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Revitalizing indigenous wisdom to prevent bullying: A qualitative ethnographic study of Bugis-Makassar cultural values in education

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the possibility of Bugis-Makassar cultural values *Sipakatau* (mutual respect), *Sipakalebbi* (mutual appreciation), and *Sipakainge* (mutual admonition) as a framework for bullying prevention in schools in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. This qualitative ethnographic study collected data from participatory observation, in-depth interviews, document analysis, and a classroom simulation with twelve key informants, including cultural experts, educators, and students from South Sulawesi. The research delineates methods for incorporating indigenous values into educational curricula and daily practices to cultivate a more inclusive, respectful, and sympathetic school atmosphere. Integrating *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge* into school activities like peer mediation, character education, and classroom simulations promotes collective responsibility, moral integrity, and social peace. The findings indicate that these cultural norms substantially mitigate bullying by fostering mutual respect, appreciation, and constructive peer support. Nonetheless, the study recognises possible obstacles, like the reinforcement of social hierarchies and compliance, which may occur if these principles are implemented without critical adaptation. The study emphasises the significance of culturally responsive bullying prevention measures and advocates for additional empirical research to assess the long-term efficacy of this strategy.

1. Introduction

Bullying is still a significant issue in Indonesian schools, with serious repercussions for kids' social development, academic achievement, and psychological health (Alap et al., 2025; Cahya et al., 2025; T. Lesmana et al., 2025; Irwan et al., 2025; Mahmud et al., 2025; Talib et al., 2024). According to national surveys and local research, verbal, social, and physical bullying continues to disturb learning settings in classrooms and has a detrimental impact on victims' long-term well-being (Abed AL-Shibli & ALnasrawii, 2024; Francisco et al., 2025; Oriol et al., 2025; Malta et al., 2025). The issue is especially severe in South Sulawesi, where peer group dynamics, economic inequality, and social hierarchies frequently foster discriminatory behaviours and student mockery (Fatmawati et al., 2024; Nurjanna et al., 2024; Yakin et al., 2025; Arifi et al., 2025). Various bullying prevention strategies in Indonesia have incorporated local cultural values to enhance effectiveness. For example, interventions based on Bugis-Makassar cultural values, storytelling approaches, and character education programs have positively

reduced bullying behaviours in schools (Fardlillah & Nur, 2025; Suhendar et al., 2024). To tackle the bullying issue in Makassar, it is crucial to examine the cultural values of the Bugis-Makassar community, as these values can provide valuable insights for developing effective intervention strategies.

In Makassar, bullying takes on various forms, with physical, verbal, and social bullying being the most commonly observed in school environments (Bakar & Syahrudin, 2017; S. Mahmud et al., 2014; Munira et al., 2023). Physical bullying includes behaviours such as hitting, pushing, or kicking, which are typically more prevalent among male students. Verbal bullying, which involves name-calling, mocking, or disparaging comments, affects both male and female students but is more frequently reported among females (Arifuddin et al., 2021; Yusri et al., 2025). Social bullying, in contrast, involves the exclusion of individuals from peer groups or the spread of harmful rumours, often targeting students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Asmariah, 2024; Fajrin et al., 2025; Nengsi & Subaedah, 2024). The rise of digital technology has led to an increase in cyberbullying, where students are

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subjected to harassment and humiliation through social media, text messages, or online platforms (Awaru et al., 2023; Safaria, 2016; Umar et al., 2024). The persistence of these bullying forms in Makassar is closely tied to peer group dynamics and social hierarchies, which often foster discriminatory behaviours and marginalisation, especially among students from different social and economic backgrounds (Awaru et al., 2023; Prodyanasari & Vantie, 2024; Wahanisa et al., 2021). Therefore, addressing these bullying behaviours requires the development of specific interventions that consider both the behavioural patterns and the cultural context of the region, integrating local cultural values and community-based approaches (Donoghue et al., 2025; Suhendar et al., 2024). To address the issue of bullying in Makassar, it is essential to explore the cultural values inherent in the Bugis-Makassar community, as these values can offer valuable insights for intervention strategies.

