduction of Behavior Change Agents and the *Satua Bali* animation module. The increase in understanding was observed compared to the period before these interventions. This result is also statistically significant, with a p-value < 0.05. This means that H0 is rejected, indicating a difference in students' understanding of bullying before and after the establishment of Behavior Change Agents using the *Satua Bali* animation in Jembrana District. Similarly, self-efficacy, attitudes, and self-esteem also showed statistically significant differences before and after the implementation of Behavior Change Agents, with a p-value < 0.05. The variables that simultaneously contributed to the improvement of anti-bullying behavior can be observed.

Table 5 shows that the independent and dependent variables account for 78% of the effect, while 22% is attributed to other factors not included in this study. The linear regression equation obtained is $Y = 35.05 + 3.28 (\text{Attitude}) + 6.05 (\text{Self-Esteem})$. This

Table 1. Results of the analysis of respondent characteristics who entered as behavioral change agents.

Variables	f (%)
Age (Mean±SD)	11.3 ± 0.4
Sex	
Male	14 (30.5)
Female	32 (69.6)
Class	
5 (five)	28 (60.9)
6 (Six)	18 (39.1)
Pre-test (Mean±SD)	81.3 ± 10.8
Post-Test (Mean±SD)	82.6 ± 18.5

Table 2. Difference test of knowledge before and after attending the behavior change agent program.

Result	Mean rank	Z value	p
Pre-test	20.9	-2.58	0.01
Post-test	28.83		

Table 3. Student characteristic analysis.

Variable	f (%)
Sex	
Male	418 (44.9)
Female	512 (55.1)
Class	
4	228 (24.5)
5	350 (37.6)
6	352 (37.8)
Victim	
Yes	304 (32.7)
No	626 (67.3)
Bully	
Yes	161 (17.3)
No	769 (82.7)

means that for every 1-unit increase in attitude, the attitude variable increases by 3.28 units, assuming other independent variables remain constant. Similarly, for every 1-unit increase in self-esteem, the self-esteem variable increases by 6.05 units, assuming other independent variables remain constant.

Discussion

Behavior Change Agents are expected to reduce bullying incidents in schools. This study adopts the fundamental philosophical values of *Tat Twam Asi* and integrates them into animated films as a trigger medium for the formation of anti-bullying change agents. The findings revealed that Behavior Change Agents play a highly effective role in enhancing the literacy and understanding of students, particularly those targeted for intervention, to further increase their knowledge about bullying and its prevention in schools. This aligns with previous research, which found that a key indicator of success in forming Behavior Change Agents in schools is the reduction in bullying incidents and an increase in students' awareness of the types and classifications of bullying.³² This highlights the strong correlation between the establishment of change agents and the prevention of bullying behavior in schools. Additionally, one study found that animation media can enhance empathy, thereby encouraging the prevention of bullying behaviors among teenagers in Madura.³³ To address bullying behavior, the values of tolerance embedded in *Tat Twam Asi* can be packaged into an animated medium to develop anti-bullying agents in schools. *Tat Twam Asi* is a Sanskrit phrase where «Tat» means «he/she/they,» «Twam» means «you,» and «Asi» means «is.» Thus, in essence, it conveys the meaning: *I am you, and you are me*, signifying that all beings are equal.³⁴ Based on this philosophy, this study sought to adopt animation as a means of shaping anti-bullying change agents.

A literature review found that one of the educational models

Table 4. Results of descriptive analysis of difference test.

Results	Mean rank	Z Value	p
Pre-test Knowledge	398.9	-23.94	<0.0001
Post-test Knowledge	440.4		
Pre-test <i>Self Efficacy</i>	406.1	-2.48	0.013
Post-test <i>Self Efficacy</i>	431.1		
Pre-test Attitude	198.1	-23.79	<0.0001
Post-test Attitude	496.1		
Pre-test Self Esteem	400.8	-5.08	<0.0001
Post-test Self Esteem	553.6		

Table 5. Multivariate analysis of variables that increase the non-occurrence of bullying cases in schools.

Results	R	B	p
Constanta	0.78	35.05	
Knowledge		0.09	0.3
<i>Self Efficacy</i>		0.01	0.7
Attitude		3.28	<0.0001*
Self Esteem		6.05	0.003*

for bullying prevention in schools includes the use of comic media, educational videos, and peer tutoring³⁸. This review discusses that for students aged 11–16 years, the peer tutoring program known as *Tutoria Entre Iguales* (TEI), which originates from Spanish, is effective in reducing both conventional bullying and cyberbullying. These suggest that the TEI program is effective in reducing bullying and cyberbullying behaviors.³⁹ The findings indicated support the effectiveness of forming anti-bullying Behavior Change Agents through the *Satua Bali* animation media, which is based on the *Tat Twam Asi* philosophy, as a preventive measure against bullying among school-aged adolescents. The philosophy of *Tat Twam Asi* teaches human equality, emphasizing that bullying or oppression of others is not permitted. Instead, *Tat Twam Asi* promotes compassion and mutual care among individuals. The core principle embedded in this philosophy encourages people to treat others with the same kindness and respect they would wish for themselves. Harmony, generosity, virtue, and wisdom—values instilled in *Tat Twam Asi*—serve as guiding principles for adolescents in fostering relationships with their peers.⁴⁰

The psychoeducation efforts undertaken were not only directed at students but also involved parents and teachers. This approach helps them develop awareness of the severe consequences of bullying in both the short and long term. Additionally, teachers and parents have begun to recognize the symptoms experienced by bullying victims, allowing them to provide timely intervention without significant delays.⁴¹ These align with the empowerment efforts conducted by Divayana,⁴² which found that bullying prevention can be achieved through digital literacy empowerment based on the *Tat Twam Asi* philosophy. In this study, attitude was identified as a key multivariate factor that enhanced bullying prevention among students. A positive attitude toward bullying prevention was also found to increase students' willingness to actively prevent bullying.⁴³ Positive prosocial attitudes significantly influences students' motivation to engage in bullying prevention efforts at school.

In addition to the variables mentioned above, self-esteem also plays a crucial role in bullying prevention. These findings indicate that individuals with high self-esteem are more capable of preventing bullying. This aligns with previous research, which found that students with higher self-esteem are more likely to prevent bullying among their peers. High self-esteem is influenced by various factors, including family support, media exposure, and peer support.⁹ As a result, students with high self-esteem were less likely to engage in bullying behaviors. A limitation of this study is the absence of a control group to compare the effectiveness of forming Behavior Change Agents through the *Satua Bali* animation. Future research should incorporate a comparative study using *Satua Bali* animations or expand the sample size. This would allow for the potential integration of this media into the bullying prevention curriculum in Jembrana, Bali, and in Indonesia.

Conclusions

There was a difference in bullying prevention behavior before and after the formation of the behavioral change agents. This result seems to be highly effective, as can be seen from the statistical value. The behavioral change agents formed had a positive impact on increasing the preventive behavior of bullying among elementary school students in Jembrana District. Despite the limitations of not having a control group, this did not affect the results of the effectiveness test between the groups before and after being given

the behavior change agent using the *Satua Bali* animation. Next, researchers hope to redevelop the research to reach a wider population. In addition, Balinese *Satua* animation can serve as a reference and can be substituted into the curriculum to prevent bullying in schools.

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