Beyond Punishment: Unraveling the Integrative Empowerment Model for Youth Violence Prevention

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ABSTRACT

This paper methodically analyses the Integrative Empowerment Model for Youth Violence Prevention (IEMYVP), a model developed by the author. The primary objective is to evaluate the effectiveness of the IEMYVP in reducing instances of bullying within educational settings. Employing a hypothetical dataset that reflects the demographic and behavioral dynamics of a primary and secondary school, the study utilizes multiple regression analysis to assess the impacts of the model's five key components: awareness, empowerment, participation, support systems, and community engagement. Grounded in human rights principles, the IEMYVP incorporates Joseph Raz's interest theory and John Rawls' concept of justice as fairness, advocating a comprehensive strategy for bullying prevention. The IEMYVP proposes a holistic approach to bullying prevention by focusing on enhancing awareness, empowering individuals, promoting active participation, supporting victims, and engaging the community. The study's results indicate that each component notably decreases bullying, with awareness and empowerment showing the most significant impact. These components collectively account for approximately 67.75% of the variation in bullying reduction, demonstrating the model's strong potential to create safer educational environments. The findings highlight the necessity for empirical testing of the IEMYVP across diverse educational landscapes to refine its elements and verify its effectiveness. The study promotes integrating this model into broader anti-bullying strategies to improve student well-being and security, emphasizing fairness and respect. The paper concludes by advocating for extensive implementation trials, aiming to establish a robust, evidence-based framework for youth violence prevention in schools.

KEYWORDS

Bullying, human rights, integrative empowerment model, proactive intervention, school environment, youth violence prevention.

INTRODUCTION

This paper investigates the potential of the integrative empowerment model to reduce bullying incidents within educational institutions. It examines the model's application in various school settings and evaluates its effectiveness in creating a safer and more inclusive environment for students. The study pivots around the central question: "How can the integrative empowerment model significantly reduce bullying incidents in schools across the European Union (EU) and Norway?" Bullying, a form of aggressive behavior, pertains to situations where juveniles and teens come across actions that instill discomfort, foster uncertainty, or cause a sensation of isolation (Olweus, 1993; Woods & Wolke, 2004). It can be physical, verbal, relational, psychological, or take the form of cyberbullying (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; Smith et al., 2008). Olweus (1997) provides an empirical analysis of bullying, portraying victims as insecure and weak and bullies as aggressive individuals with a strong desire for control, dominance, and power. The bully's traits are linked to various childhood conditions, such as a lack of emotional care, inadequate boundary setting, and the use of physical punishment. The child's inherent temperament is also a significant factor. Olweus (1997) also highlights the role of adult relationships within the family in shaping a child's aggressive behavior. Conversely, Faris and Ennett (2012) view bullying as a byproduct of a competition among young people for social hierarchy positions and a fight to prevent social degradation.

Studies have demonstrated that bullying is not a simple phenomenon but rather is influenced by a multifaceted interplay of various factors (Cook et al., 2010; Van Noorden et al., 2016). These factors encompass individual characteristics, family dynamics, the school environment, and even broader social contexts (Modecki et al., 2014; Smith et al., 2008). Individual characteristics may include personal traits such as self-esteem, emotional intelligence, and resilience. Family dynamics can involve aspects like parental involvement, family structure, and sibling relationships. The school environment encompasses elements such as school culture, teacher-student relationships, and peer group dynamics. Broader social contexts may encompass societal norms, media influence, and community resources. However, it's argued that bullying is the result of a power struggle (Schott and Søndergaard, 2014). Traits such as appearance or clothing, which are often targeted in bullying, are not fixed but are formed or constructed in the process where positions are contested. Bullying, therefore, does not target specific traits but rather what is considered acceptable at a given moment. This suggests that, in theory, anyone could be subjected to bullying. These actions can considerably impact youngsters and adolescents' emotional well-being and social interactions (Nansel et al., 2004). Notably, bullying frequently occurs covertly, typically in locations where adults are absent (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; Modecki et al., 2014; Smith et al., 2008).

Bullying Incidence in Norwegian Schools: A Rising Concern

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2020) emphasizes that every student is entitled to a secure and nurturing educational atmosphere that fosters health, well-being, and academic advancement. The 2022 student survey in Norway, with a response rate of

approximately 86% of the 450,000 students surveyed, indicated that more than 80% of the students reported a positive school experience (Norwegian Directorate of Education, 2023). Nevertheless, recent studies across all grades in Norwegian public schools have revealed a worrying trend: the incidence of bullying has seen a significant rise over the past three years (Dyvik, 2024; Wendelborg, 2023). While the annual survey had previously reported a decrease in bullying incidents among 7th and 10th graders from 2016 to 2019, a reversal of this trend was observed from 2020 onwards (Dyvik, 2024). During the school year 2016/17 to 2019/20, about 7% of primary school pupils in Norway reported experiencing bullying at least two to three times a month. However, this figure saw a recent surge, climbing to 7.9% in 2021/22 and nearing 10% in 2022/23 (Dyvik, 2024; Wendelborg, 2023). The 2023/24 school year marked a new high in the reported instances of bullying among primary and lower secondary school pupils in Norway. Close to 11% of 7th graders and 8% of 10th graders reported being bullied by their peers at least two to three times per month (Dyvik, 2024; Wendelborg, 2023). Additionally, during the same school year, 6.1% of upper secondary students in Norway reported experiencing bullying at least two to three times a month, marking the highest incidence rate for the period under review (Dyvik, 2024). A similar study conducted by Fossum and colleagues in 2023 discovered that 5.7% of middle school students in northern Norway reported feeling unsafe as a result of bullying.

