
Development of an anti-bullying intervention model using the “Empati!Go” snakes and ladders board game at SDN Sidodadi II/154

Ellyta Jaatsiah¹, Dewi Nur Hayati², Saskia Shafa' Rafifah³, Kalevi Akbar Arifino⁴,
Mohammad Farras Khuluqi⁵

¹ State University of Surabaya; 24040564118@mhs.unesa.ac.id

² State University of Surabaya; 24040564095@mhs.unesa.ac.id

³ State University of Surabaya; 24040564105@mhs.unesa.ac.id

⁴ State University of Surabaya; 24040564114@mhs.unesa.ac.id

⁵ State University of Surabaya; 24040564092@mhs.unesa.ac.id

⁶ State University of Surabaya; 24040564098@mhs.unesa.ac.id

Corresponding Author: 24040564118@mhs.unesa.ac.id

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-3784-4932>¹, <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-7290-1409>², ,
<https://orcid.org/0009-0006-5518-5833>⁴, <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-3624-2623>⁵.

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to design a bullying prevention intervention model using the board game Empati!Go and test its effectiveness in increasing students' awareness and empathy toward bullying behavior. The method used was action research, with 48 students from classes 3A and 3B at SD Negeri Sidodadi II/154 in Surabaya as the subjects. Data were collected through observation, documentation, pre-tests, game interventions, and post-tests, and analyzed qualitatively, supported by simple quantitative score comparisons. A sample of 13 students was selected for the pre-test and post-test data. The research results showed a significant increase: the students' average pre-test score of 1.69 rose to 10.00 on the post-test after playing Empati!Go, with a difference of +8.31 points. This finding surpasses the effectiveness of other anti-bullying board games, such as The Galaxy Rescue and Stop Bullying (Kurniawan et al., 2024), which are also documented in the scoping review as board games, and differ from conventional snakes-and-ladders games (Afandi, 2015; Wati, 2021), which merely transfer cognitive knowledge. The novelty of Empati!Go lies in integrating a mandatory multiple role-taking mechanism, in which players assume the roles of victim, perpetrator, and helper within a single game, thereby explicitly operationalizing the concepts of role-taking, the generalized other, and the mind-self from George Herbert Mead's symbolic interactionism. The implications of this study suggest that empathy-based board games can fundamentally transform students' social understanding, such that teasing behavior, initially perceived as a joke, is interpreted as bullying following the intervention. This intervention model is recommended for adoption in elementary schools as a low-tech, easily replicable, and effective promotive and preventive strategy to foster a safe, child-friendly school environment.

Keyword: *anti-bullying interventions; educational board game; symbolic interactionism.*

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Introduction

The phenomenon of bullying in elementary school settings in Indonesia shows an increasingly alarming trend, particularly because young children are the group most vulnerable to the psychological and social impacts of bullying. Various sources report that educational institutions, which are supposed to be safe havens for students, often become sites of violence, both physical and verbal. Data from the Indonesian Education Monitoring Network (JPPI) indicates that in 2024, there were 573 incidents of violence in the education sector, a significant increase from 285 the previous year, with approximately 31% of these incidents involving bullying. Moreover, sexual violence and bullying were the most common forms of violence in Indonesian schools in 2024 (Santika, 2025). Additionally, reports from the KPAI and JPPI indicate that the majority of victims were from elementary school levels, with the dominant forms of bullying being physical and verbal violence (Humas KPAI, 2024; Pusiknas Bareskrim Polri, 2025). This situation is further exacerbated by the proliferation of viral bullying cases in the media throughout 2025, indicating that this phenomenon has become a systemic issue within the education sector. Bullying behavior in elementary school settings remains a global issue with serious impacts on students' psychological, social, and academic development (Kurniawan et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2026). These facts demonstrate that bullying is not merely a personal issue but a social problem requiring serious and systematic attention. If not addressed early on, this behavior can escalate into more complex forms of violence in the future. Therefore, an approach is needed that focuses not only on law enforcement but also on prevention through Education.

