



Empathy Training Based on the Culture of Peace in Makassar Bugis Towards the Improvement of Peaceful Personalities

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Abstract

Empathy training based on bugis makassar peaceful culture to improve students' peaceful personality. This study examines the effect of Empathy training technique based on Bugis Makassar peaceful culture on improving students' peaceful personality. The issue addressed is students' low peaceful personality characterized by inability to forgive, weak emotional control, and lack of empathy. The research novelty lies in integrating Bugis Makassar local wisdom *Sipakatau*, *Sipakainge'*, and *Sipakalebbi* into empathy training. Using quasi-experimental design, 18 seventh-grade students were divided into experimental and control groups. Intervention was conducted through group counseling integrating three cultural values. Data were collected using peaceful personality scale and analyzed statistically. Results showed experimental group experienced highly significant improvement from low to high category, while control group remained unchanged. This culturally-based technique provides school counselors an alternative approach to enhance students' peaceful personality and prevent conflicts. The research significance highlights the importance of integrating local wisdom into guidance and counseling curriculum for meaningful character education.

Keywords: *Empathy Training; Peaceful Personality; Bugis Makassar Local Wisdom*

A. Introduction

Character education is the main foundation in shaping a young generation that not only excels academically, but also has high moral and social qualities. In the midst of the challenges of globalization, students are faced with the need to be able to coexist harmoniously in a diverse society. However, the reality is that the development of peace in students has not been fully achieved. Data from the WHO (2023), shows that one in seven adolescents experience mental disorders such as depression and anxiety, with an alarming global suicide rate reaching 800,000 cases per year. The main disorders experienced by adolescents included stress by 56%, sleep disorders by 42.6%, anxiety by 28.2%, and depression by 20.7%. In Indonesia, the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (2025) recorded 973 cases of violence against children in the first six months of 2025, with education as the highest contributor of 9.5%. This phenomenon indicates that low self-awareness, lack of empathy, and weak emotional management are the main causes of social disharmony and increasing violence in the school environment, so it requires serious and systematic handling.

Personal problems of unpeaceful also occurred in MTsN 1 Makassar. Early survey results show that many students have low self-esteem, often fail to control negative emotions, lack respect for others, and lack empathy for others. A needs analysis through the dissemination of a peaceful personal questionnaire based on Castro & Galace's theory (2019) to 108 students of grade VII showed that 20 students (18.5%) were in the low and very low categories. Students who are not peaceful tend to be easily inflamed by emotions and often hurt others emotionally, which ultimately damages social relationships and hinders their character development (Biahimo et al., 2025). This condition indicates the need for special interventions to improve students' peaceful personalities.

A *peaceful personality* is a sedentary psychological disposition that is reflected in peaceful living choices, anti-violence attitudes, and a commitment to building harmonious relationships with oneself and the social environment (Nelson, 2014). Castro & Galace (2019) emphasize the importance of equanimity, healthy emotional management, high empathy, and constructive conflict resolution. The main competency in building a peaceful personality is empathy, which not only helps a person share emotional experiences with others but also plays an important role in building healthy social relationships (Riess & Neporent, 2024). Several studies have shown that *empathy training* is effective in improving personal peace. Paulus & Meinken (2022) prove that *empathy training* is able to foster social sensitivity and reduce aggressive behavior. Jolliffe & Farrington (2021) found that empathy training that includes cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions successfully builds caring and tolerant characters. Reza et al. (2020) showed that *empathy training* is effective in improving the ability to forgive female students who experience violence. Zakkiyah & Fauziyah (2025) also proved that symbolic modeling techniques are effective in shaping social and moral character through increasing empathy in students. Rahmah et al. (2024) added that group interventions in educational settings are very useful for improving empathy and other social skills. However, these studies still use a Western approach that is not necessarily in accordance with the local cultural context of Indonesia.

Indonesia has a wealth of noble values that have the potential to support the development of peaceful character, one of which is the Makassar Bugis culture with three main values: *Sipakatau* (humanizing each other), *Sipakainge'* (reminding each other), and *Sipakalebbi* (mutual respect). These values reflect the principles of empathy, respect for the dignity of others, and humane conflict resolution (Buchori & Fakhri, 2018). Research by Amiruddin et al. (2023) proves that the application of *Sipakatau*, *Sipakainge'*, and *Sipakalebbi* values in learning can increase students' empathy. Herlin et al. (2020) revealed that this culture has a

high tolerance value and is effective in forming empathetic characters. Halima et al. (2021) show that these values play an important role in shaping adolescent moral awareness. Although these studies show the potential of Makassar's Bugis cultural values in character formation, there has been no research that specifically integrates these values into *empathy training* to improve students' peaceful personalities in the school context.