Prevalence and Impact of Bullying in European Union Schools

Bullying in schools across the European Union (EU) is a critical issue that has been extensively studied. The Council of Europe has published a report highlighting the pervasive nature of violence in schools, particularly violence regarding orientation, gender identity or expression, or sex-related traits (Council of Europe, 2018). This type of violence is widespread throughout Europe and is frequently underreported, posing a significant risk to students' health and academic performance (UNESCO, 2023). The prevalence of bullying within the EU varies, with an OECD average indicating that approximately 23% of pupils indicate experiencing bullying on a recurring basis each month (OECD, 2019). National estimates suggest a significant and wide-ranging extent of bullying involvement in elementary schools across Europe, with anywhere from 10% to 50% of young people having experienced some form of bullying (Husky et al., 2020). The EU-sponsored "European Campaign against Bullying" has revealed startling data: around 51% of learners in Lithuania, 50% in Estonia, 43% in Bulgaria, 31% in Greece, 25% in Latvia, and 15% in Italy have been victims of bullying (CESIE 2014). This data underscores the severity of the problem in various EU states. The Health Behavior in School-aged Children (HBSC) inquiry, a joint effort with the WHO Regional Office for Europe conducted every four years, provides further insights (WHO, 2024[a]).

The 2021/2022 HBSC survey examined adolescent peer violence and bullying spanning 44 nations and regions throughout Europe, Central Asia, and Canada (WHO, 2024[a]). Despite increased awareness and efforts to address bullying, it remains a significant threat to student welfare. The rise of information technologies and social networks has added a new layer of complexity to bullying (European Parliament 2023). A recent study by WHO/Europe found that

one in six school-aged children is affected by cyberbullying. The study also noted an increase in cyberbullying incidents from 2018 to 2022, with the incidence of cyberbullying involving boys increasing from 11% to 14%, and for girls, it increased from 7% to 9%. Furthermore, the percentage of boys reporting experiences of cyberbullying climbed from 12% to 15%, and for girls, it advanced from 13% to 16% (WHO, 2024[b]). The study further revealed gender-specific trends in bullying behavior. Boys tended to exhibit more aggressive behaviors and engage in physical altercations, underscoring the importance of implementing strategies that foster emotional control and constructive social exchanges. On the other hand, the increasing prevalence of bullying, especially cyberbullying among girls, calls for tailored approaches that enhance digital security, cultivate empathy, and support inclusive educational environments (WHO, 2024b). Consequently, it is vital that educational authorities across Europe intensify their initiatives to establish a secure environment for children, with the goal of reducing the harmful impacts of bullying on students' mental health and academic performance (UNESCO, 2023).

Bridging the Gap: A New Approach to Bullying Prevention

Existing research on bullying within educational environments has thoroughly examined its occurrence, the complex nature of its origins, and the efficacy of different prevention and intervention methods (Olweus, 1993; Wang et al., 2014; Woods & Wolke, 2004). The focus of these studies has often been on specific elements such as the psychological effects of bullying, the socio-economic status of the participants, or the success of policy-based initiatives (Armitage, 2021; Nansel et al., 2004; Swearer & Hymel, 2015). Nonetheless, there is a notable absence of research investigating how comprehensive models, which amalgamate components of empowerment and rights-based approaches, can be effectively employed in a variety of educational settings. Much of the existing research has either concentrated on individual intervention methods or has been restricted in its scope concerning geographical diversity and the breadth of educational contexts (Fossum et al., 2023; Smith et al., 2008).

For example, while some studies offer insights into the effectiveness of policies and programs in mitigating bullying, they frequently overlook how these strategies can be incorporated into a holistic model that also fosters empowerment and inclusivity (Gaffney et al., 2019). Moreover, there is a dearth of literature that assesses the suitability and outcomes of such models across different cultural contexts within the EU and Norway, regions characterized by diverse educational systems and varying rates of bullying incidents. This paper aims to address these gaps by applying the IEMYVP across a wide range of educational institutions in the EU and Norway, evaluating its potential to not only decrease bullying incidents but also to improve the overall environment by empowering students and educators. In doing so, this paper seeks to contribute to a more detailed understanding of how integrated approaches can be adapted and implemented to effectively address bullying in different educational and cultural contexts.

Integrative Empowerment Model for Youth Violence Prevention

The Integrative Empowerment Model for Youth Violence Prevention (IEMYVP) is an extensive methodological and theoretical strategy formulated to mitigate the complex problem of bullying within academic environments. Developed by the author, this model draws its theoretical underpinnings from a vital synthesis of human rights perspectives, namely Joseph Raz's interest theory and John Rawls' concept of justice as fairness (Raz, 1984; Rawls, 2001).