The Bugis-Makassar group, on the other hand, possesses a wealth of cultural values that are embodied in the Lontara texts and applied in day-to-day activities (Hutami & Zulfajri, 2024; Basri et al., 2024; Nursalam et al., 2024). The most important ones are *Sipakainge* (mutual admonition), *Sipakatau* (mutual respect), and *Sipakalebbi* (mutual appreciation) (Hadawiah et al., 2025; Hegseth, 2024). These principles strongly emphasise the collective moral obligation, empathy, and dignity (Engelsen et al., 2025; Hess, 2024). Prior research has acknowledged the significance of indigenous knowledge in influencing moral conduct and resolving disputes, but its relevance to current issues like bullying in schools is still little understood (Abdo, 2024; Kruger & Vass, 2024; Shizha, 2025). Additionally, there is a study vacuum in both theoretical integration and practical application since Bugis-Makassar frameworks have received little attention, even though Indonesian studies have looked at cultural values like mutual cooperation and harmony in education (Firdaus & Suwendi, 2025; Redjeki et al., 2025). In light of the importance of Bugis-Makassar cultural values in shaping moral conduct, this study explores their potential application in addressing current issues, specifically bullying in schools.

This study investigates the role of Bugis-Makassar cultural values, *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge*, in shaping students' behaviours and attitudes toward bullying prevention, and it evaluates their effectiveness in fostering a respectful and inclusive school environment. Creating the *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge* bullying prevention approach, which converts Bugis-Makassar cultural values into tangible classroom procedures, makes this study novel. By operationalising indigenous philosophy as a valuable tool for bullying prevention, this methodology advances character education and cross-cultural educational psychology (Domínguez-de la Ossa et al., 2024). However, the study also recognises the limitations of applying cultural values: although they foster empathy and solidarity (Steunou & Simeone, 2025), they can reinforce social hierarchies and conformity if not critically adapted (Yeo et al., 2025). This dichotomy emphasises how crucial ethnographic research is for identifying the advantages and disadvantages of cultural practices (Pushkar, 2025; Roshan & Elhami, 2024). Building on these considerations, the present study is guided by the following research questions to critically examine the potential and challenges of integrating Bugis-Makassar cultural values into bullying prevention practices.

While numerous studies have explored bullying prevention from psychological and pedagogical perspectives, little attention has been given to indigenous cultural frameworks as a foundation for sustainable strategies. This study, therefore, investigates the role of Bugis-Makassar cultural values in shaping respectful and inclusive school environments, guided by the following research questions:

1. How do the Bugis-Makassar cultural values of *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge* Function as cultural frameworks for preventing bullying in educational settings?
2. How do Bugis-Makassar cultural values shape students' social character and promote respectful interactions to prevent bullying in South Sulawesi Schools?

3. How do social stratification and cultural symbols influence bullying practices in South Sulawesi schools, and in what ways can Bugis-Makassar values mitigate these effects?

2. Literature review

Schools in Indonesia have long recognised bullying as a persistent social and educational issue. Despite school-based interventions, verbal, relational, and physical bullying are still common, according to recent national and regional reports (Kennedy, 2020; Unicef, 2020). Research highlights that bullying is frequently associated with cultural hierarchies and socioeconomic inequalities, especially when peers stress differences in status or attractiveness (Görzig et al., 2021; Juan et al., 2025; Varela et al., 2020). These results highlight how urgent it is to create preventative measures that are both successful and culturally aware.

Research on bullying prevention has shifted more and more toward restorative practices and social-emotional development globally (Fredrick et al., 2022; Israelashvili et al., 2020). Nonetheless, recent research contends that interventions based only on universal frameworks frequently fall short of meeting local realities, especially in countries that value collectivism (Sivaraman et al., 2019; Yin et al., 2024; Zaneva et al., 2023). Cultural resources like *rukun* (harmony) and *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), which have been demonstrated to promote empathy and lessen peer violence, are being investigated by some researchers in Indonesia as protective variables (Koopman, 2021; Lukiyanto & Wijayaningtyas, 2020). However, there is still a lack of research on the Bugis-Makassar cultural background, which makes it challenging to comprehend how indigenous beliefs might influence anti-bullying tactics.