Based on the literature review, it was identified that there is no *empathy training model* that integrates the values of local wisdom of Bugis Makassar in a systematic and structured manner to improve students' peaceful personalities. Previous studies have focused more on the application of cultural values in general learning or the use of *empathy training* with a Western approach, but no one has combined the two in a single comprehensive counseling intervention. Therefore, this study aims to determine the effect of the application of *Empathy training techniques* based on the peaceful culture of Bugis Makassar on the improvement of students' peaceful personal life in MTsN 1 Makassar. Theoretically, this research is expected to enrich the scientific treasures of guidance and counseling based on local culture (*indigenous counseling*). Practically, this study provides an alternative contextual and meaningful counseling technique for BK teachers to improve students' peaceful personalities and provides policy recommendations for schools in integrating the value of local wisdom into student character development programs.

B. Method

This study uses a quantitative approach with a *quasi-experimental* design type using *pretest-posttest nonequivalent control group design*. This design was chosen because it does not allow for full randomization in a school setting that has a fixed class structure, but it is still effective for testing the effectiveness of the intervention under natural conditions as well as allowing for comparison of changes between experimental and control groups (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Pandang & Anas, 2019).

The research population is all grade VII students at MTsN 1 Makassar totaling 108 students from three classes, namely VII.6, VII Science 2, and VII Informatics. The research sample amounted to 18 students divided into 9 students in the experimental group and 9 students in the control group. The sampling technique used *proportional random sampling* with the criteria of students who showed very low and low categories of unpeaceful individuals.

The research instrument uses a peaceful personal scale compiled based on five indicators of peaceful personality according to Castro & Galaze, (2019), namely the ability to forgive, self-respect, the ability to control negative emotions, respect for others and empathy, and the ability to foster compassion. The scale uses *the Likert model* with four answer options. The validity of the instrument was tested using *corrected item total correlation* with the criterion ≥ 0.3 resulting in 40 valid items out of 40 items tested to 111 students. The reliability of the instrument using *Cronbach's Alpha* yielded a value of 0.908 which indicates the instrument is very reliable.

The *empathy training intervention* based on the peaceful culture of Bugis Makassar was carried out in 4 meetings of 45 minutes for 2 weeks. Encounter 1: Self-understanding (*Sipakatau*) focuses on the exploration of self-awareness and the recognition of personal emotions. Meeting 2: Other People's Perspectives (*Sipakainge'*) focus on *perspective taking* and understanding other people's perspectives. Meeting 3: Emotional control (*Sipakalebbi*) focuses on the regulation of emotions and the application of mutual respect. Meeting 4: Empathetic expression in behavior (Integration of the Three Values) focuses on the practice of empathic behavior and commitment to implementation. The control group followed regular BK services, namely classical guidance.

This research meets the research ethics including: *informed consent* from parents/guardians and students, *confidentiality* with identity codes, *voluntary participation* without coercion, *beneficence* for the benefit of participants, *non-maleficence* to avoid negative impacts, and official permission from the school and the Ministry of Religion.

Data analysis used descriptive statistics including frequency distribution, percentage, *mean*, and *gain scores* to describe students' personal levels of peace. Inferential statistical analysis used *an independent sample t-test* with a significance level of 0.05 to test the research hypothesis. Prerequisite tests include a normality test using *Shapiro-Wilk* and a homogeneity test using *Levene's Test*. Data processing using SPSS 27 for Windows with the H_0 criterion is rejected if the significance value is <0.05 .

C. Discussion

A peaceful person is a persistent psychological condition and is reflected in peaceful life choices, anti-violence attitudes, and a commitment to building harmonious relationships (Nelson, 2014). Castro & Galace (2019) stated that *peaceful personality* is the result of the formation of values, attitudes, and skills that are instilled through a systematic and structured process of peace education. The concept of peaceful personal emphasizes the importance of equanimity, healthy emotional management, high empathy, and constructive and non-violent conflict resolution. Empathy as the main competency in the formation of a peaceful personality consists of two components, namely cognitive which includes *perspective taking* and *fantasy*, and affective which includes *empathic concern* and *personal distress* (Davis, 1996). The integration of local cultural values in psychological interventions is in line with *the indigenous psychology approach* which emphasizes the importance of cultural context in understanding and intervening in psychological problems. The values of *Sipakatau*, *Sipakainge'*, and *Sipakalebbi* in Makassar's Bugis culture reflect the basic principles of empathy and respect for human dignity which are very relevant to be integrated in character education (Buchori & Fakhri, 2018).