Bullying behavior at the elementary school level impacts students' psychological, social, and academic well-being, with low empathy emerging as one of the primary factors driving such actions (Nashir et al., 2026). A study indicates that empathy training can reduce the likelihood of bullying, particularly by enhancing the ability to see things from another person's perspective (Nashir et al., 2026; Rizal & Muslikah, 2025). In efforts to address bullying, various board games, such as "Stop Bullying" and modified versions of Monopoly, have proven effective in enhancing empathy and serve as educational tools for students (Adila et al., 2024; Kurniawan et al., 2024). However, research by Hidayat et al. (2025) revealed that increased empathy knowledge is not always accompanied by more empathetic behavior; therefore, the development of media that not only focuses on understanding but also motivates students to behave empathetically is needed. Various studies indicate that the use of games as interventions—including digital and board games—successfully enhances students' awareness, knowledge, and empathy regarding bullying (Lepe-salazar et al., 2024; Paiva et al., 2021;

Willems et al., 2025). Additionally, research by Zubković et al. (2022) demonstrates that the challenge element in games significantly improves understanding of anti-bullying actions, while the immersion element significantly increases empathy toward victims.

Findings from various studies support the effectiveness of this approach. Ponamon et al. (2026), in their community service program at SD GMIM 8 Tomohon, demonstrated that empathy-based emotional literacy education can improve students' understanding of bullying while fostering a caring attitude toward peers, as reflected in a 26.3-point increase in post-test scores. Nur'aini et al. (2026), using the Golden Circle method (Why-How-What), also demonstrated that an approach starting with an understanding of why bullying is wrong can build students' intrinsic motivation to act empathetically, rather than merely out of fear of punishment. Regarding game-based media, Wati (2021) and Afandi (2015) developed a snakes-and-ladders game as a learning tool in elementary schools, and both reported significant improvements in learning outcomes, 45% (Wati, 2021) and 40% (Afandi, 2015), following the use of this medium.

Although many studies indicate that board games can enhance empathy, research specifically focused on the development of a Snakes and Ladders game designed to prevent bullying, grounded in Mead's symbolic interactionism theory, remains limited. Most existing media have not specifically applied the concept of others' roles as the foundation for empathetic behavior. Furthermore, intervention programs to prevent bullying among lower-grade students in elementary school are still rarely implemented and typically focus more on knowledge or the development of empathetic attitudes. Thus, this study aims to create Empati!Go is a modified snakes-and-ladders board game based on Mead's theory, with the goal of enhancing understanding of empathy and anti-bullying attitudes among third-grade students in elementary school.

This study is grounded in George Herbert Mead's theory of symbolic interactionism, which emphasizes the relationship between mind, self, and society in shaping social behavior (Mead, 2022). This approach has been used to combat bullying and has proven effective in changing students' attitudes (Londo, 2025). However, the implementation of social-emotional learning in educational institutions remains suboptimal and tends to be reactive, necessitating more structured intervention strategies (Kristianto & Wakhudin, 2025). In this context, educational games can provide students with opportunities for hands-on learning that supports the understanding of social values. Through the ability to understand others' perspectives, empathy can mitigate bullying behaviors and strengthen better social relationships. Thus, game-based learning methods are considered a suitable option to support social-emotional learning and the

development of empathy among elementary school students. The high incidence of bullying among elementary school students highlights the need for intervention tools that not only enhance knowledge but also directly foster empathy and social skills. Research by Yang & Lu (2024) has developed multi-role, virtual, scenario-based learning to enhance empathy; however, studies on conventional board games grounded in Mead's symbolic interactionism and the concept of role-taking remain limited. Therefore, the novelty of Empati!Go lies in the development of a snakes-and-ladders board game that facilitates face-to-face interaction, empathetic reflection, and direct role-taking, thus differing from previous media that primarily used digital platforms or focused solely on knowledge enhancement. This method is expected to improve students' understanding of the importance of empathy and mutual respect.