Additionally, more recent research emphasises the necessity of relating psychological concepts like empathy (Indreswari et al., 2023; Prasetyani et al., 2023), resilience, and moral growth to cultural wisdom (Fitriah et al., 2025; Na'amneh et al., 2025). Research indicates that perspective-taking and mutual caring diminish violent behaviour and increase social inclusion, making empathy in particular a critical component in reducing bullying (Hernández et al., 2023, 2023, 2023; Hikmat et al., 2024; Knox et al., 2022; Longobardi et al., 2020; Reid & Overall, 2024; Steinvik et al., 2024). However, the relationship between indigenous values and culturally particular empathy frameworks in the Indonesian setting has not received much attention.

This study fills this gap by analysing the Bugis-Makassar values of *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge*. Little research has empirically examined their use in schools or in relation to bullying, although cultural experts have long recognised their significance for social harmony (Halidin et al., 2024; Jamaluddin et al., 2022). By emphasising these principles, the study fills a significant vacuum in the literature on bullying prevention in Indonesia and elsewhere. It provides guidance on reviving traditional knowledge for today's educational issues.

The Bugis-Makassar philosophical framework, which emphasises social responsibility and community morality, is the foundation for this investigation. The research's theoretical foundation comprises three interconnected values:

1. *Sipakatau* (Mutual Respect).

This principle strongly emphasises acknowledging the worth and dignity of every human being. By presenting respect as a duty transcending social or economic standing, *Sipakatau* theoretically offers a moral compass for lowering bullying. It supports theories that see dignity as a deterrent to aggressiveness and respect-based approaches to character building in educational psychology (Klocek et al., 2024; Schwarzer et al., 2025).

2. *Sipakalebbi* (Mutual Appreciation).

This value emphasises honour development in social relationships

and acknowledging others' contributions. The focus on prosocial reinforcement and reconciliation in positive psychology is theoretically consistent with this approach (Balabanian & Lemos, 2020; Laguna et al., 2022; Oliveira et al., 2024; Rean & Stavtsev, 2020). Similar to restorative techniques employed in international anti-bullying initiatives, *Sipakalebbi* provides a framework for mending peer relationships following disagreement in bullying environments (Pérez-Jorge et al., 2023; Weber & Vereenoghe, 2020).

3. *Sipakainge* (Mutual Admonition).

This principle is centred on constructive reminders and group accountability for moral behaviour, which are at the heart of this principle. It goes beyond one's own behaviour to encompass the duty of mentoring others. In theory, it is consistent with Islamic educational viewpoints that consider *nasihat* (advice) a social and moral obligation, as well as restorative justice approaches (Pérez-Jorge et al., 2023; Weber & Vereenoghe, 2020). *Sipakainge* offers a culturally relevant method of peer responsibility in bullying prevention that balances empathy and discipline.

The study builds a theoretical framework rooted in culture by referencing these three ideals, enhancing and expanding on current psychology ideas of empathy and restorative practice. The framework makes it possible to investigate bullying prevention as a process of reviving indigenous wisdom in schools and a behavioural intervention.

3. Methods

3.1. Research design

In order to investigate how the Bugis-Makassar cultural values of *Sipakataui*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge* can function as frameworks for avoiding bullying in schools, this study used a qualitative ethnographic design (Khan & Sarkar, 2024; Subrahmanyam, 2025). Ethnography was deemed appropriate because it makes it easier to describe the lived experiences, symbolic practices, and social interactions that influence South Sulawesi's cultural life and educational procedures.

The study was conducted at several elementary and high schools in South Sulawesi, Indonesia, elementary and high schools. These locations were chosen because they uphold Bugis-Makassar cultural values in regular classroom instruction, making them ideal settings for investigating the function of traditional knowledge in preventing bullying.

