

Enhancing Bullying Awareness through Religious Moderation-Based Psychoeducation among Filipino Secondary School Students

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Abstract

This study examined the effectiveness of a religious moderation-based psychoeducational intervention in enhancing bullying awareness among Filipino secondary school students. A quasi-experimental pre-test–post-test control group design was employed involving 74 tenth-grade students divided into experimental ($n = 37$) and control ($n = 37$) groups using purposive sampling. The intervention consisted of a two-day structured psychoeducational program integrating tolerance, empathy, non-violence, and moral responsibility through guided reflection, discussion, and problem-solving activities. Data were collected using an adapted version of the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (QBO). The instrument demonstrated acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .87$). Data were analyzed using Wilcoxon signed-rank and Mann–Whitney U tests. The experimental group demonstrated a statistically significant increase in bullying understanding scores from pre-test to post-test compared to the control group ($p < .05$). Gain score analysis further revealed a significant between-group difference with a large effect size ($r = .58$), suggesting that the intervention was associated with improved bullying awareness and understanding of peer relationships. The study was conducted in one secondary school using purposive sampling, limiting broader generalizability. In addition, the study focused on cognitive understanding rather than direct behavioral outcomes. Future studies should examine long-term behavioral effects across multiple educational settings. This study contributes to the literature by integrating religious moderation values as a culturally grounded moral-reflective approach within school-based psychoeducation for bullying awareness among adolescents.

Keywords: bullying awareness, religious moderation, psychoeducation, moral development, secondary school students

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1. Introduction

Bullying constitutes a complex socio-psychological phenomenon shaped by individual cognition, peer dynamics, and school climate. In the Philippines, evidence from large-scale assessments such as PISA indicates that a substantial proportion of students report experiencing bullying in school settings (Chiu & Vargo, 2022). These findings underscore the need for context-sensitive prevention models that address both behavioral and moral-regulatory dimensions of adolescent interaction. Rather than focusing solely on punitive or behavioral control strategies, emerging research suggests that integrating value-based frameworks within school interventions may offer a more sustainable approach to bullying awareness.

There are significant emotional, mental, and social impacts on adolescents who experience bullying, and it can even eliminate their well-being (Bermejo et al., 2022). Bullying can produce significant emotional distress, including feelings of anger, guilt, fear, and social insecurity. Bullying can cause significant emotional distress, including feelings of anger, guilt, and disgust (Liu et al., 2019). Victims often experience emotional difficulties and lower life satisfaction. Self-

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harm and suicidal thoughts: There is a strong correlation between being a victim of bullying and increased thoughts of self-harm and suicidal ideation, especially among adolescents (Hyland et al., 2021; Musslifah et al., 2024). Regarding mental health, victims of bullying are at higher risk of experiencing mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem (Man et al., 2022). These problems can continue into adulthood, causing long-term psychological difficulties. It is important to realize that the impact of bullying not only includes the psychological trauma of the victim but can also create a cycle of negative behavior that continues in the perpetrator and the surrounding environment.

Bullying behavior in adolescents can be analyzed as the result of a complex interaction between individual, family, and social-environmental factors (Barboza et al., 2009; Mirawati et al., 2025). Adolescents involved in bullying, either as perpetrators or victims, often experience severe social stress due to peer pressure, family expectations, or inability to resolve interpersonal conflicts (Bibou-Nakou et al., 2012). This stress can be exacerbated by low coping skills, such as the inability to manage emotions or social stressors constructively. Bullies often show patterns of aggression in response to emotional insecurity, while victims tend to feel isolated and powerless to protect themselves (Klomek et al., 2015). Understanding the sources of stress and limited adaptive abilities in adolescents is key to preventing and overcoming bullying behavior. From this, it can be seen that internal and external factors play a role in the occurrence of bullying behavior in adolescents.