Furthermore, using games as a tool can increase student engagement in the learning process. This is crucial because monotonous teaching approaches are often ineffective in conveying social values. By combining educational elements with games, this intervention model is expected to yield more positive outcomes. Consequently, this study highlights the importance of innovation in bullying prevention strategies, particularly at the elementary school level. By focusing on developing interactive, empathy-based media, this study is expected to contribute to creating a safer, more comfortable, and bullying-free educational environment.

Methods

This study employs an Action Research approach to implement interventions and observe changes resulting from specific actions. The researcher chose this approach because the study not only focuses on observing existing phenomena but also on efforts to solve problems through concrete actions within the school environment. This study is grounded in Symbolic Interactionism, a theory introduced by George Herbert Mead, with its analysis centered on Mind, Self, and Society. The research process followed comprises the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages. During the planning stage, the researcher developed research instruments, designed the "Empati!Go" snakes-and-ladders game, and prepared materials on bullying and empathy. The implementation stage involved directly applying the game as an educational tool for the students. The evaluation stage was conducted last to determine changes in students' understanding following the intervention, using a sample of selected students to whom specific questions were posed.

This study was conducted at SDN Sidodadi II/154, Surabaya, in April 2026. The fieldwork stages began with observation and coordination with school officials on April 8, 2026, followed by a board game trial on April 13, 2026, and the intervention's implementation on April 14,

2026. The selected research subjects were students from classes 3A and 3B, comprising 26 students from class 3A and 22 from class 3B, for a total of 48. The first session was conducted with class 3B, and the second session with class 3A. Each session lasted approximately 40–50 minutes. In each session, students participated in a pre-test, the Empati!Go board game, and a post-test. The sampling technique for administering the pre-test and post-test questionnaires used purposive random sampling to reduce bias and select respondents based on specific criteria aligned with the research objectives. Pre-tests and post-tests were conducted to measure changes in students' knowledge and empathy before and after playing (Chen et al., 2025; Freire et al., 2021). The primary criterion for respondents was that they had participated directly in the Empati!Go snakes-and-ladders game activity. The number meeting the criteria consisted of 7 students from class 3A and 6 students from class 3B, with the same students completing both the pre-test and post-test questionnaires, resulting in a total sample of 13 students for the pre-test and post-test. This number was chosen because the respondents participated directly in the intervention, so they were considered capable of providing useful data regarding changes in understanding and attitudes toward bullying behavior before and after the activity. The subjects of this study were selected because elementary school students are still in the formative stage of developing attitudes and empathy-based ways of thinking, which are crucial for preventing bullying. The intervention conducted through the "Empati!Go" snakes-and-ladders game helps students understand the impacts of bullying and fosters empathy toward their peers.

This study analyzed data qualitatively, supported by simple quantitative data

in the form of a simple comparison of pre- and post-intervention scores. The comparison of pre- and post-intervention scores was obtained through observations in the form of pre-tests and post- tests administered to a randomly selected sample of students. The pre-test was administered before the intervention to determine the students' initial levels of understanding of bullying and empathy; the post-test was then administered after the intervention to measure changes in understanding of bullying and empathy among the same students who had been selected for the pre-test.

Result and Discussion

Results

Table 1. Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test Results

Description	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Total Respondents	13	13
Average Score	1,69	10,00
Highest Score	3	11
Lowest Score	0	7
Mean Difference	-	8,31

Based on the *pre-test* data analysis of 13 respondents, comprising 6 students from Class 3B and 7 from Class 3A, it was found that students' initial understanding of bullying and empathy remains low. This is evident from the average score of 1.69, with a high of 3 and a low of 0. This information indicates that many students are not yet aware of the impact of bullying on others or its various forms. As a result, students often view behaviors such as insults, teasing, or physical violence as part of normal social interaction before receiving intervention. This indicates that students still do not understand the social cues associated with bullying. This situation highlights the need for a learning approach that not only provides knowledge but also offers hands-on experiences to help students better understand the concepts of bullying and empathy.