3.2. Data collection procedure

This study involved a twelve key informants method (Hardyns et al., 2023; Luetke Lanfer et al., 2024; Pahwa et al., 2023), consisting of four cultural specialists from the Bugis-Makassar community, two teachers, and six students from both elementary and secondary school levels. Informants were chosen based on their relevance, competence, and firsthand experience with the cultural norms and bullying dynamics under study. The cultural specialists provided deep contextual knowledge of Bugis-Makassar values and customs, which is essential for understanding how cultural identity shapes student interactions. The teachers contributed insights from their practical experience in integrating cultural values into the school environment, shedding light on how such integration influences school climate and student behaviour. The students, selected for their lived experiences as victims, witnesses, or peers in bullying situations, offered vital perspectives on how these issues are experienced in everyday school life. Table 1 shows the criteria for selecting key informants.

This study employed three complementary data collection strategies to ensure data triangulation: participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Participatory observation was conducted through the researcher's direct involvement in classroom activities, cultural dress events, and school celebrations (Bellindo-Garcia et al., 2022). Particular attention was given to peer interactions, traditional status symbols like *Songko Racca* and *Pasappu*, and bullying behaviours. Observations were systematically documented through reflective and narrative field notes. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers, students, and cultural specialists (Maher & Bedwei-Majdou, 2024, pp. 195–220; Nair, 2023). These interviews focused on three main areas: interpretations of *Sipakataui*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge*; personal experiences with bullying in school environments; and perspectives on how cultural values can function as preventive tools. All interviews were video-recorded and transcribed verbatim with participants' informed consent.

3.3. Research instruments, data recording, and data analysis techniques

Document analysis was also used to provide historical and cultural context. This included the examination of *Lontara* manuscripts, Bugis-Makassar proverbs, and school records related to cultural events. Additionally, a simulation was conducted to complement naturalistic observation. Given the candid and unpredictable nature of bullying incidents among middle school students, direct ethnographic observation of such events is extremely difficult to capture naturally. Therefore, the

Table 1
Criteria for selecting key informants.

Category	Position/Role	Selection Criteria	Rationale for Inclusion
Cultural Experts (R1-R4)	Scholars of Bugis-Makassar culture, local customary leaders, or instructors focused on indigenous knowledge.	- At least five years of engagement in cultural or educational activities about Bugis-Makassar customs. - Profound comprehension of <i>Lontara</i> scriptures or <i>Pappaseng</i> doctrines. - Acknowledged by the community as cultural resource individuals	To offer a comprehensive contextual and philosophical comprehension of the values of <i>Sipakataui</i> , <i>Sipakalebbi</i> , and <i>Sipakainge</i> .
Teachers/Educators (R5-R6)	Guidance and counselling educators or character education instructors	- Engaged in teaching for at least 3 years at educational institutions that integrate local culture into their curriculum. - Proficient in managing student behavioural challenges, especially instances of bullying. - Proficient in culturally-based educational programs.	To provide pragmatic insights into applying cultural values in school-based character education and anti-bullying initiatives.
Students (R7-R12)	Junior and senior high school students (aged 13–17)	- Represent a variety of social and economic origins. - Possess experiences as victims, witnesses, or mediators in bullying episodes. - Capable and prepared to express their opinions during interviews or simulations.	To document lived experiences, views, and peer dynamics concerning respect, admiration, and rebuke in everyday school encounters.

simulation was created based on previously documented bullying cases to demonstrate how Bugis-Makassar cultural values can be applied in practice. This simulation recreated bullying scenarios to demonstrate how the cultural values of *Sipakatau* (mutual respect), *Sipakalebbi* (mutual appreciation), and *Sipakainge* (mutual admonition) could be applied to prevent and mitigate bullying. *Sipakatau* was reflected in inclusive behaviours that respected students from all socioeconomic backgrounds; *Sipakalebbi* appeared in conflict resolution and peer reconciliation efforts; and *Sipakainge* was evident in circle discussions where students respectfully reminded one another of proper behaviour. Designed as an informative case study rather than a statistical test, the simulation provided concrete evidence of how local wisdom can be practically integrated into educational settings.

The research employed several instruments to collect data effectively. A semi-structured interview guide was developed with teachers, students, and cultural experts, allowing flexibility while maintaining focus on key topics. An observation checklist systematically records verbal and nonverbal bullying behaviours observed during school activities. Additionally, audio and video recording devices were used to document interviews, simulations, and real-time interactions for further analysis and validation.