The description of data regarding the peaceful personal variables of grade VII students at MTsN 1 Makassar is categorized into 5 categories, namely very low, low, medium, high, and very high.

Interval	Categories	F	%
137-160	Very High	26	23
113-136	Height	52	46
89-112	Medium	15	13,3
65-88	Low	17	15
40-64	Very Low	3	2,7
Quantity		108	100

Table 1. Categories Personal Level Peace

Based on the table above, it can be seen that some of the respondents in this study had a peaceful personal score in the high majority category, which was 46% of the student respondents. Then it went to a very high of 23%. It can be concluded that the category of Peaceful Person from the category to the high. Although the majority of students were in the high category, there were still 20 students (17.7%) who were in the low and very low categories indicating the need for special interventions to improve their peaceful personalities.

Furthermore, before conducting the research analysis, a prerequisite test for normality test analysis was carried out. The normality test aims to find out whether the data is distributed normally or not. The Normality test was performed on each variable, namely the Peaceful Person, the experimental group, and the control group, which was analyzed with the help of SPSS 27 *for Windows* using the *Shapiro-Wilk* test. Testing data of normality test, i.e. if sig. > 0.05, the data is distributed normally, but if sig. < 0.05, the data is not distributed normally.

Tests of Normality							
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Personal Peace	<i>Control Pretest</i>	.214	9	.200*	.829	9	.083
	<i>Posttest Control</i>	.303	9	.200*	.687	9	.091
	<i>Pretest Experiment</i>	.204	9	.200*	.856	9	.087
	<i>Posttest Experiment</i>	.131	9	.200*	.959	9	.792

Table 2. Normality Test

Based on the normality test table above, it shows that the data on peaceful personal variables in the experimental group both in the *pretest* with a Shapiro Wilk *significance value* of 0.087 (sig. > 0.05) and in the *posttest* with a significance value of 0.792 (sig. > 0.05) are normally distributed. In the control group, the results of the normality test showed that *the pretest* data had a significance value of 0.083 (sig. > 0.05) and *the posttest* of 0.091 (sig. > 0.05), so that the control group's data was also distributed normally. Thus, all data in both the experimental group and the control group met the assumption of normality.

Test of Homogeneity of Variance					
		Living Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Personal Peace	Based on Mean	.649	3	32	.589
	Based on Median	.648	3	32	.590
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.648	3	30.246	.591
	Based on trimmed mean	.675	3	32	.574

Table 3. Homogeneity Test

Based on the table above, the results of the data homogeneity test showed that all data, both *Pretest* and *Posttest* in the experimental and control groups, had a significance value of ≥ 0.05 . So it is concluded that the data variance is homogeneous.

The results of hypothesis testing were carried out to determine the influence of *Empathy training techniques* based on the peaceful culture of Bugis Makassar on the improvement of students' peaceful personality. The results of the hypothesis test indicate the acceptance or rejection of the hypothesis proposed in the study. Hypothesis testing in this study was carried out using independent sample t-test analysis techniques.

Independent Samples Test									
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Equal variances assumed	.998	.333	-16.818	16	.000	-30.889	1.837	-34.783	-26.995
Equal variances not assumed			-14.395	16.818	.000	-30.889	1.837	-34.818	-26.960

Table 4. Uji T-Test

Based on Table 4, it can be seen that the average *posttest* score of the experimental group ($Mean = 113.00$, $SD = 4,500$) is much higher compared to the average *posttest* score of the control group ($Mean = 82.11$, $SD = 3,180$). This mean difference indicates that the experimental group that received *empathy training interventions* based on the peaceful culture of Bugis Makassar experienced a much greater increase in peaceful personality than the control group that did not receive special interventions. Obtained the value of t calculated = -16.818 with the value of $Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000 < \alpha 0.05$, then H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted. This showed that there was a very significant difference between the students' personal peace levels in the experimental group and the control group after the intervention. The mean difference of -30.889 indicates a very large average difference between the two groups with a 95% confidence interval ranging from -34.783 to -26.995 which does not include zeros, thus reinforcing the conclusion that the difference is indeed statistically significant.