Joseph Raz's interest theory suggests that individuals inherently hold rights to conditions that are essential for their well-being (Raz, 1984). Applied to the context of preventing youth violence, this theory underscores the crucial right of young learners to an educational environment that is devoid of threats, harm, or intimidation (Raz, 1984). In practice, the frequent occurrences of bullying and aggressive behaviors in schools not only disrupt these conditions but also violate students' intrinsic rights. Therefore, the IEMYVP strategically prioritizes the implementation of robust, effective measures aimed at alleviating violence within schools. The overarching goal of the model is not only to impart academic knowledge but also to actively foster the well-being and security of all students, thereby reinforcing the school's role as a protective, nurturing space for learning and development.

John Rawls' theory of justice as fairness emphasizes the fair distribution of rights and opportunities within society (Rawls, 2001). Rawls argues that social structures should be organized in a manner that maximizes the welfare of the least advantaged members of society (Rawls, 2001). Rawls introduces the concept of a social contract formed under a "veil of ignorance", where individuals design societal systems without knowledge of their own socio-economic positions, thereby ensuring that these systems are fair and equitable to all, especially the most vulnerable. Within the IEMYVP framework, this notion inspires the development of preventive strategies that are not only inclusive but also specifically tailored to address the needs of students who are most susceptible to experiencing violence.

By integrating these strategies into the school system, the model guarantees that protective measures are universally accessible while also focusing on the unique challenges faced by disadvantaged or vulnerable groups. This approach effectively aligns the principles advocated by both Raz and Rawls, aiming to create a school atmosphere that is both safe and just, where every student's right to security and well-being is actively upheld. While direct research on IEMYVP's application to bullying is needed, empowerment interventions have proven effective in other contexts (Iswant et al., 2024; Ogbe et al., 2020). Such interventions improve an individual's ability to identify issues, be open to support, stick to a plan of action, and effectively use the resources they have (Nocentini, Menesini, & Salmivalli, 2013).

The IEMYVP effectiveness *(I)* can be expressed as a function of its components:

$$I = k_1 A + k_2 E + k_3 P + k_4 S + k_5 C.$$

Where:

"A" stands for "Awareness" and focuses on equipping students with a deep understanding of youth violence, its consequences, and peaceful conflict resolution strategies.

This is achieved by strategically integrating educational content about these topics into the school curriculum. Workshops, seminars, and curriculum enhancements aim to foster a thorough comprehension of the impact of violence and the importance of respectful coexistence. These initiatives cultivate critical thinking, empathy, and awareness of the societal and personal costs of violence. Ultimately, the goal is to establish a school culture that values informed action and prevents bullying. Assessing the effectiveness of the "Awareness" component extends beyond traditional surveys. Pre- and post-test scores from a relevant knowledge survey offer a baseline understanding. Evaluating students' ability to recall and explain anti-bullying messaging accurately is crucial. This deeper evaluation ensures the educational content resonates with students and equips them to address specific bullying behaviors within the school environment.

"E" stands for "Empowerment", which centers on providing students with the skills and confidence to address youth violence directly. It emphasizes training in conflict resolution, empathy, and leadership, fostering a sense of agency and resilience among students. The goal is to develop a student body capable of peaceful interaction, positive influence, and taking action to prevent bullying. By enhancing self-efficacy and building non-violent problem-solving skills, this component creates a school environment where empowerment becomes a shared value. To assess the "Empowerment" component, a multifaceted approach is essential. This includes pre- and post-intervention assessments in conflict resolution, empathy, and leadership. Additionally, self-reported surveys and structured observations of role-playing scenarios can provide valuable insights. A focus on demonstrated skills, such as conflict resolution or assertiveness, along with students' self-reported confidence in handling bullying situations, offers a comprehensive evaluation of empowerment gains.

"P" stands for "Participation", which emphasizes students' active involvement in initiatives designed to foster a peaceful school culture. This component recognizes the importance of student voices in decision-making processes, particularly those concerning conflict resolution and disciplinary approaches. Engaging students in shaping their environment fosters a sense of ownership, responsibility, and investment in creating a non-violent community. Participation highlights collaborative problem-solving and underscores the power of collective action. Assessing the effectiveness of the "Participation" component requires an in-depth approach. While pre- and post-intervention attendance data and involvement in related committees offer a starting point, it's crucial to focus on the quality of participation. This includes evaluating the complexity and reach of student-led initiatives within the school. Surveying students to understand their perceptions of barriers and successes within participation efforts can provide valuable insights for improvement.