For data analysis, a qualitative thematic analysis approach was used (Campbell et al., 2021; Cernasev & Axon, 2023; Sandhiya & Bhuvanewari, 2024, pp. 289–310). The process began with transcribing field notes and interview recordings. Data were then divided and organised into thematic clusters, such as preventative techniques, types of bullying, and expressions of cultural values. Open and axial coding methods were applied to identify patterns and relationships between categories. Finally, detailed explanations were constructed to link empirical findings with broader theoretical and cultural frameworks. Triangulation of sources, methods, and data from cultural experts, teachers, students, observations, and documents ensured the credibility and reliability of the analysis.

4. Result

This section presents the findings on how the Bugis-Makassar cultural values of *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge* function as practical frameworks for preventing bullying in South Sulawesi schools. Based on interviews with cultural experts, teachers, and students, the results highlight how these values shape students' respect, appreciation, and mutual guidance, and how they are applied in educational settings to foster a more inclusive and respectful environment.

4.1. The role of sipakatau, sipakalebbi, and sipakainge in preventing bullying: cultural values and educational application

The values of *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge* represent indigenous wisdom that serves as foundational philosophies deeply embedded within the socio-cultural fabric of South Sulawesi communities. These values hold fundamental significance in guiding ethical and social conduct. Interviews with Bugis-Makassar cultural experts elucidate the specific meanings of these principles: *Sipakatau* denotes mutual respect, *Sipakalebbi* signifies mutual appreciation, and *Sipakainge* embodies mutual admonition for collective betterment. This study further explicates the nuanced interpretations and practical applications of these three values in bullying prevention, drawing upon empirical data from interviews with cultural scholars, educators, and students.

The fundamental attitude underpinning the value of *Sipakatau* is the humanisation of others, which is primarily manifested through the practice of respect toward fellow human beings. The findings of this study indicate that *Sipakatau* serves as the foundational principle underpinning all forms of politeness and social etiquette. It is understood as an imperative that humans treat each other with dignity and humanity, regardless of background or status. This Bugis philosophy is particularly relevant to addressing bullying, as it emphasises the

recognition of human beings as dignified entities whose honour must be preserved, promoting kindness, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Supporting documentation from Bugis-Makassar cultural texts further illustrates the basic human attitudes encapsulated in *Sipakatau*, as outlined in Table 2.

The aforementioned attitudes reflect a set of principles, values, and a profound sense of humanity that consistently uphold the dignity of others by refraining from harshness, aggression, harm, and other detrimental behaviours. Such behaviours are closely associated with verbal and physical bullying.

Bugis-Makassar cultural experts explain that the principle of humanising others (*Sipakatau*) originated as a fundamental tenet to prevent conflicts, disputes, and global wars, which arise when individuals fail to treat one another with genuine humanity in attitudes and behaviours. Respondents illustrated this principle by highlighting the prevalence of violent behaviours among adolescents, such as bullying, which often stem from a lack of empathy for others. In response, the value of *Sipakatau* emerges as a culturally grounded alternative to mitigate such conditions by fostering mutual respect among youth. This can be cultivated through school educational processes, particularly in teacher-student interactions during learning, and within the family environment through parent-child relationships. Collectively, these socialisation processes are essential for nurturing *Sipakatau* in everyday life.

Bugis-Makassar cultural experts explain that *Sipakalebbi* constitutes a fundamental principle governing interpersonal interactions. According to interview data, the meaning of *Sipakalebbi* extends beyond mere etiquette; it embodies mutual appreciation, recognising the divine endowment of faculties such as intellect, heart, and senses that distinguish humans from other beings.

Furthermore, establishing Bugis-Makassar traditions and customs, particularly those related to *Sipakalebbi*, is inseparable from the belief in *Dewata Seuwwae* (the One Almighty God). This belief cultivates a fear of engaging in actions contrary to divine will. Consequently, the internalisation of *Sipakalebbi* in individuals represents a value system and normative framework that guides daily speech and behaviour within the Bugis-Makassar community.