After the intervention using *the Empati!Go board game*, test results showed a significant improvement. Students lowered their average score to 10.00, with the highest score at 11 and the lowest at 7. There was a significant change in understanding following the intervention, with an average difference of 8.31 points. This indicates that nearly all students learned more about bullying and empathy through the *Empati!Go board game*. In addition to achieving better scores, students' ability to identify social situations related to bullying has improved. Students began to distinguish between harmless jokes and behavior that could hurt others. This suggests that the intervention not only improved students' cognitive aspects but also began to influence their affective aspects, such as their ability to understand others' feelings and perspectives.

Field Trial Results: School Administration Feedback

To assess the feasibility and practicality of the *Empati!Go board game*, researchers interviewed Mr. Zico, the administrative staff member at SD Negeri Sidodadi II/154 Surabaya, who served as the liaison between the research team and the school. He noted that the board

game activities were met with high enthusiasm from the students and differed from their daily routines.

"I saw the kids were really enthusiastic, ma'am. Usually, during recess or free periods, they're all over the place, running around, shouting. But yesterday, when you and the team were leading the activity, they were all sitting quietly, focused on playing. That rarely happens, I was even surprised,"

Regarding changes in student behavior after participating in the activity, Mr. Zico reported that the 3rd-grade homeroom teacher, Ms. Fari, had noted that positive changes were emerging.

"Ms. Fari, the 3rd-grade homeroom teacher, mentioned that a few days after the game, the children started to change. Those who used to tease their friends for different lunches or wrinkled clothes are now starting to speak up when someone tries to tease them. Some even reported to Ms. Rina when they saw their friends being mocked. They still need guidance, but the effects are already visible, ma'am."

Mr. Zico also recommended that the Empati!The board game should be used again in schools and should be integrated into learning activities.

"It's worth it, in fact, I think it's necessary. If possible, it should be incorporated into the Civic Education (PPKn) curriculum or P5 activities, since the theme is about anti-violence and character building, it's a perfect fit. My only suggestion is that the board game shouldn't be limited to just one set. If possible, increase it to 3 or 4 sets so the children don't have to wait in line for too long. But regarding the game's concept and how it's played, I think it's already a good educational experience, and the children enjoy it."

Overall, the results of the interviews with school officials indicate that the Empati!Go board game received a positive response, is deemed suitable for use, and has the potential to be further developed as an intervention tool for bullying prevention in elementary schools.

Results of Student Activity and Response Observations

Student participation during the game was also observed to supplement the quantitative data, as recommended in serious game studies on bullying (Paiva et al., 2021; Zubković et al., 2022). According to the observation results, there was a fairly striking difference in classroom dynamics before and after the intervention. The initial situation in Class 3B (morning session) indicated that the students appeared to lack self-confidence and were not active in interacting. Many children were only focused when the activity began and were reluctant to respond. However, after the Empati!Go board game was introduced, the students gradually began to show interest. Despite their limited engagement, they started following the game's flow,

understanding the rules, and daring to participate in simple discussions.

In contrast, in Class 3A (afternoon session), students displayed a more active, expressive, and enthusiastic attitude from the start of the activity. The learning process was highly dynamic during the game. Students showed high levels of participation, becoming enthusiastic as they read game cards, answered questions, and completed various challenges. Students were also more communicative with one another, marked by stronger interactions, group collaboration, and emotional responses such as laughter and enthusiasm. Before the activity, some students appeared passive, shy about speaking, and still viewed teasing as ordinary banter. During the intervention using the Empati!Go board game, the classroom atmosphere became more active, interactive, and enthusiastic. Students began to feel confident discussing, collaborating, and understanding the impact of bullying and the importance of empathy toward peers. After playing, some students started showing concern for their classmates, such as saying, “Hey, A was speaking rudely earlier,” and “It’s sad if they keep getting teased.” Additionally, students gave positive feedback such as “Teacher, can we play again sometime?” “Teacher, will you come here tomorrow?”, “It was fun playing, Teacher,” and “I now realize that teasing makes people sad,” which demonstrated the students’ interest and understanding toward the activity.