"S" stands for "Support Systems", which highlights the importance of accessible and effective school-based resources designed for violence prevention and student well-being. Vigorous support networks, including counseling, mentorship programs, and comprehensive teacher training, are crucial for early identification and intervention in potential violence

situations. These resources address the diverse needs of students and help prevent escalation. By emphasizing a supportive and responsive infrastructure, this component underscores a proactive approach to violence prevention, prioritizing care and timely intervention. Evaluating the effectiveness of the "Support Systems" component involves several key metrics. These include pre- and post-intervention comparisons of counseling service usage, feedback from mentorship programs, and assessments of the adequacy of teacher/staff training. Additionally, accessibility is vital; students must be able to easily identify and navigate processes for reporting bullying and seeking help. Measuring the school's response time to reported incidents is crucial, as it directly impacts trust in the support system.

"C" stands for "Community Engagement", which emphasizes the depth and quality of the school's collaboration with external stakeholders to prevent violence. It recognizes that schools alone cannot shoulder the responsibility for violence prevention and promotes partnerships with families and local organizations. These partnerships reinforce anti-violence messaging and establish collective responsibility throughout the community. Assessing the effectiveness of the "Community Engagement" component requires a multifaceted evaluation. This includes pre- and post-intervention comparisons of the number and breadth of active partnerships. Community feedback on their involvement and participation rates in school-led initiatives provides valuable insights. Furthermore, mapping the types of organizations involved, along with parents' perceptions of being informed and included in the school's anti-bullying efforts, offers a comprehensive picture of community engagement.

Figure 1.

The IEMYVP Structure

The coefficients $(k_1, k_2, k_3, k_4, k_5)$ represent the relative weight of each component. These weights can be determined through rigorous testing and statistical analysis to create an evidence-based approach. Data analysis across diverse schools using IEMYVP will offer insights into which components have the greatest impact on reducing bullying.

Figure 1 illustrates the IEMYVP structure, which visually represents the model's five main components and their interconnected nature in achieving the goal of reducing youth violence in educational environments.

The IEMYVP recognizes youth violence as a complex issue with multiple causes, shaping its proactive and multi-faceted prevention approach. Instead of solely relying on punishment, the model prioritizes building resilience and positive development. It empowers students to be leaders in bullying prevention. The goal is to transform schools into spaces where everyone feels respected and contributes to maintaining non-violence. IEMYVP's inclusive approach becomes part of a school's fabric, equipping students to recognize violence potential, intervene when needed, and advocate for peace.

METHODS

The methodological framework of this study involves a synthetic analysis using a hypothetical dataset designed to evaluate the efficacy of the IEMYVP $(I = k_1A + k_2E + k_3P + k_4S + k_5C)$ within a school environment. The study is methodological in nature, employing both quantitative and qualitative paradigms to ensure a comprehensive analysis. The quantitative aspect involves using multiple regression analyses to determine the impact of various IEMYVP components on bullying indicators. Qualitatively, the study interprets the potential interactions between these components and their broader implications within the educational ecosystem. A comprehensive literature review was conducted using databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. The searches were tailored around keywords pertinent to the study: "Bullying", "Human Rights", "Integrative Empowerment Model", "Proactive Intervention", "School Environment", and "Youth Violence Prevention". This strategic approach facilitated a thorough review of existing studies and theories relevant to the development and evaluation of the IEMYVP.

The dataset, while not derived from real-world data, is constructed to reflect the diversity and dynamics of a primary and secondary school, denoted as "Q High School," with a student population of approximately 600. This methodological approach facilitates precise adjustments of variables to rigorously evaluate theoretical propositions. Table 1 presents a hypothetical dataset that was methodically created to represent a typical primary and secondary school environment, taking into account the varied socio-economic backgrounds of the students.

Table 1 offers a detailed overview of a simulated dataset utilized to assess the effectiveness of the IEMYVP. N 600 denotes the study's sample size, providing a robust dataset for analysis. It ensures statistical validity and represents a wide array of student profiles that are typical of a diverse school environment. The 'Entry/Component' column enumerates the components of the IEMYVP (*A, E, P, S, C*), along with the resulting 'Bullying Indicator' (*I*). This indicator serves as the outcome variable, calculated from the weighted contributions of the five components based on their respective coefficients. The 'Mean' and 'SD' (Standard Deviation) columns display the scores for each component, which are uniformly set at 50 and 10,

respectively. This standardization implies that the generated values for each component are normally distributed around the mean, with a standard deviation reflecting the typical variability expected in such data.

Table 1.

Hypothetical Dataset

Entry	Component	Mean	SD	Generated Score X=mean+sd$*Z$ where $Z\sim N(0,1)$	N 600	Bullying Indicator Calculation (I) I=5+0.5*A+0.4*E+0.3*P+0.2*S+0.1*C+ϵ
1	Awareness (A)	50	10	39.14	42.18	78.66
2	Empowerment (E)	50	10	61.41	49.10	84.71
3	Participation (P)	50	10	61.12	55.80	93.62
4	Support Systems (S)	50	10	46.99	44.65	78.47
5	Community Engagement (C)	50	10	40.45	52.51	90.74
600	Resulting Bullying Indicator (I)			52.31		

The 'Generated Score' column provides the formula used for generating scores for each component, which is X=mean+sd$*Z$, where Z represents a standard normal variable, characterized by a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1. It provides examples of actual generated values. For instance, awareness (A) has a generated score of 39.14, calculated as 50+10$*Z$ where Z approximates to -1.086 based on the given example. The 'Bullying Indicator' (I) column displays the computation for the bullying indicator based on the formula I=5+0.5*A+0.4*E+0.3*P+0.2*S+0.1*C+ϵ, where ϵ is a noise component adding random variability to the model. Example values are shown for each component's contribution to this final bullying indicator.

