

STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTING PHYSICAL AND VERBAL VIOLENCE IN SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS THROUGH CHARACTER EDUCATION APPROACHES: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstrak

Keywords:

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Physical and verbal violence in schools remains a significant issue that affects students' psychological well-being, social development, and academic performance. Verbal violence is reported to occur more frequently than physical violence; however, it often receives less attention. Contributing factors include individual, family, and social aspects, as well as the influence of digital media, particularly in the form of cyberbullying. This study employs a qualitative approach using a literature review method to analyze strategies for preventing school violence through a character education approach. The findings indicate that character education, which fosters values such as empathy, responsibility, and mutual respect, is effective in reducing students' aggressive behavior. The integration of character values into the learning process, the habituation of positive behaviors, and reinforcement through social-emotional learning (SEL) have been shown to enhance the effectiveness of prevention efforts. However, challenges such as limited supervision and low levels of family involvement remain significant barriers. This study emphasizes that the systematic, collaborative, and sustainable implementation of character education is a key strategy for creating a safe, supportive, and conducive school environment that promotes students' overall development.

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INTRODUCTION

Education plays a strategic role in shaping students' character and personality. Schools do not merely function as institutions for transferring knowledge, but also as environments that instill moral, social, and ethical values. In this context, education is expected to produce individuals who are not only academically competent but also

possess strong character and are able to interact positively in social life (Kemendikbud, 2020; Santika et al., 2021; Lavy & Naama-Ghanayim, 2021; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Therefore, schools must provide a safe and conducive environment that supports students' holistic development.

However, in practice, school environments continue to face various challenges, one of which is the increasing incidence of physical and verbal violence among students. School violence has become a global issue that has received serious attention due to its widespread impact on student development (UNESCO, 2019; WHO, 2020; UNICEF, 2021). Reports from OECD (2019) indicate that a large proportion of students across countries have experienced some form of violence in school, while CDC (2020) highlights the high prevalence of bullying among adolescents. Research by Putri and Wibowo (2021) further demonstrates that school violence significantly affects students' learning quality and psychological well-being. These findings suggest that schools have not yet fully become safe environments for all students.

Physical violence in schools may include actions such as hitting, kicking, or other forms of direct aggression, whereas verbal violence involves behaviors such as insulting, mocking, and degrading others through words (Sari & Nugroho, 2020; Smith, 2016). Studies indicate that verbal violence occurs more frequently than physical violence but often receives less attention because its effects are not immediately visible (Rahmawati & Suryadi, 2020; Wulandari et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2021). Research by Saputra et al. (2022) also reveals that the development of social media has expanded forms of verbal violence, particularly cyberbullying among students, as supported by studies from Patchin and Hinduja (2018).

The impacts of physical and verbal violence in schools should not be underestimated. Students who become victims of violence tend to experience emotional disturbances such as anxiety, stress, and low self-esteem (Hidayati et al., 2019; Espelage et al., 2020). In addition, violence contributes to decreased academic achievement and learning motivation (Prasetyo & Kurniawan, 2021; OECD, 2019; Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). An unsafe learning environment has been shown to significantly hinder students' academic and social development.

Various factors contribute to the occurrence of violence in schools, including individual, family, and social environmental factors. Lack of supervision in schools and weak character education are among the primary causes of aggressive behavior among students (Astuti & Handayani, 2020; Glewwe et al., 2020). Furthermore, peer influence and the rapid development of digital technology further exacerbate this issue (Saputra et al., 2022; Thornberg, 2020; UNICEF, 2021).

To address these issues, effective and sustainable prevention strategies are required. One relevant approach is character education, which aims to instill moral values such as empathy, tolerance, responsibility, and mutual respect in students (Santika et al., 2021; Lavy & Naama-Ghanayim, 2021; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Research by Fitriani et al. (2020) indicates that integrating character education into the learning process can promote positive behavior and reduce students' aggressive tendencies.