Overall, the classroom atmosphere during the intervention can be classified as active or participatory. *The Empati!Go board game* successfully transformed the learning approach, which previously tended to be one-sided, into a more interactive one that directly engaged the students. This demonstrates that games, as an intervention, can enhance student participation in the learning process. The students' responses to the game were also very positive. They appeared highly enthusiastic, deeply interested, and emotionally engaged at every stage of the game. Additionally, the students showed interest in interacting with the facilitator through various means, such as asking questions, discussing their experiences related to bullying, and requesting a joint debriefing after playing the *Empati!Go board game*.

Interpretation of Results

Based on the quantitative and qualitative data obtained, it can be concluded that the use of the Empati!Go board game is effective in improving students' understanding of bullying and their sense of empathy. This improvement is evident not only in the significant *post-test* results but also in changes in students' attitudes, engagement, and responses to social situations. When linked to the symbolic interactionism perspective proposed by Herbert Mead, this improvement occurs due to the intense social interactions that take place during the game. In the Empati!Go

snakes-and-ladders game, students are confronted with various situations reflecting bullying behavior. Through this interactive process, students begin to redefine the meaning of social symbols that they previously viewed as jokes, transforming them into actions recognized as potentially harmful to others. In other words, the Empati!Go *board game* functions not only as a learning tool but also as a means to shape new social meanings among students, thereby enhancing their awareness and empathy in daily life.

Discussion

Students often interpret teasing, mocking, name-calling, or physical jokes among friends as not serious issues; they view these actions as “ordinary jokes” or part of everyday social interaction. However, from the perspective of

From the victim's perspective, such treatment can hurt feelings, damage self-confidence, and even trigger trauma. This is the starting point of this study: to change students' understanding that teasing and similar behaviors are not merely jokes, but actions that have the potential to hurt others. In line with George Herbert Mead's symbolic interactionism, every behavior, word, or expression is a social symbol (Mead, 2022). The meaning of a symbol is not fixed to the action itself but emerges from the process of interaction and negotiation of meaning among students. In other words, “teasing” can mean “funny” if the peer group consistently responds with laughter, but it can also mean “hurtful” if the group responds with empathy and rejection. This study demonstrates that prior to the intervention, students had collectively constructed the meaning “teasing is just a joke” through their daily interactions. According to Mead, an individual's ability to take on another's perspective (*role-taking*) is the foundation of social consciousness.

When a child imagines what their friend feels when teased, they are engaging in *role-taking*. Conversely, when a child fails to engage in *role-taking*, they view the action solely from their own perspective—what Mead calls “*I*.” Through the Empati!Go game, children are given the opportunity to practice role-taking that is, to try to put themselves in the position of a friend who is being teased or subjected to unpleasant treatment. In this process, students not only hear explanations about bullying but also face situations that encourage them to imagine what others are feeling. From this experience, *self-awareness* begins to grow—that is, an awareness of one's own attitudes and behaviors. Children gradually realize that actions previously considered ordinary can actually cause sadness, shame, or hurt in others.

When this play experience is repeated in group interactions, they also begin to form a “*generalized other*”, an understanding of shared norms that teasing, humiliating, and belittling

peers is not acceptable behavior. This understanding enables students to begin viewing bullying from the victim's perspective rather than solely from the perpetrator's or bystanders' viewpoints. At this stage, they do not merely know that bullying is wrong, but also begin to understand why such actions are painful and should be avoided. This internalization process is evident in the shift in students' attitudes, as they no longer merely wait for reprimands from teachers but actively report actions they deem inappropriate and defend marginalized peers (Ponamon et al., 2026). These findings align with the Gate-Bull program, which documented an increase in bystanders' willingness to act following game-based interventions (Willems et al., 2025). This shift in perspective is reflected in the improved pre-test and post-test scores. The average score, which initially stood at 1.69, increased to 10.00, a difference of 8.31 points. This increase indicates that the intervention using the Empati!Go board game not only enhances students' knowledge but also helps foster stronger social awareness and empathy toward the experiences of bullying victims.