The purpose of creating this dataset is to test the efficacy of the IEMYVP, hypothesizing that improvements in components like awareness or empowerment directly correlate to reductions in bullying incidents. This aligns with the model's premise that enhancing these areas

will create a more positive school environment. The dataset assumes a diverse socio-economic background among the students to mirror a realistic urban school setting, enhancing the applicability and relevance of the findings across similar educational contexts. The use of normative distributions for generating the data points ensures that the dataset mimics real-world variations and behaviors, making the analysis both realistic and reliable.

The model hypothesizes that a change in any of these components would have an equivalent impact on the bullying indicator. The values for these indicators were generated based on normative distributions that mirror expected real-world variations, thus providing a realistic framework for analysis. Because the data is hypothetical, the sampling method involves the theoretical selection of data points that represent a wide array of demographic and behavioral characteristics typical of a diverse urban school setting. This approach ensures that the findings can be generalized to a broader context within the EU and Norway, as stipulated in the research goals.

A systematic approach was taken in constructing the dataset, in which each component of the IEMYVP was quantified based on established research metrics that align with the constructs of awareness, empowerment, participation, support systems, and community engagement. Each component was then operationalized into measurable variables, ensuring that they reflected the theoretical underpinnings of the model. To ensure validity and reliability in this methodological study, several strategies were employed: Firstly, construct validity was addressed by aligning each variable closely with theoretical constructs derived from the literature on bullying prevention and human rights. Secondly, reliability was simulated by using consistent data entry and established scales for measurement, where applicable. Eventually, internal validity was maintained by controlling for potential confounders through statistical adjustments in the regression analysis.

RESULTS

Based on the hypothetical dataset in Table 1, a regression analysis was conducted using "R", a statistical process for estimating the relationships among variables, which is crucial in predicting outcomes and understanding how variables influence each other. The bullying indicators served as the dependent variable, while the components of the IEMYVP *(A, E, P, S, C)* were treated as independent variables. This approach allowed for an examination of the relationship between each component of the IEMYVP and the bullying indicator (*I*), while controlling for the effects of the other components. The analysis aimed to estimate the coefficients *(k_1, k_2, k_3, k_4, k_5)* that quantify the relationship between each component and the bullying indicator. These coefficients provide insights into the relative importance of each component in the IEMYVP, offering guidance for targeted interventions to reduce bullying incidents. A representation of the regression analysis results from the hypothetical dataset is illustrated in Table 2. It summarizes the relationship between the IEMYVP components and the bullying indicator outcome variable.

Table 2.

Regression Analysis of the Hypothetical Dataset

Component	Estimate	Standard Error	t value	p-value
Intercept	5.63527	2.34344	2.405	0.0165 *
Awareness (*A*)	0.51718	0.02122	24.371	< 2e-16 ***
Empowerment (*E*)	0.35285	0.02007	17.584	< 2e-16 ***
Participation (*P*)	0.30263	0.02076	14.577	< 2e-16 ***
Support Systems (*S*)	0.19985	0.02102	9.506	< 2e-16 ***
Community Engagement (*C*)	0.11411	0.02028	5.625	2.86e-08 ***

Codes for statistical significance are as follows: *** indicates $p < 0.001$; ** denotes $p < 0.01$; * signifies $p < 0.05$; . highlights $p < 0.1$; blank indicates $p \geq 0.1$. Additional details on regression analysis include: a residual standard error of 5.01 with 594 degrees of freedom; a multiple R-squared of 0.6775; an adjusted R-squared of 0.6748; and an F-statistic of 249.6 across 5 and 594 degrees of freedom. The overall p-value for the model is less than 2.2e-16.

Table 2 provides a concise overview of the significant influence each component of the model has on the reduction of bullying incidents, demonstrating robust statistical significance across all variables in the study. The intercept is 5.63527. This is the expected value of *I* (the bullying indicator) when all other variables are 0. The coefficients for *A*, *E*, *P*, *S*, and *C* are 0.51718, 0.35285, 0.30263, 0.19985, and 0.11411 respectively. These figures reflect the alteration in the bullying metric resulting from a one-unit modification in the corresponding predictor, with all other variables remaining constant. The p-values are all less than 0.05, indicating that all predictors are statistically significant at the 5 percent level. This means that there is strong evidence to suggest that each component of the IEMYVP has a significant association with reducing bullying incidents. The R-squared value is 0.6775, indicating that approximately 67.75% of the variability in the bullying indicator can be explained by the IEMYVP.