Previous research on bullying awareness has primarily focused on school-based intervention models. Empirical studies indicate that structured school programs can reduce bullying prevalence and improve students' psychological well-being by fostering supportive school climates and peer connectedness (Arslan et al., 2021; Hensley, 2013). These programs typically emphasize social-emotional learning, peer support systems, and positive behavioral reinforcement strategies (Liu et al., 2019). However, many existing interventions prioritize behavioral management and policy enforcement while giving limited attention to adolescents' internal moral regulation processes. Although anti-bullying policies and legal frameworks contribute to institutional accountability (Brank et al., 2012; Sansone & Sansone, 2015), policy-oriented approaches alone may not sufficiently address the cognitive and moral mechanisms underlying bullying behavior. This gap suggests the need for prevention frameworks that integrate moral and value-based dimensions within school-based interventions. By incorporating structured moral-regulatory components, prevention efforts may move beyond reactive or policy-driven responses toward fostering internalized prosocial norms among adolescents.

Beyond behavioral management and disciplinary enforcement, bullying is increasingly understood as a phenomenon associated with moral cognition, empathy deficits, and processes of moral disengagement (Bandura, 1989; Gini et al., 2014). Adolescents who engage in bullying often cognitively justify harmful behavior, minimize victim suffering, or diffuse personal responsibility within peer dynamics. Consequently, prevention efforts that rely solely on external regulation may not sufficiently address the internal cognitive and moral processes underlying peer aggression. This limitation suggests the importance of integrating reflective and value-oriented approaches within school-based interventions. In the present study, religious moderation is conceptualized not as doctrinal religious instruction, but as a culturally grounded moral-regulatory framework emphasizing tolerance, empathy, non-violence, social responsibility, and respect for diversity. The intervention assumes that structured reflection on these values may strengthen adolescents' moral internalization, empathy development, and normative awareness in peer interactions. From this perspective, religious moderation functions as a reflective psychoeducational approach that supports moral appraisal and reduces cognitive acceptance of harmful interpersonal behavior.

Conceptually, the intervention is informed by social-ecological perspectives on bullying and theories of moral disengagement. The proposed mechanism suggests that reflective discussions centered on empathy, accountability, and inclusive peer relationships may enhance adolescents' understanding of bullying by encouraging critical evaluation of aggressive behavior and its social consequences. Thus, the study positions bullying awareness not merely as knowledge acquisition, but as part of a broader process of moral and social-cognitive development. Within the Philippine cultural context, interpersonal relationships are strongly influenced by the concept of *Kapwa*, which emphasizes shared identity, relational connectedness, mutual respect, and collective responsibility. From a social-ecological perspective, these relational values may shape adolescents' perceptions of peer interaction, conflict resolution, and social responsibility within school environments. Integrating reflective and value-oriented approaches that resonate with culturally grounded concepts such as *Kapwa* may therefore strengthen the contextual relevance and cultural sensitivity of bullying awareness interventions.

Thus, the present study does not assume that religious moderation directly eliminates bullying behavior. Rather, it proposes that integrating religious moderation principles into a structured psychoeducational program may influence bullying-related cognition through mechanisms of moral internalization, empathy development, self-regulation, and normative reflection. The intervention encourages adolescents to reflect on their interpersonal experiences, strengthen

conflict-resolution skills, and foster a school environment that supports prosocial interaction. By promoting the perception of differences as social assets rather than threats, the program seeks to enhance inclusive peer relationships. From a moral-development perspective, cultivating empathy and social responsibility may reduce cognitive justifications for harmful behavior. Accordingly, this study hypothesizes that participation in the religious moderation-informed psychoeducational program will significantly improve adolescents' understanding of bullying and its prevention mechanisms within the studied school context.

2. Methods

2.1. Research Design

This study used a pre-post control group design experiment involving two groups, namely the experimental group and the control group. The experimental group received an intervention in the form of training to improve understanding of bullying behavior in adolescents, while the control group did not receive any treatment. Measurements were taken on both groups before and after the intervention was given. With this approach, the difference in understanding of bullying behavior between the experimental group and the control group after the intervention can be analyzed. The experimental design is presented in Table 1. Random assignment was not feasible due to institutional and scheduling constraints within the school setting. Therefore, intact classes were used to preserve the natural classroom structure and minimize disruption to academic activities. Although this approach supports ecological validity, it may increase the possibility of selection bias.