A pilot test of the modified Empati!Go snakes and ladders *board game* was conducted with third-grade students at Sidodadi II/154 Public Elementary School, where a *pre-test* was administered before playing *the board game*, followed by a *post-test* after playing. *The pre-test* results showed an average student comprehension score of only 1.69. This indicates that most students were not yet able to understand that teasing can hurt others. They were trapped in the perspective of the perpetrator or the bystander, viewing the act as entertainment. Experts refer to this as low cognitive empathy—the ability to understand others' perspectives and feelings. Research by Rizal & Muslikah (2025) confirms that students who bully others in elementary school generally lack cognitive empathy. They cannot consider the emotional impact of their actions. The same was revealed by Nashir et al. (2026), who stated that the perpetrator's inability to put themselves in the victim's perspective is

the primary trigger for aggressive behavior. Thus, the initial condition of the students we studied reflects a “small community” that has not yet reached a collective consensus that teasing is a form of symbolic violence. Humanistic values, such as compassion and respect for others' feelings, have not been well internalized. However, after playing the modified Snakes and Ladders game, Empati!Go, the data showed that the students' average understanding score changed to 10.00, indicating a difference of 8.31 points. This is not merely a number but a shift in the students' understanding of how to interpret an action classified as bullying.

After a series of interactions within the game, students developed what Mead refers to as “Me”, that is, the self internalized from the attitudes and expectations of others (in this case, the expectations of the playgroup, the facilitator, and the game rules) (Mead, 2022). This new “Me”

holds the beliefs: “Teasing is wrong,” “We must defend the victim,” “If I’m teased, I’ll be hurt.” Subsequently, when students return to the real world and face a teasing situation, this new “Me” will control the spontaneous response of “I” (such as the urge to join in the teasing). They will pause to think, recall the lesson from the game, and then choose a more prosocial action. In psychology, this is called *self-regulation*, and in Mead’s theory, it is referred to as the ability to assume the role of a generalized *other*. Research by Francisco et al. (2024) found that participants with higher empathy showed a reduction in *moral disengagement* (self-justification of aggressive actions) over time. This means that when someone can feel and understand the victim's suffering, they will find it increasingly difficult to justify bullying behavior. Our findings align with the focus on enhancing understanding, suggesting that increased cognitive and affective empathy can lead students to reject teasing behavior rather than justify it as “just a joke.” Nur’aini et al. (2026) also confirm in their research that empathy instilled from an early age through

Character education and positive social interactions will make children more sensitive to others’ feelings, thereby reducing the tendency to bully.

With students demonstrating increased cognitive and affective empathy, this indicates that their emotional responses emerge after successful role-taking. Students not only recognize that teasing is wrong (cognitive aspect) but also begin to feel uncomfortable when witnessing a peer being teased (affective aspect). This is evident in a more vibrant classroom dynamic, the emergence of the courage to report incidents, and a willingness to defend the victim. Kurniawan et al. (2024) concluded in their *scoping review* that *role-playing games* (RPGs) can train children to enhance empathy in the context of bullying. *The board game* Empati!Go serves a similar function by providing scenarios that allow students to repeatedly practice *role-taking*, thereby honing their cognitive and affective empathy. Research by Adila et al. (2024) also demonstrates that *board games* designed with collaborative gameplay systems and activity cards can enhance children’s understanding of anti-bullying concepts and their social engagement. These findings reinforce the evidence that *board games* are not merely entertainment media but effective tools for reconstructing social meaning.

In daily life, the process of negotiating the meaning of a symbol often takes time and tends to lack focus. However, the Empati!Go board game can accelerate this process because the game offers clear rules and is based on empathy to win, thereby creating opportunities to reflect, take action, and think of responses that do not involve bullying. Unlike traditional snakes-and-ladders games, which merely convey information through thinking questions on each square (Afandi, 2015; Wati, 2021), Empati!Go combines questions with role-playing in given scenarios

that focus on students' emotions and perspectives.

of the students. This aligns with research findings (Zhang et al., 2026) that the most successful anti-bullying games integrate cognitive, emotional, and behavioral objectives simultaneously rather than focusing on just one. Furthermore, this game provides immediate feedback, such as questions or statements to peers, facilitators, or teachers, to reinforce students' understanding. Not only that, but this board game also allows students to experience various bullying scenarios through role-playing exercises. Additionally, the game creates a space where students feel more at ease experimenting with responses without fear of judgment, fostering honesty and openness in reflection. According to Mead, the process of *self-development* occurs through *play* and *structured games*. In the *play* stage, children engage in *role-taking*; in the *game* stage, they learn to follow rules applicable to all players, and at this point, they reach a developmental milestone in understanding others' roles. The Empati!Go *board game* operates at this stage as well, where there are rules, a shared goal, and each player must consider their actions.