Similarly, schoolteachers have articulated that fostering an attitude of mutual appreciation enables students to filter and resist negative behaviours that contravene the principles of *Sipakalebbi*, regardless of differences in ethnicity, religion, race, or social status. Documentation from the *Lontara* manuscript *La Mellong Kajaolaliddo* further illustrates these values, as presented in Table 3. Furthermore, several cultural admonitions are articulated in Table 3 to uphold proper etiquette (adap).

The aforementioned cultural texts indicate that the Bugis-Makassar community is fundamentally equipped through familial socialisation with normative guidelines that prevent behaviours contradictory to the customary traditions prevailing in South Sulawesi. A thorough understanding of the moral imperatives in the texts presented in Tables 3 and 4 can serve as foundational ethical messages to be conveyed to students, aiming to deter behaviours that violate human rights, including physical and verbal violence, bullying, and other related misconduct.

Bugis-Makassar cultural experts describe *Sipakainge* as a value that perfects the practice of etiquette in daily behaviour. As human beings,

Table 2
Cultural texts of Bugis-Makassar regarding the concept of humanity (*Tau*).

Original Text (Bugis-Makassar)	Translation
<i>Sipakatauwwi tauwe nasaba taumi.</i>	Humans respect each other because they are human.
<i>Sipakalebbi tauwe nasaba taumi ancagingenna.</i>	Humans honour each other because of their shared origin.
<i>Sitanrereangngi tauwe siri'na, nasaba gau sipakatau.</i>	Humans support each other because of <i>Siri'</i> , an expression of <i>Sipakatau</i> .

Table 3

Texts of proverbs regarding virtue.

Original Text (Bugis-Makassar)	Translation
<i>Winru decengngi ada-adae.</i>	Improve your speech when speaking.
<i>Patarakkai ampe-ampe malebbie.</i>	Cultivate noble and honourable behaviour.
<i>Paddioloe ri oloe.</i>	Do not exaggerate or take sides before knowing the truth.

Table 4

Texts regarding etiquette.

Original Text (Bugis-Makassar)	Translation
<i>Najagai ada adanna.</i>	Always maintain proper speech.
<i>Naissengngi alena.</i>	Know oneself.
<i>Naitai alena.</i>	Reflect on oneself.
<i>Mappogau angka sitinajae.</i>	Act in accordance with propriety.

individuals inevitably require reminders not solely regarding right and wrong conduct, but more profoundly, as mechanisms for balance, comparison, and reinforcement. This concept aligns with the prophetic teaching of Rasulullah SAW, who stated that religion is *nasihat* (advice or counsel). Consequently, advice is a critical balancing tool, applicable to oneself and the counsel offered to others.

The value of *Sipakainge* is closely intertwined with religious teachings. Cultural experts explain that human reminders or advice sources vary according to context. For instance, Islamic teachings convey ultimate truths through the Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, which include commandments and prohibitions. Additionally, reminders that carry authoritative weight arise from parents, while peer and social reminders originate from friends, companions, or others addressing everyday life challenges.

This cultural insight aligns with observed conditions within the school environment, where teachers emphasise the crucial role of peer influence in preventing behaviours that contradict religious, ethical, and moral principles, as well as social etiquette in interpersonal interactions, particularly in combating peer violence, harassment, and bullying.

Furthermore, *Sipakainge* is strongly connected to the concept of *Pesse*, meaning empathy. Upholding *Sipakainge* reflects a commitment to caring for others' well-being, as an expression of empathy toward peers who are victims of violence or bullying. Table 5 present several attributes of *Sipakainge* that can be applied in daily life are presented in Table 5.

The aforementioned attributes illustrate that mutual admonition extends beyond close relationships to encompass anyone experiencing moral lapses or difficulties in self-regulation. It demonstrates the value of reminding one another to achieve collective well-being. Such admonition, understood as a form of *Paseng* (cultural message), reflects a communication style characterised by firmness and sincerity, which is further detailed in Table 6.

The three aforementioned traits represent fundamental qualities that every individual should embody, particularly in social relationships. They serve as integral components of personal identity, enabling individuals to provide counsel and offer mutual reminders when social issues arise. Cultivating these traits contributes to fostering harmony and cohesion within the community.

Table 5

Attributes of sipakainge in daily life.