2.2. Participants

Participants were 74 tenth-grade students from one secondary school in the Philippines. Two intact classes were selected using purposive sampling and assigned as the experimental group ($n = 37$) and the control group ($n = 37$). The use of intact classes was intended to maintain the natural classroom structure and reduce disruption to the school schedule. Purposive sampling was applied to ensure that participants shared comparable educational backgrounds and were enrolled in the same grade level within the same institutional context. While this approach supports internal comparison between groups, it limits external generalizability. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted as context-specific and not representative of adolescents across broader regional settings. Given the relatively small sample size and the inclusion of participants from only one secondary school, the findings should be interpreted cautiously and may not be generalized to broader adolescent populations across different educational or cultural settings.

2.3. Data collection instruments

Data collection used a bullying scale adapted from the Questionário de Bullying de Olweus (QBO) scale (Gonçalves et al., 2016). The instrument consists of four dimensions: physical bullying, verbal bullying, social bullying, and indirect and rational bullying. The statements in the QBO instrument were modified to suit the cultural background of the students who were respondents in the Philippines, so it is very important to consider the cultural and environmental aspects of the study (Head et al., 2005). So, the scale used was modified according to the research location.

2.4. Intervention

The intervention consisted of a two-day structured psychoeducational program divided into seven sessions (see Table 2). The program was designed to enhance adolescents' understanding of bullying behavior by integrating principles of religious moderation, including tolerance, empathy, non-violence, and moral responsibility. The sessions were facilitated by certified school counselors and religious education instructors with professional experience in adolescent counseling and character education. All facilitators had a minimum of five years of teaching or counseling experience in secondary school settings. Prior to implementation, facilitators participated in a coordination meeting to standardize procedures and ensure fidelity to the intervention module. A structured intervention manual was used throughout the program to maintain consistency across sessions. The manual outlined session objectives, learning materials, discussion prompts, reflective activities, and evaluation procedures to enhance replicability. To enhance implementation fidelity, facilitators followed a standardized session protocol and completed session checklists after each activity. Informal monitoring was conducted throughout the intervention to ensure that the planned content and procedures were delivered consistently across sessions.

2.5. Data analysis

Prior to hypothesis testing, normality assumptions were assessed using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test. Results indicated that the experimental group data were not normally distributed at both pre-test ($K-S = 0.162$, $p = .016$) and post-test ($K-S = 0.195$, $p = .001$). In contrast, the control group data met normality assumptions at pre-test ($K-S = 0.087$, $p = .200$) and post-test ($K-S = 0.100$, $p = .200$). Given the violation of normality in the experimental group, non-parametric tests were employed. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test was used to examine within-group differences between pre-test and post-test scores in the experimental group. To assess between-group differences, gain scores were calculated for each participant (post-test score minus pre-test score). The Mann–Whitney U test was then conducted to compare gain scores between the experimental and control groups. All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS version 25, with significance set at $p < .05$.

2.6. Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the relevant institutional ethics committee prior to data collection. Permission was also obtained from the participating school administration. Written informed consent was secured from parents or guardians, while assent was obtained from all student participants before participation. Participants were informed that their responses would remain confidential and that participation was voluntary.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Result

This study aims to determine the effectiveness of intervention in the form of a structured psychoeducational anti-bullying intervention in improving understanding of bullying behavior in adolescents by comparing two groups: the experimental group and the control group. It should be noted that the experimental and control groups demonstrated differences in baseline pre-test scores prior to the intervention. Because intact classes were used without random assignment, complete group equivalence could not be ensured. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted cautiously, particularly regarding causal inference.

Table 1. Description of Empirical Data

Group	Pre-test	Intervention	Post-test
Experiment	Knowledge of bullying behavior	Anti-bullying intervention	Knowledge of bullying behavior
Control	Knowledge of bullying behavior		Knowledge of bullying behavior

Table 1 shows the research design involving two groups. The experimental group was given an intervention in the form of a structured psychoeducational anti-bullying intervention, while the control group did not receive any intervention. Measurement of understanding of bullying behavior was carried out through a pre-test before the intervention and a post-test after the intervention in both groups. This design allows for a comparison of changes in understanding scores between the groups that received the intervention and those that did not receive the intervention.