The implementation of character education in schools can be carried out through various strategies, including the integration of character values into the learning process, the habituation of positive behaviors, and the involvement of teachers as role models. Research by Wibowo et al. (2021) shows that schools that consistently implement character education demonstrate lower levels of violence and more harmonious social

relationships among students. In addition, social-emotional learning (SEL)-based approaches have been proven effective in enhancing students' social skills (Jones et al., 2020; Taylor et al., 2017).

Furthermore, character education plays a crucial role in developing students' moral awareness, enabling them to distinguish between right and wrong and to understand the consequences of their actions (Nugraha & Putra, 2019; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Therefore, this approach is considered a potential strategy for preventing physical and verbal violence in school environments.

Based on the above discussion, this study aims to analyze various strategies for preventing physical and verbal violence in schools through a character education approach based on a literature review.

However, there remains a limitation in existing studies that comprehensively integrate character education with social-emotional learning (SEL) approaches as preventive strategies for school violence based on recent literature reviews.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Violence in school environments remains a common issue in education and has become a global concern. Violence can be defined as aggressive behavior intentionally carried out to harm others, either physically or psychologically (UNESCO, 2019, p. 12; WHO, 2020). In the educational context, violence not only affects victims directly but also influences the overall learning climate. An unsafe school environment can hinder both the learning process and students' social development (OECD, 2019; Thornberg, 2020; Wang et al., 2021).

School violence is generally classified into two main forms: physical and verbal violence. Physical violence includes actions such as hitting, kicking, or other forms of direct aggression that cause immediate injury, whereas verbal violence involves behaviors such as insulting, mocking, and degrading others through words (Sari & Nugroho, 2020; Smith, 2016). Research by Rahmawati and Suryadi (2020) indicates that verbal violence occurs more frequently than physical violence but is often not recognized as a form of violence. This is supported by findings from Wulandari et al. (2022) as well as international studies showing that verbal violence has significant psychological impacts despite not being physically visible (Wang et al., 2021; Arseneault, 2018).

The development of digital technology has further expanded forms of violence among students, particularly in the form of cyberbullying. Research by Saputra et al. (2022) shows that uncontrolled use of social media increases the risk of verbal violence. This finding is consistent with Patchin and Hinduja (2018), who state that cyberbullying is one of the fastest-growing forms of violence among adolescents and has serious implications for students' mental health. Furthermore, UNICEF (2021) emphasizes that digital environments significantly contribute to the increasing risk of violence among children and adolescents.

The impacts of school violence are not only short-term but may also persist in the long term. Research by Hidayati et al. (2019) indicates that victims of violence tend to experience emotional problems such as anxiety, stress, and low self-esteem. In addition, Prasetyo and Kurniawan (2021, p. 214) found that school violence negatively affects students' academic achievement and learning motivation. These findings are supported by Espelage et al. (2020) and Arseneault (2018), who report that victimization is associated with decreased psychological well-being and academic engagement.

The causes of school violence are complex and involve multiple factors. Astuti and Handayani (2020) argue that lack of supervision in schools and weak character education are major contributors to aggressive behavior among students. In addition, Glewwe et al. (2020) explain that aggressive behavior can be learned through observation and social interaction within the school environment. Thornberg (2020) also highlights the significant role of peer group dynamics in the emergence of bullying behavior in schools.

To address these issues, various approaches have been developed, one of which is character education. Character education is a systematic process of instilling moral values in students so that they are able to behave in accordance with social norms (Santika et al., 2021, p. 123). Values such as empathy, responsibility, and mutual respect serve as essential foundations for shaping positive student behavior (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Numerous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of character education in reducing violent behavior in schools. Research by Fitriani et al. (2020) indicates that integrating character education into the learning process can promote positive behavior and reduce students' aggressive tendencies. This is supported by Wibowo et al. (2021), who found that schools that consistently implement character education tend to have lower levels of violence and more harmonious social relationships among students. Furthermore, Lavy and Naama-Ghanayim (2021) emphasize that structured character education programs significantly contribute to the development of prosocial behavior among students.