It's vital to highlight that this interpretation is based on the assumption that the relationships between the predictors and the bullying indicator are linear and additive. It does not consider potential interactions between predictors. The true impact of the IEMYVP can only be validated through comprehensive statistical analysis using authentic data. It's important to remember that a mere correlation does not necessarily imply causation. A variable's association with the bullying indicator does not necessarily imply that altering the variable will change the bullying indicator. Unmeasured factors could be confounding the relationship. As such, these results should serve as a basis for further exploration rather than conclusive evidence of the IEMYVP's effectiveness. Furthermore, the residuals should be examined to ensure the assumptions of the regression model are satisfied. This includes verifying linearity, independence, homoscedasticity, and normality. If these assumptions are violated, the results of the regression analysis may not be reliable.

DISCUSSION

Understanding the Critical Role of Awareness in Preventing Bullying

The hypothetical analysis underscores the potential effectiveness of the IEMYVP in reducing bullying incidents in schools across the EU and Norway, with a particular emphasis on the role of "Awareness". The analysis suggests that amplifying understanding about the negative consequences of bullying and the importance of respectful interactions could be the most advantageous strategy for addressing such incidents. Through a range of awareness initiatives like educational programs, workshops, and campaigns, the entire school community, including students, educators, and parents, can gain a deeper understanding of bullying. This enhanced awareness could potentially catalyze significant shifts in the school culture and individual attitudes towards bullying. This analysis aligns with Raz's interest theory, which posits that an individual has a right if their well-being is of sufficient importance to justify imposing a duty on others (Raz, 1984). Utilizing this theory in the context of bullying implies that students are inherently entitled to an educational setting that is both safe and respectful. It is the responsibility of schools, teachers, and students to ensure this right is upheld, which aligns with the emphasis on increased awareness and promotion of respectful behavior.

Rawls' concept of justice as fairness also provides a theoretical foundation for the role of awareness in combating bullying. Rawls envisions a society where citizens hold equal rights and cooperate within an egalitarian framework (Rawls, 2001). This emphasizes that all students have a right to a secure and respectful learning environment, as inferred from the educational context. Awareness programs play a crucial role in educating the school community about respecting these rights, thereby fostering a culture of respect and fairness. From a human rights perspective, protection from bullying is seen as a fundamental right essential for the enjoyment of numerous other rights, such as freedom from violence and the rights to health and education. Awareness initiatives play a vital role in safeguarding these rights by informing the school community about the harmful effects of bullying and the importance of respectful behavior.

Empirical evidence supports the effectiveness of such programs. A meta-analysis indicated that school-based bullying prevention programs significantly reduce both bullying and victimization (Gaffney et al., 2019; Wang, 2014), and further research has shown the efficacy of anti-bullying programs across various countries in mitigating bullying incidents (Gaffney et al., 2021, Swearer & Hymel, 2015). Given the alarming statistics from the preceding text, such as the increase in bullying incidents among primary and lower secondary school pupils in Norway and the high incidence rate among upper secondary students, the proposed solution could potentially be effective. However, it's important to note that the implementation and success of such a program would depend on various factors, including the commitment of the entire school community and the availability of resources. This reinforces the argument that raising awareness about the detrimental effects of bullying and emphasizing the importance of respectful conduct through comprehensive programs can instigate profound changes in both school culture and individual attitudes towards bullying.

Empowering Students Against Bullying

"Empowerment", identified as the second most impactful element of the IEMYVP, implies that equipping students with the ability to stand against bullying and assist their peers who are being bullied could substantially aid in decreasing instances of bullying in schools. Empowerment programs could lead to an increase in bullying incident reporting and a greater willingness among students to intervene. These programs could teach students about their rights and responsibilities and equip them with the skills and confidence to intervene when they witness bullying. Raz's interest theory posits that individuals' well-being is intrinsically linked to their capacity to pursue and fulfill their interests (Raz, 1984). Bullying fundamentally undermines a victim's well-being. It limits their autonomy, hinders their opportunities for personal development, and negatively impacts their sense of security. Empowerment programs address this by giving students the agency to protect their own well-being. Programs that teach assertive communication skills, conflict resolution, and how to build support networks bolster a potential victim's ability to defend their interests and deter bullies. Rawls' justice as fairness conception emphasizes a society's obligation to establish institutions that safeguard equal opportunities for all. Bullying is a direct violation of this principle, creating an environment of intimidation and inequality (Rawls, 2001). Empowerment extends this idea to encompass the responsibility of bystanders as well. Empowering students to intervene when they witness bullying reinforces the notion that everyone has a stake in ensuring a just and fair community. A core principle of such programs may focus on bystanders shifting from passive observers to active defenders, creating the sense that bullying is socially unacceptable.