To clarify the conceptual foundation of the intervention administered to the experimental group, the theoretical basis and operationalization of religious moderation are described below. The concept of religious moderation in this study is defined as a value-oriented moral framework emphasizing tolerance, justice, non-violence, empathy, and respect for diversity. Within the intervention, religious moderation was operationalized not as doctrinal instruction, but as structured moral reflection aligned with established theories of adolescent moral development and moral disengagement.

Specifically, the intervention was designed to strengthen (1) moral internalization, (2) empathy development, and (3) normative reflection within peer interactions. These mechanisms are consistent with social-ecological and moral-regulatory perspectives on bullying awareness. The training modules were developed by integrating character education principles and psychoeducational approaches commonly used in school-based prevention programs. Details of the intervention sessions are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Contents of Anti-bullying intervention Activities

Sessions	Time	Contents	Method
Session 1: Introduction	30 minutes	Opening, explanation of the stages of the training Giving a pre-test on the bullying scale	Lectures
Session 2: Psychoeducation on Bullying and Moral-Regulatory Reflection	60 minutes	Conceptual understanding of bullying, Introduction to moral disengagement mechanisms, Reflection on tolerance, empathy, and non-violence as moral-regulatory principles	Lectures, guided discussion, reflective exercises
Session 3: Adaptation of training reality	60 minutes	Problem-solving analysis	Lectures, discussions, and assignments
Session 4: Assessment training	60 minutes	Forum Group Discussion	Lectures, discussions, games, and assignments
Session 5: Assessment training	60 minutes	Analysis of FGD results and problem-solving	Lectures, discussions, and assignments
Session 6: Assessment training	60 minutes	Affirmation of understanding of learning to prevent bullying with religious moderation	Lectures, discussions, and assignments
Session 7: post-test and evaluation	30 minutes	Post-test activities on knowledge of bullying in adolescents and efforts to prevent bullying with various modes	Assignments

Descriptive statistics were first examined to provide an overview of bullying understanding scores across groups and test phases. Table 3 presents the mean, standard deviation, and score range for both experimental and control groups at pre-test and post-test.

Table 3. Description of Empirical Data

Group	n	Test Phase	Mean	SD	Minimum Score	Maximum Score
Experiment	37	Pre-Test	145.38	7.97	123	158
	37	Post-Test	150.89	9.81	112	169
Control	37	Pre-Test	130.32	14.21	95	155
	37	Post-Test	134.54	15.48	101	160

As presented in Table 3, the experimental group's mean score increased from 145.38 (SD = 7.97) at pre-test to 150.89 (SD = 9.81) at post-test. In contrast, the control group showed a smaller change, with mean scores increasing from 130.32 (SD = 14.21) to 134.54 (SD = 15.48). Although descriptive statistics suggest improvement in both groups, descriptive comparisons alone are insufficient to establish statistical significance. Therefore, assumption testing was conducted to assess data distribution prior to performing inferential analyses. To provide a clearer visual comparison of score changes across groups, Figure 1 presents the pre-test and post-test bullying understanding scores for both the experimental and control groups.

As presented in Table 5, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test indicated that the experimental group data did not meet normality assumptions at both measurement points ($p < .05$), whereas the control group data were normally distributed ($p > .05$). Because normality was violated in the experimental group, non-parametric analyses were employed for subsequent within-group and between-group comparisons. This approach ensured methodological consistency and avoided violations of parametric test assumptions.

A Wilcoxon signed-rank test revealed a statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores in the experimental group ($Z = -2.680$, $p = .007$). This finding indicates that participants in the intervention group demonstrated a significant increase in bullying understanding following the program. To reduce the influence of baseline score differences, gain score comparisons were conducted to examine relative changes between pre-test and post-test scores across groups.