In addition to character education, social-emotional learning (SEL) has also been recognized as an effective approach in preventing school violence. Jones et al. (2020) found that SEL programs enhance students' social competence, emotional regulation, and positive behavior. This is further supported by Taylor et al. (2017), who demonstrate that SEL programs have long-term effects on students' well-being and academic achievement. Therefore, integrating character education with SEL can provide a comprehensive solution for creating a safe and conducive school environment.

Nevertheless, further research is needed to explore the most effective implementation strategies across different school contexts. Each school has unique characteristics that require contextualized approaches (OECD, 2019). Moreover, rapid technological advancements and evolving social dynamics demand continuous innovation in the implementation of character education.

In conclusion, the literature review indicates that character education has significant potential in preventing school violence. However, a comprehensive understanding of effective implementation strategies is essential to maximize its impact in creating safe and supportive learning environments.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach using a literature review design. A literature review is a research method that involves examining and analyzing various relevant sources to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. In this study, the researcher reviews previous studies related to physical and verbal violence in school environments, as well as the implementation of character education as a preventive strategy.

The data sources in this study are derived from various relevant scientific publications, including international journals, accredited national journals, books, and

official reports published within the last ten years. The selection of literature sources is conducted selectively by considering their credibility, relevance, and alignment with the research topic. The databases used for literature searches include Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, and national journal portals.

The data collection technique used in this study is documentation. This process involves identifying, collecting, and organizing literature relevant to the research focus. The literature search is conducted using specific keywords such as “school violence,” “verbal violence,” “physical violence,” and “character education.” The collected literature is then screened based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria.

The inclusion criteria in this study are as follows: (1) articles published in reputable national or international journals; (2) publications within the last ten years; (3) studies directly related to school violence and character education; and (4) availability of full-text articles. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria include: (1) articles that are not relevant to the research focus; (2) sources with unclear credibility; and (3) articles that are not accessible in full text.

The data analysis technique used in this study is descriptive qualitative analysis. The collected data are analyzed by categorizing, comparing, and synthesizing findings from previous studies. This analysis is conducted systematically to identify patterns, relationships, and research gaps related to strategies for preventing violence through character education approaches.

Through this method, the study is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of character education as a strategy for preventing physical and verbal violence in school environments, as well as to contribute to the development of improved educational policies and practices.

To enhance the validity of the findings, the analysis is conducted iteratively by comparing multiple sources and identifying similarities and differences across previous research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Previous studies relevant to this discussion are presented in the following table:

Table 1. Previous Studies

NO	AUTHOR (YEAR)	RESEARCH FOCUS	FINDINGS
1	Rahmawati & Suryadi (2020)	Verbal violence in schools	Verbal violence occurs more frequently and has significant psychological impacts
2	Wulandari et al. (2022)	Bullying and mental health	Verbal bullying affects students' emotional conditions
3	Prasetyo & Kurniawan (2021)	Violence and academic achievement	Violence reduces motivation and academic

			performance
4	Hidayati et al. (2019)	Psychological impact of violence	Victims experience anxiety, stress, and low self-esteem
5	Astuti & Handayani (2020)	Causes of aggressive behavior	Lack of supervision and weak character education
6	Saputra et al. (2022)	Social media and cyberbullying	Digital media increases verbal violence
7	Fitriani et al. (2020)	Implementation of character education	Reduces students' aggressive behavior
8	Wibowo et al. (2021)	School climate and character	Reduces violence and improves social harmony
9	Santika et al. (2021)	Strengthening character education	Enhances moral awareness and responsibility

Based on Table 1, it can be observed that previous studies indicate that violence in school environments, particularly verbal violence, remains a significant issue. Studies by Rahmawati and Suryadi (2020) and Wulandari et al. (2022) reveal that verbal violence occurs more frequently than physical violence and has substantial psychological impacts on students. These findings are consistent with international studies demonstrating that verbal violence is often less visible but has long-term effects on students' mental health (UNESCO, 2019; Wang et al., 2021; Arseneault, 2018). This suggests that non-physical forms of violence require equal attention to physical violence.