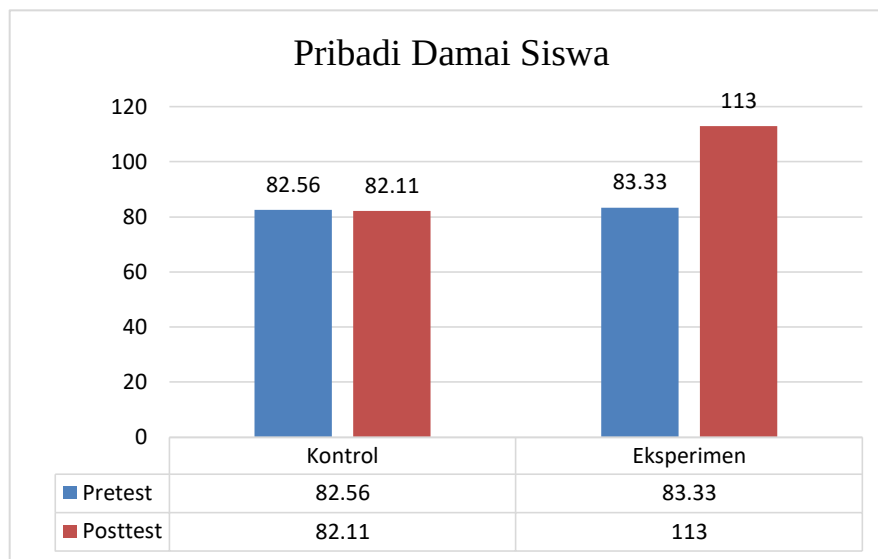


Figure 1. Peace Personal Level Comparison

The figure above shows a comparison of the peaceful personal level between the experimental group and the control group based on *the Pretest* and *Posttest results*. The graph was made from the average scores of both groups before the intervention (*Pretest*) and after the intervention (*Posttest*). Furthermore, *the gain score* was used to see an overview of changes in students' peaceful personal level after being given an intervention in the form of *an Empathy training technique* based on the Bugis-Makassar Culture of Peace.

The success of this intervention is in line with Castro & Galace (2019) who stated that *peaceful personality* is the result of the formation of values, attitudes, and skills through a systematic process of peaceful education. These findings confirm Nelson's (2014) theory that a peaceful person is a sedentary psychological disposition that is reflected in peaceful living choices, non-violent attitudes, and a commitment to building harmonious relationships with oneself and the social environment. Praszkie et al. (2023) emphasized that a peaceful personality is characterized by *inner peace* and strong emotional stability.

Davis (1996) explains that empathy consists of cognitive and affective components. Reza et al. (2020) clarify that the cognitive component includes

Perspective taking and *Fantasy*, while the affective component consists of *Empathic Concern* and *Personal Distress*, where the cognitive empathy process develops to support affective experiences. *Empathy training* through four structured stages provides a comprehensive learning experience for students to develop a peaceful personality cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally. Buchori & Fakhri (2017) emphasized that unpeaceful thoughts, feelings and behaviors cause unrest, anxiety, tension and even conflict in self and social life.

The integration of Makassar's Bugis cultural values, namely *Sipakatau*, *Sipakainge'*, and *Sipakalebbi* provides its own advantages. Buchori & Fakhri (2018) explained that the peaceful cultural values of Makassar Bugis, namely *Sipakatau* (humanizing each other), *Sipakainge'* (reminding each other), and *Sipakalebbi* (mutual respect), reflect the roots of the South Sulawesi people's philosophy of upholding humanity and solidarity. Khaeruddin et al. (2022) revealed that the philosophy of 3S cultural values in the Bugis tribe community has become a deeply rooted value and principle of life, shaping the social and moral identity of the community for generations. Fatimah et al. (2025) prove that the reinforcement of 3S cultural values can be applied effectively in various contexts including regional financial management, demonstrating the flexibility and relevance of these values in modern life. Rahmawati & Arsyad (2025) emphasized that the integration of *Sipakatau* values with other cultures is an important part of character education based on local wisdom that is relevant to support sustainable development in the Bugis community of Makassar.