Attributes of Sipakainge	Translate
<i>Rebba sipatokkong.</i>	Mutual support.
<i>Mali siparappe.</i>	Mutual care.

Table 6

Traits as standards for mutual admonition.

Traits	Translation
<i>Getteng.</i>	Firm.
<i>Lempu.</i>	Honest.
<i>Ada tongeng.</i>	Truthful in Speech.

4.2. The role of Bugis-Makassar cultural values in shaping social character and preventing bullying in South Sulawesi

This research directly involved Bugis-Makassar culturists, teachers, and students in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. Based on observations, South Sulawesi is one of the provinces that still firmly instills cultural values in daily life to maintain harmonious social relations in community life and education in schools. The research location is dominated by Bugis tribes from various regencies in South Sulawesi, Makassar tribes, and transmigrants from various provincial cities in Indonesia. Based on interviews with cultural experts, teachers, and students, it can be concluded that the Bugis-Makassar cultural values, which originate from the Lontara Bugis-Makassar, play a crucial role in shaping ethical social character and mutual respect. Fig. 1 demonstrates that interviews with cultural professionals enhanced the comprehension of these values and their practical application in everyday life, underscoring their importance in influencing social dynamics.

The significance of *Pappaseng*, which conveys moral teachings, *Panggaderreng* as a framework of customary norms, *Tudang Sipulung* as a deliberative method, *Macca Na Malempu* promoting intelligence and integrity, *Sulapa Eppa* serving as the basis for holistic character development, and *Siri Na Pesse* underscoring dignity and empathy, collectively reinforce the tenets of mutual respect and empathy within social interactions. Cultural specialists assert that the Bugis-Makassar people have values that constitute a way of life, derived from the Lontara Bugis-Makassar. These cultural values reflect the Community's life, such as *Pappaseng*, *Panggaderreng*, *Tudang Sipulung*, *Macca Na Malempu*, *Sulapa Eppa*, and *Siri Na Pesse*. (-R1, -R4) and "The existing cultural values, such as *Pappaseng*, are moral messages related to ethical behaviour." (-R2, -R4). Fig. 2 illustrates the teacher's viewpoint, which underscores integrating cultural values into educational processes, fostering character development and ethical behaviour among pupils.

Social events, such as the deterioration of community cohesion and the escalation of violence in schools, indicate a possible correlation with the erosion of cultural values, underscoring the necessity for their reinforcement through education. A teacher stated, "The importance of preserving cultural values in schools is to filter various behaviours that may hurt students, such as brawls, physical violence, verbal abuse, or bullying." (-R5). Additionally, the influence of social inequality in society, such as differences in social status among students, often triggers bullying. The teacher added, "The issues of the deterioration of these

**Fig. 1.** Interview with A cultural specialist.



Fig. 2. Interview with A teacher.

values may potentially arise from societal inequity. Bullying in schools may be affected by socio-economic disparities among students." (-R6).

The principles of *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge* are essential in tackling these challenges by enhancing students' character to honour and value one another. As stated by the cultural expert, "The Bugis-Makassar community has instilled attitudes of mutual respect, mutual appreciation, and mutual reminders to address the social inequalities that occur." (-R1, -R3). The teacher also emphasised, "The shift in understanding of the values of *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge* among students means it is important to continue providing stimulus through various activities in school." (-R5). This highlights the importance of integrating these values into daily interactions at school. Fig. 3 illustrates that the student's viewpoint underscores the importance of these values in influencing peer relationships and their practical implementation in educational settings.

According to student interviews, a major factor in promoting respect for one another is the inculcation of *Sipakatau* values by classmates, parents, and instructors at home and school. Pupils who recognise the value of *Sipakatau* are more inclined to oppose bullying in the classroom. As students said, "In essence, the values of *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge* have been instilled in life by parents at home, teachers at school, and peers both at school and outside school." (-R7, -R8). They further added, "Through the values of *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge*, peers who understand the importance of humanising others through respect will be motivated to resist bullying actions that occur at school." (-R9, -R12).