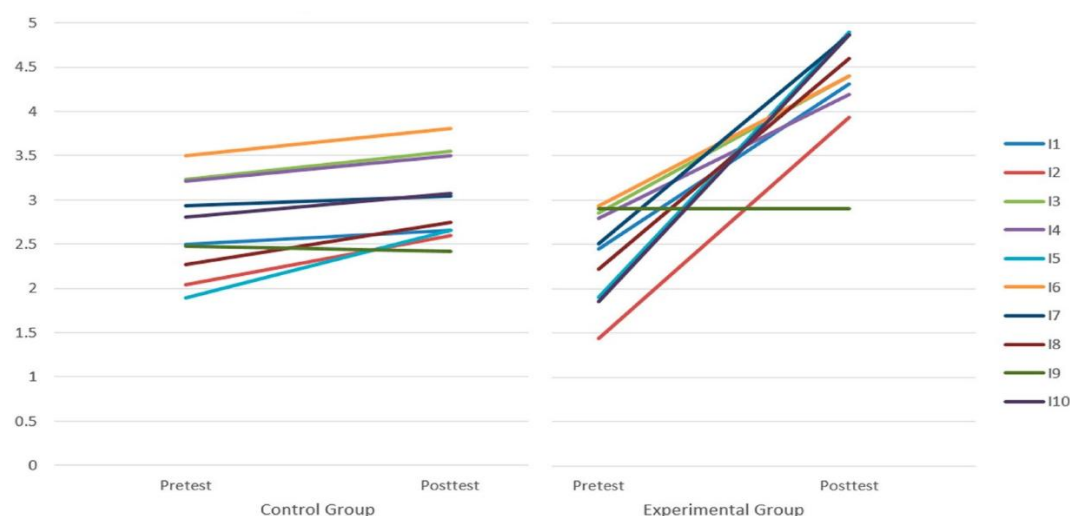


Figure 1. Individual Changes in Bullying Understanding Scores from Pre-test to Post-test in the Experimental and Control Groups

Table 4. Normality Test Results (Kolmogorov- Smirnov)

Group		K-S Statistic	p-value	Distribution
Experiment	Pre-Test	0.162	.016	Not Normal
	Post-Test	0.195	.001	Not Normal
control	Pre-Test	0.087	.200	Normal
	Post-Test	0.100	.200	Normal

Table 5. Wilcoxon Test

	Pretest-Posttest Experiment
Z	-2.680
P	.007

Table 6. Mann Whitney

	Score
U	223.00
Z	-4.993
P-value	< .001

A Mann–Whitney U test revealed a statistically significant difference in gain scores between the experimental and control groups ($U = 223.00$, $Z = -4.993$, $p < .001$). The experimental group demonstrated greater improvement in bullying understanding compared to the control group. The effect size, calculated using $r = Z / \sqrt{N}$, was approximately $r = .58$, indicating a large magnitude of difference.

3.2. Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that students who participated in the religious moderation-informed psychoeducational program demonstrated a statistically significant increase in bullying understanding compared to the control group. This result suggests that the intervention contributed to strengthening adolescents cognitive awareness of bullying forms, consequences, and prevention strategies. However, these findings should be interpreted cautiously. The present study measured cognitive understanding rather than direct behavioral outcomes; therefore, conclusions regarding reductions in bullying prevalence cannot be drawn. Prior research has emphasized that improvements in knowledge and awareness represent an important preliminary step in prevention efforts, but cognitive gains do not automatically translate into sustained behavioral change (Ttofi & Farrington, 2011)(Durlak et al., 2011), Thus, the observed improvement may be best understood as an enhancement in moral and social cognition that could potentially support longer-term behavioral regulation.

The connection between religious moderation and the observed outcomes can be interpreted through multiple interrelated mechanisms. Psychologically, structured reflection and guided discussion may enhance empathy and perspective-taking, which are consistently associated with lower acceptance of bullying and greater prosocial engagement (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). From a moral-regulatory perspective, bullying behavior has been linked to processes of moral disengagement, whereby individuals cognitively justify harmful actions or minimize victim impact (Gini et al., 2014). The emphasis on tolerance, accountability, and non-violence within the religious moderation framework may have encouraged reflective processes associated with moral internalization and reduced cognitive tendencies toward moral disengagement.