The results of this study indicate that Empati!Go successfully enhances understanding of bullying and fosters empathy toward victims. This research supports the model proposed by Zubković et al. (2022), which states that challenge elements in games impact knowledge acquisition, while immersion elements influence the development of empathy. In the discussion of Empati!Go, the challenge of completing role-playing missions enhances students' understanding of various forms of bullying. In this regard, the success of Empati!Go is closely tied to the teacher's role within the game. Teachers at the research sites reported that students became more open to sharing their experiences and increasingly brave in reporting incidents (Ponamon et al., 2026; Willems et al., 2025). From a symbolic interactionist perspective, Empati!Go plays a role in creating a safe school environment by reshaping shared meanings regarding acceptable behavior.

Changes following the game were evident not only in improved post-test scores but also in tangible attitudinal shifts: students became more active, more willing to report incidents to facilitators, better able to distinguish between harmless teasing and bullying, and more caring toward their peers. From Mead's perspective, this serves as evidence that the "Me" embodying *anti-bullying* values has been formed and is beginning to regulate the impulsive "I." The concept of "mind" is defined as the ability to use symbols in responding to oneself, and "self" is considered the ability to view oneself from another person's perspective. In other words, students have developed a more empathetic and socially responsible "*self*." A similar process was also observed, in which engagement in the game was positively associated with increased

compassion toward victims (Zubković et al., 2022). This study not only provides a practical solution in the form of *a board game* but also reaffirms a fundamental truth of symbolic interactionism: social reality *is not given*; it is always negotiated through interaction. And through thoughtfully designed interactions, we can create a school reality that is more humane, civilized, and free from bullying.

Conclusion

Various types of bullying behaviors are often unrecognized by many people and dismissed as mere harmless jokes, particularly in elementary school settings. Verbal bullying, such as sarcasm and taunts, is frequently downplayed and treated as a common occurrence in the daily lives of elementary school students. Their inability to understand others' feelings suggests that their empathy has not yet developed properly. This is evident from the *pre-test* results, which show a low level of understanding regarding the impact of unrecognized bullying behaviors on others' mental and emotional well-being, as evidenced by an average score of 1.69. Through intervention and

Education using *the Empati!Go board game*, a shift in students' perspectives on bullying and its effects became evident, as shown by a significant increase in the average *post-test* score to 10.00. This means that understanding, which initially averaged only 1.69, increased by 8.31 points after playing *the "Empati!Go" snakes-and-ladders board game*. From Herbert Mead's perspective, the success of this intervention indicates a shift in the meaning attributed to bullying symbols, where teasing, once viewed as a harmless joke, is now recognized as a harmful act that must be avoided. This game provides Education through direct social interaction, presented as a fun Snakes and Ladders game suitable for elementary school-aged children. Through this game, students learn to understand that small actions like teasing or mocking are also forms of bullying and should not be considered normal.

This research introduces an innovation in the development of anti-bullying intervention models by focusing on instilling empathy in children through board games. Unlike typical anti-bullying approaches conducted through lectures or awareness campaigns, Empati!Go uses play as an innovative and enjoyable learning tool that gives students the opportunity to understand their own feelings and those of others, the perspectives of others in a given situation, and the impact of their behavior on others, through a board game designed to enhance empathy. Empati!Go offers a more

participatory approach that better aligns with the developmental characteristics of elementary school children. Through this, it is hoped that future research can further explore the development of empathy and the prevention of bullying and violence in early childhood settings over the long term.

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