Bullying violates fundamental human rights such as dignity, safety, and education. Empowerment programs that align with a human rights perspective educate students on their inherent rights. Students who have a better understanding of human rights are more likely to recognize bullying for the violation it is and believe that they have the right to speak up against it. Research underscores the effectiveness of empowerment in reducing bullying. Studies demonstrate that such interventions improve self-esteem in potential targets, promote prosocial behavior in bystanders, and lead to an overall decline in bullying incidents (Smith et al., 2008; Nocentini et al., 2013; Swearer & Hymel, 2015). Moreover, these programs have been shown to cultivate a greater sense of community cohesion and safety within schools, which in itself deters bullying behavior. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that empowerment cannot be the sole solution to bullying. Systemic factors within schools and broader society also play a significant role. Empowerment-based approaches are most effective when combined with comprehensive anti-bullying policies that address power imbalances and promote inclusivity. This suggests that empowerment programs could be a potential solution to the increasing bullying incidents in the EU and Norwegian schools. These programs could equip students with the necessary skills and confidence to stand against bullying, thereby promoting a safer and more inclusive school environment. However, the effectiveness of such programs would need to be evaluated through further research and studies.

The Role of Participation in Combating Bullying

"Participation", identified as the third key component of the IEMYVP, suggests that fostering student involvement in anti-bullying initiatives and encouraging them to actively contribute to a safe and respectful school environment could help reduce bullying incidents. Schools that promote high levels of student participation in decision-making and policy development could witness lower bullying rates. This can be achieved through programs that provide opportunities for students to engage in anti-bullying initiatives, such as peer mentoring schemes or student-led anti-bullying promotions. Raz (1984) underscores the importance of autonomy and self-determination in achieving personal well-being. Bullying undermines this by placing the victim in a position of powerlessness. When students have meaningful roles in shaping anti-bullying policies and initiatives, it restores a sense of agency. Participation empowers them to exercise control over their environment and actively pursue their interests in a safe and supportive space. Rawls' (2001) concept of justice as fairness emphasizes the need for individuals to have a voice in the institutions that affect them. Inclusive anti-bullying programs, driven by student participation, embody this principle. This ensures that the voices and experiences of those directly impacted by bullying are central to creating solutions.

Participation fosters a collective sense of ownership, where the responsibility of maintaining a safe environment is shared across the student body. This perspective is especially relevant in the EU and Norway, where recent studies have shown a worrying increase in bullying incidents. Research supports the link between student participation and decreased bullying. Schools with greater student involvement in decision-making tend to have lower rates of bullying (Wang et al., 2014). Participatory programs cultivate greater student investment in maintaining a positive school climate while also potentially revealing subtle issues that adult-led initiatives might miss. However, it's important to note that participation alone is not sufficient to eradicate bullying. It should be used in conjunction with other interventions as part of a holistic approach to addressing underlying systemic issues. Meaningful participation requires adults to create spaces where student voices are genuinely heard and empowered to influence change. Thus, the IEMYVP approach could potentially be a powerful tool in combating the rising trend of bullying across the EU and in Norwegian schools. By empowering students and involving them in decision-making processes, schools can foster a more inclusive and respectful environment. Nonetheless, this approach should be part of a broader, holistic strategy to address the systemic issues underlying bullying.

Support Systems, Community Engagement, and Bullying Prevention

"Support Systems" and "Community Engagement" are the fourth and fifth most influential factors in reducing bullying incidents, suggesting that providing support systems for bullied students and involving the broader community in anti-bullying efforts could be beneficial. The support systems initiative could provide a safe space for students to report bullying incidents and seek help. This system could include trained professionals, such as counselors and psychologists, who can provide immediate assistance to victims, helping them cope with the

emotional trauma associated with bullying. Furthermore, this system could contribute to the rehabilitation of bullies by providing them with the necessary guidance and counseling to understand the impact of their actions and promote empathy. School-based support systems are vital for bullied students, offering a safe space for them to express their feelings, seek assistance, and receive necessary support. Raz's (1984) interest theory asserts that a person possesses a right when an element of their well-being, like their interests, is significant enough to necessitate a duty on others. In the context of bullying, the bullied student's interest in receiving support and protection is significant enough to impose a duty on the school to provide support systems. Community engagement in anti-bullying efforts entails the participation of various community members, including parents, local businesses, and community organizations. This corresponds to Rawls' (2001) idea of justice being synonymous with fairness, picturing a community of independent individuals possessing identical fundamental rights and collaborating within a system of economic equality. In this context, members of the community, as autonomous individuals, work together to guarantee each student's fundamental right to an environment that is secure and free from bullying.

Bullying gravely infringes upon numerous human rights, encompassing the right to education, freedom from bias, and both physical and emotional safety. Empirical evidence indicates that bullying negatively impacts mental health, substance use, and suicide among bullied students (Armitage, 2021). Anti-bullying efforts that prioritize support systems and community engagement can help mitigate these negative impacts by reinforcing bullied students' sense of worth and helping them regain a sense of agency. Students with robust support networks experience lower levels of victimization and less severe psychological consequences (Swearer & Hymel, 2015). Community engagement furthers this cause by challenging the power imbalance inherent in bullying. Regular workshops and awareness programs could be conducted to educate the community about the adverse effects of bullying and the importance of a safe and inclusive school environment. This initiative could also encourage students to stand up against bullying and support their peers who are victims. Whole-school anti-bullying programs that involve multiple stakeholders have demonstrated significant reductions in bullying perpetration and victimization (Craig, Pepler, & Blais, 2007; (Nocentini, Menesini, & Salmivalli, 2013). School-wide programs that foster a culture of respect, clearly articulate anti-bullying policies, and provide training for staff to intervene effectively have also been shown to yield the most positive outcomes (Iswant et al., 2024; Ogbe et al., 2020). These programs not only aim to prevent bullying but also strive to create an environment where every student feels safe and respected. By promoting respect and clearly communicating anti-bullying policies, these programs set clear expectations for behavior within the school community. Hence, the IEMYVP's "Support Systems" and "Community Engagement" initiatives could potentially play a significant role in mitigating the rising trend of bullying in Norwegian and EU schools. However, the success of these initiatives would largely depend on the active participation and commitment of all stakeholders involved.