The integration of local cultural values provides several important advantages. Halima et al. (2021) show that the values of *Sipakatau*, *Sipakainge'*, and *Sipakalebbi* play an important role in shaping adolescents' moral and spiritual awareness and encouraging healthy social relationships. Herlin et al. (2020) revealed that *the culture of Sipakatau, Sipakainge', and Sipakalebbi* has a high value of tolerance and local wisdom and strengthens the principle of *siri'* as a control of deviant behavior, proven to be effective in forming empathetic characters, mutual cooperation, and deep social awareness.

The formation of peaceful personalities is in line with the concept of character strengths Chérif et al. (2022) that character strengths such as compassion, forgiveness, and empathy play a major role in fostering *inner peace*. The improvement of students' peaceful personal in this study is in line with Nelson's (2014) *theory of Personal Peacefulness which defines a peaceful person as a sedentary psychological disposition that is reflected in peaceful living choices, anti-violence attitudes, and commitment to building harmonious relationships*. Fan & Cui (2024) stated that peaceful personalities are formed through a combination of positive personality traits and psychological practices such as *mindfulness and self-acceptance* that contribute to stress management, strengthening emotional resilience, and the formation of reflective attitudes in the face of conflict.

The findings of this study are in line with previous research that showed a positive relationship between empathy training and positive character development. Kahrman et al. (2016) found *empathy training* to be effective in increasing nurses' empathy levels, suggesting structured empathy training can result in consistent improvement of empathy skills. Suparmi & Sumijati (2021) prove that *empathy training* can improve prosocial behavior in elementary school-age children, indicating that the development of empathy from an early age contributes to the formation of positive social characters. Paulus & Meinken (2022) through meta-analysis showed that *empathy training* has been proven to be effective in improving empathy skills. This research makes a new contribution by integrating local cultural values that have been shown to increase the relevance and effectiveness of interventions. These findings contrast with Jolliffe & Farrington (2021) who reported on engagement challenges in *conventional empathy training*, indicating that the integration of local cultures can increase students' active participation.

This study found that the integration of Makassar's Bugis cultural values in *empathy training* was associated with better personal improvement of peace, supporting the findings of Amiruddin et al. (2023) which proved that the application of *Sipakatau*, *Sipakainge'*, and *Sipakalebbi* values in learning can

increase students' empathy. Cahyaningrum et al. (2024) developed empathy training guidelines using educational cinema techniques to prevent *bullying behavior* of junior high school students, showing that empathy training can be an effective prevention strategy against aggressive behavior in the school environment. These findings are in line with Zakkiyah & Fauziyah (2025) who showed that symbolic modeling techniques are effective in shaping social and moral character, and Rahmah et al. (2024) who proved that group intervention in the educational environment is very useful in improving empathy and social skills. In contrast to Reza et al. (2020) who focused on female students who were victims of violence, this study proves that *empathy training* is also effective for the population of high school adolescents with unpeaceful personal problems.

The findings of this study indicate that *the Empathy training technique* based on the peaceful culture of Bugis Makassar has a significant influence on the peaceful personal improvement of grade VII students at MTsN 1 Makassar. The practical implication of these findings is that Guidance and Counselling schools and teachers need to focus on developing programs that can enhance students' empathy through learning methods relevant to the local cultural context, as well as social support from parents and the surrounding environment to help students build strong peaceful characters.

This research has several limitations. First, the time to implement the intervention was relatively short, with only four meetings, so it only captured changes at one point in time. Second, the limited number of samples, namely 18 students with 9 students per group, makes generalization of research results still limited. Third, the research sample was limited to one school so the results may not be generalizable to a wider population. Therefore, follow-up studies with longitudinal designs and larger samples are needed to reinforce these findings.

D. Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that *the Empathy Training technique* based on the peaceful culture of Bugis Makassar has a significant effect on the peaceful personal improvement of grade VII students at MTsN 1 Makassar ($t = -16.818$; $p = 0.000 < 0.05$), with the experimental group increasing +29.67 points while the control group decreased by -0.45 points. This research makes a scientific contribution by developing *empathy training techniques* that integrate the values of local wisdom of Bugis Makassar (Sipakatau, Sipakainge', Sipakalebbi) as an alternative to the Western approach and empirically prove that the approach based on local culture is more effective because it is relevant to the identity of students. Practically, this technique can be implemented by BK teachers for group counseling interventions and provide recommendations for policies to integrate local wisdom in guidance and counseling curriculum. It is recommended to conduct more in-depth research with a larger sample to test the long-term effectiveness and explore the application of other local wisdom in various Indonesian cultural contexts.

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