The impact of school violence is not only emotional but also affects students' academic performance. Prasetyo and Kurniawan (2021) found that violence reduces students' learning motivation and academic achievement. This is supported by Hidayati et al. (2019), who reported that victims of violence tend to experience anxiety, stress, and low self-esteem. More broadly, OECD (2019) indicates that students who experience bullying demonstrate lower academic engagement compared to those who do not. This finding is further reinforced by Darling-Hammond et al. (2020), who argue that unsafe learning environments significantly affect the quality of student learning outcomes.

In terms of contributing factors, Astuti and Handayani (2020) emphasize that lack of supervision in schools and weak character education are major causes of aggressive behavior among students. The explanation of aggressive behavior through processes of observation and imitation is further supported by Glewwe et al. (2020), who highlight the influence of social interactions on aggressive behavior. In addition, Saputra et al. (2022) demonstrate that the development of social media has expanded forms of violence, particularly cyberbullying. This is supported by Patchin and Hinduja (2018), who show that digital interactions increase the risk of verbal violence among adolescents.

As a preventive effort, character education has been identified as one of the most recommended approaches. Fitriani et al. (2020) found that integrating character education into learning can reduce aggressive behavior and improve students' positive attitudes. This aligns with Wibowo et al. (2021), who demonstrate that schools consistently implementing character education exhibit lower levels of violence and more harmonious social relationships. Furthermore, Lavy and Naama-Ghanayim (2021) emphasize that structured character education programs can enhance prosocial behavior and reduce deviant behavior among students.

In addition to character education, social-emotional learning (SEL) approaches have also proven effective in supporting violence prevention in schools. Jones et al. (2020) found that SEL programs improve students' emotional regulation, empathy, and social skills. These findings are reinforced by Taylor et al. (2017), who demonstrate that SEL programs have long-term positive effects on students' well-being and academic achievement. This indicates that a combination of character education and SEL can serve as a more comprehensive strategy in creating a safe school environment.

However, the implementation of character education still faces several challenges, including the lack of systematic integration into the curriculum, limited supervision, and insufficient support from families. Additionally, the rapid development of digital technology presents further challenges in preventing violence, particularly in the form of online verbal abuse (Thornberg, 2020; UNICEF, 2021). This suggests that violence prevention efforts require more comprehensive, adaptive, and collaborative approaches.

Furthermore, research indicates that school-wide violence prevention programs are more effective than partial interventions. Recent evidence from systematic reviews and meta-analyses shows that school-based programs designed to reduce bullying behavior and victimization are effective, with significant reductions observed in both aspects (Gaffney, Ttofi, & Farrington, 2021). This underscores the importance of comprehensive and integrated interventions across the entire school environment.

Overall, the findings suggest that character education plays a crucial role in preventing physical and verbal violence in schools. However, its effectiveness largely depends on appropriate implementation strategies, consistency in execution, and support from multiple stakeholders. Therefore, a comprehensive and collaborative approach is essential to create a safe, supportive, and conducive educational environment for students' development.

This, an approach that integrates character education with social-emotional learning (SEL) not only serves as a preventive measure but also functions as a strategy to strengthen students' socio-emotional capacities in navigating the dynamics of modern school environments.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the literature review, it can be concluded that physical and verbal violence in school environments remains a significant issue with broad impacts on students' psychological, social, and academic development. Verbal violence is found to occur more frequently than physical violence; however, it often receives less attention.

Various factors influencing school violence include individual, family, and social aspects, as well as the influence of digital media, which has expanded forms of violence, particularly cyberbullying. This indicates that school violence is a complex issue that requires comprehensive and holistic intervention.

The findings also demonstrate that character education is one of the most effective strategies for preventing violence in schools. By fostering values such as empathy, responsibility, and mutual respect, character education promotes positive behavior and reduces students' aggressive tendencies.

However, the effectiveness of character education largely depends on the consistency of its implementation, its integration into the learning process, and support from multiple stakeholders, including schools, families, and communities. Therefore, collaborative and sustainable efforts are essential to create a safe, supportive, and conducive educational environment for students' development.

Accordingly, this study recommends that schools systematically integrate character education into the curriculum, strengthen collaboration with families, and optimize the implementation of social-emotional learning (SEL) as part of a sustainable violence prevention strategy.

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