At a cultural level, integrating shared moral values into school-based discussions may influence perceived peer norms, consistent with the social-ecological model of bullying, which highlights the role of contextual and normative factors in shaping aggressive behavior (Hong & Espelage, 2012). Compared to conventional anti-bullying programs that focus primarily on rule enforcement and disciplinary consequences, this approach emphasizes internal normative reflection. While policy-based interventions target external regulation, value-oriented psychoeducational strategies may operate through internal cognitive and moral processes (Feliana et al., 2023). The observed increase in understanding may therefore reflect strengthened moral appraisal rather than immediate behavioral suppression.

The intervention addressed multiple dimensions of bullying physical, verbal, social, and relational consistent with established conceptualizations of bullying behavior (Olweus, 2013). By explicitly examining these dimensions, the program encouraged participants to recognize that bullying extends beyond overt physical aggression to include verbal hostility, social exclusion, and relational manipulation. Research indicates that relational and social forms of bullying are strongly associated with psychological distress and long-term mental health risks (Arseneault, 2018). Through structured discussions and reflective activities, participants were guided to evaluate how such behaviors affect peer relationships and emotional well-being. Rather than positioning religious moderation as a doctrinal solution, the program operationalized it as a framework for reinforcing empathy, social responsibility, and inclusive peer norms. In this sense, the intervention aligns with broader social-emotional and character education approaches while contextualizing them within culturally resonant value systems. In addition, the present analysis focused on overall bullying understanding scores and did not separately examine specific bullying dimensions such as physical, verbal, social, or relational bullying. Future studies may benefit from analyzing these dimensions independently to identify which aspects of bullying awareness are most responsive to psychoeducational intervention.

The findings contribute to the growing literature on bullying awareness by highlighting the potential role of value-oriented moral frameworks in shaping adolescents' cognitive appraisal of peer aggression. While most conventional anti-bullying programs emphasize behavioral management, supervision, and disciplinary regulation (Fox et al., 2012; Suud et al., 2025), the present study suggests that integrating moral-regulatory constructs such as tolerance, empathy, and accountability may influence the cognitive mechanisms underlying bullying-related judgments. From a moral disengagement perspective (Bandura, 1989), bullying behavior is often sustained through cognitive justifications that minimize harm or diffuse responsibility (A. S. Rahmatullah & Azhar, 2020). The observed increase in bullying understanding in this study may reflect enhanced moral awareness that challenges such justificatory processes. This suggests that prevention models may benefit from incorporating structured opportunities for moral reflection rather than relying solely on external enforcement strategies.

Furthermore, the findings extend social-ecological perspectives on bullying (Hong & Espelage, 2012) by demonstrating how culturally embedded value systems such as religious moderation can function as contextual normative resources within school environments. Rather than positioning religious moderation as a doctrinal intervention, the study conceptualizes it as a culturally resonant framework that strengthens internal regulation and reflective judgment. This contributes to theoretical discussions on how culturally grounded moral constructs may complement established social-emotional learning approaches.

The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) activities conducted during the intervention provided important contextual insights into how local cultural values shape adolescents' interpretations of peer relationships and conflict resolution. In the Philippine context, the concept of *Kapwa* often translated as shared identity or relational connectedness plays a central role in structuring interpersonal dynamics. Rather than emphasizing individual autonomy, *Kapwa* underscores mutual responsibility, collective dignity, and the preservation of social harmony within a community (Tutor et al., 2025). Such relational orientation may influence how adolescents perceive acts of exclusion, verbal hostility, or relational manipulation, reframing them not merely as individual misconduct but as disruptions to communal balance.

From a social-ecological perspective, bullying behavior is not solely an individual psychological phenomenon but is embedded within normative systems and relational expectations (Hong & Espelage, 2012). The integration of *Kapwa*

into reflective discussions may therefore operate at the cultural-normative level by reinforcing shared standards of acceptable behavior. When bullying is discussed within a relational framework that values interconnectedness, students may be more inclined to evaluate peer aggression in terms of collective impact rather than personal conflict alone (A. S. R. Rahmatullah et al., 2022). This contextual alignment may help explain why value-oriented discussions resonated with participants and contributed to enhanced understanding.