Enhancing the IEMYVP by Addressing its Limitations

The IEMYVP, while valuable, is not without limitations. It presumes a linear relationship between independent variables (Awareness, Empowerment, Participation, Support Systems, Community Engagement) and the dependent variable (Change in Youth Violence Indicators). However, real-world relationships may be complex and non-linear, which the model might not fully encapsulate. The model's effectiveness hinges on the precise measurement of its components, and any inaccuracies could lead to erroneous conclusions. The model assumes that changes in independent variables directly instigate changes in the dependent variable, but correlation does not necessarily denote causation. There could be other confounding variables influencing the outcome. The model's applicability might not be universal due to factors such as cultural differences, socioeconomic status, and local policies. The model also assumes constant coefficients, but the significance of each component may fluctuate across different contexts or over time. Despite these challenges, the IEMYVP remains a crucial tool for addressing youth violence. Acknowledging these challenges fosters a deeper understanding of the model and guides future research and refinement.

Therefore, the IEMYVP requires a comprehensive scientific evaluation to verify its effectiveness and explore its broader applicability. This evaluation commences with pilot studies in diverse educational contexts, encompassing urban and rural settings across various socioeconomic strata. These studies should incorporate detailed evaluation strategies that monitor key bullying indicators before and after the model's implementation, facilitating an understanding of the changes and pinpointing potential areas for improvement. To ensure that the IEMYVP is thoroughly validated, extensive research studies must be conducted in the schools where the model is being applied. This involves collecting longitudinal data on several critical outcomes. These include 'Disciplinary Referrals', tracking the changes in the frequency and severity of incidents; 'School Climate Surveys', assessing perceptions of safety, respect, and connectedness among students and staff; and 'Self-Reported' Measures, evaluating shifts in students' attitudes towards violence and their conflict resolution skills. Focusing on these areas allows for an accurate assessment of the IEMYVP's effectiveness.

The model can also be refined based on empirical evidence and measurement systems, and additional variables or structures can be incorporated as needed. Non-linear regression models can be employed to capture complex relationships. To improve measurement accuracy, use validated assessment tools, increase the sample size, or use multiple measures for each variable. Longitudinal data and techniques can better infer causal relationships. Experimental or quasi-experimental designs can also be considered. Conducting studies in various settings and populations tests the model's applicability. Meta-analysis can also synthesize findings across different studies. According to theory and prior research, additional relevant variables can be incorporated into the model. The unique value of the IEMYVP can also be demonstrated through experimental designs that allow for direct comparisons with traditional approaches. This process is enhanced by supplementing quantitative data with qualitative insights gleaned

from focus groups and interviews involving students, teachers, and administrators. These insights provide a rich context, reveal mechanisms of change, and identify any unintended consequences of the model. A comprehensive understanding is best achieved through a mixed-methods approach, which fuses both quantitative and qualitative data. This rigorous, methodical approach reinforces the IEMYVP as a strategy grounded in evidence for reducing youth violence.

CONCLUSION

This paper scrutinizes the effectiveness of the IEMYVP in mitigating bullying in schools across the EU and Norway, offering an all-encompassing structure rooted in theories of human rights and principles of social justice. The investigation emphasizes the significant threat that bullying poses to students' well-being, with its occurrence varying across the EU and Norway, thereby underscoring the pressing requirement for efficacious interventions. Through a hypothetical analysis, the study illuminates the IEMYVP's potential to address this pervasive issue by employing a multifaceted approach that incorporates awareness, empowerment, participation, support systems, and community engagement. These components are designed to not only mitigate bullying incidents but also to cultivate a school environment where respect, inclusivity, and student well-being are prioritized.

The findings suggest that increasing awareness and empowerment play a crucial role in preventing bullying by educating the school community regarding the detrimental effects of bullying and providing students with the necessary skills and confidence to confront it. Participation further enhances the model's effectiveness, empowering students to take an active role in creating a safe and respectful school culture. Support systems and community engagement are also identified as vital elements, providing necessary resources and fostering a collective effort to combat bullying. The paper proposes that the IEMYVP, with its all-encompassing and inclusive strategy, presents a positive remedy for substantially decreasing instances of bullying. This, in turn, guarantees a more secure and nurturing educational atmosphere for all students. Future research is recommended to empirically test the model's applicability and effectiveness across diverse educational settings. Such studies would contribute to refining the model and strengthening its potential as a foundational strategy for halting bullying in schools.

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