The alignment between Kapwa and the religious moderation framework used in this study is not doctrinal but functional. Both emphasize tolerance, mutual respect, and social accountability as guiding principles for interpersonal conduct. Within the intervention, religious moderation was operationalized as a reflective moral lens rather than theological instruction (Imron et al., 2023). This distinction is important, as it situates spirituality within the domain of moral cognition and emotional regulation rather than dogmatic transmission. Emerging evidence suggests that structured spiritual reflection can enhance self-regulation (Halik et al., 2025), empathy, and emotional awareness factors associated with lower aggression and improved interpersonal functioning (Ramadhanti et al., 2024).

Moreover, culturally resonant frameworks may strengthen internalization processes. Moral internalization is more likely when values are perceived as socially meaningful and contextually legitimate. In this sense, the integration of Kapwa with a value-based moderation framework may have facilitated deeper cognitive engagement by connecting abstract moral principles with lived social experiences. This integration does not imply that cultural or religious constructs alone are sufficient to prevent bullying. Rather, it suggests that prevention efforts may be more effective when embedded within culturally intelligible moral narratives that support reflection, empathy, and relational accountability (Mansir et al., 2021; Muassomah et al., 2025). By situating the intervention within locally grounded relational norms, the study demonstrates how culturally embedded value systems can complement established school-based prevention strategies. This culturally contextualized approach contributes to broader discussions on how bullying awareness models can be adapted to diverse educational settings without abandoning theoretical rigor.

Practically, the findings suggest that schools may consider complementing conventional anti-bullying policies with structured psychoeducational programs that promote reflective dialogue on peer relationships. While rule enforcement and reporting mechanisms remain essential, prevention efforts may be strengthened when students are encouraged to critically examine the moral and emotional dimensions of bullying behavior. The intervention model developed in this study demonstrates that discussions centered on tolerance, empathy, and social responsibility can be integrated into existing character education or guidance counseling sessions. However, implementation should remain context-sensitive. Because this study was conducted in a single Philippine school, adaptation to other cultural or educational settings requires careful consideration of local values and institutional structures. Importantly, the program does not replace disciplinary systems but may serve as a complementary approach that targets internal moral cognition. Future school-based interventions may benefit from combining policy-level enforcement with reflective, value-oriented learning to address both external regulation and internal normative development.

Despite the positive findings, the present study should be interpreted cautiously. The intervention was conducted over a relatively short period and primarily measured adolescents' cognitive understanding of bullying rather than direct behavioral outcomes. Increased awareness and reflective understanding do not necessarily translate into sustained behavioral change or long-term reductions in bullying behavior. Therefore, the findings may best be interpreted as preliminary evidence of short-term cognitive and moral-reflective engagement. Future longitudinal studies are needed to examine whether such psychoeducational interventions contribute to enduring changes in peer interaction and bullying-related behavior over time.

4. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that value-oriented psychoeducation grounded in religious moderation contributes to adolescents' understanding and reflective awareness regarding bullying within a secondary school context. The findings suggest that principles such as tolerance, empathy, social responsibility, and mutual respect may function as reflective moral frameworks that shape how students interpret peer aggression and interpersonal relationships. However, the findings should be interpreted cautiously, as the study primarily measured cognitive understanding rather than direct behavioral outcomes or long-term reductions in bullying behavior. Practically, the findings indicate that reflective and culturally grounded psychoeducational approaches may complement existing school-based anti-bullying programs by encouraging critical discussion and moral awareness regarding peer interaction. Nevertheless, the present study was conducted within a single school context using a short-term intervention design, limiting broader generalizability and long-term interpretation. Future research is recommended to employ longitudinal and randomized intervention designs to examine whether improvements in bullying awareness contribute to sustained behavioral change over time. Further

studies may also investigate potential mediating mechanisms such as empathy development, moral disengagement, and self-regulation in order to better understand how value-oriented psychoeducational interventions influence bullying-related cognition and behavior.

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