Bullying at schools in South Sulawesi frequently takes the form of verbal abuse, physical assault, and social bullying, and it is frequently



Fig. 3. Interview with A student.

brought on by social imbalance between pupils from various socio-economic backgrounds. The Bugis-Makassar cultural values of *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge* can be a valuable substitute for this problem. *Sipakainge* cultivates empathy and compassion for victims of bullying, *Sipakalebbi* promotes appreciation for diversity, and *Sipakatau* teaches respect for one another. By putting these principles into practice in society and in schools, we can stop bullying and foster an atmosphere that is more inclusive and polite.

4.3. Bullying and social stratification in South Sulawesi Schools: the role of Bugis-Makassar values in prevention

Bullying in schools constitutes a significant issue with detrimental effects on students' psychological and social development. Such bullying incidents often originate from perceived differences that deviate from group norms, including appearance, behaviour, or social background distinctions. Peers frequently exploit these differences as justification for bullying behaviour. This phenomenon is present in schools in South Sulawesi, Indonesia.

An illustrative example includes the traditional Bugis-Makassar attire, which reflects social stratification as depicted in Fig. 4. These visible social markers may serve as triggers for bullying among students.

In Makassar, students wear traditional attire every Thursday. Within the Bugis-Makassar culture, the traditional female garment is called *Baju Bodoh*, while the male attire is called *Jas Tutup*. Both are often accompanied by headgear such as *Songko Racca* or *Pasappu*. The *Songko Racca* symbolises high social status, whereas the *Pasappu* denotes common societal standing.

In a classroom scenario, a student wearing a black *Jas Tutup* and *Pasappu* represents the standard social class, contrasted by another student wearing the more conspicuous *Songko Racca*, reflecting a higher social status. Females wear the *Baju Bodoh* across all social strata without distinction. These visible distinctions in social status, particularly indicated by the headgear, can act as catalysts for bullying. For example, as illustrated in Fig. 5, a student wearing *Pasappu* becomes a target due to their simpler appearance than their peers.

Fig. 5 depicts a classroom learning environment. Three students in the front row wear yellow *Baju Bodoh*, whispering to each other while suppressing laughter. Behind them, a male student wearing a *Pasappu* headgear, a symbol of common social status, appears socially isolated.

His separated position and calm expression indicate social exclusion. The students' laughter in front of him is interpreted as covert mockery directed at him. Standing at the front of the class, the student lowers his head and crosses his arms over his chest, signalling discomfort. Several students are seen pointing and mocking, highlighting bullying based on



Fig. 4. Traditional attire of South Sulawesi reflecting social status differences.



Fig. 5. Simulation of covert bullying situation or indirect mockery.

social status differences and attire. Fig. 6 illustrates a verbal bullying scenario characterised by multiple hands from the left side of the photo simultaneously pointing at a single student, accompanied by mocking expressions from other students.

From Fig. 6, the directed fingers symbolise verbal bullying behaviours such as blaming, ridiculing, judging, or humiliating the targeted student. Additionally, this situation reflects collective bullying, where one individual becomes the focus of several peers. Such actions may result in feelings of shame, low self-esteem, social isolation, and psychological trauma. The social disparities evident within the classroom often extend beyond, triggering bullying incidents outside the classroom, as exemplified in Fig. 7.

Fig. 7 depicts a student who was a victim of bullying inside the classroom and subsequently became the subject of verbal intimidation in the school corridor. Three students dressed in traditional yellow stand together, turning their backs on another student wearing different traditional clothing and a red *Passappu* headband. The isolated student silently overhears the mocking directed at his attire. Socially, the lone male student's posture, facial expression, and gestures indicate feelings of alienation, rejection, and exclusion. Meanwhile, the female students' act of turning their backs exemplifies subtle neglect and covert mockery.

Bullying behaviours, whether occurring inside or outside the classroom, have detrimental impacts on victims. Therefore, educating students about the importance of mutual respect, appreciation, and constructive reminders for collective well-being is imperative. Within the Bugis-Makassar cultural framework, these practices are encapsulated by the values of *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge*.

An illustrative example of *Sipakatau* in school settings is the simple



Fig. 6. Simulation of a verbal bullying situation when a student presents in front of the class.



Fig. 7. Simulation of social bullying situation outside the classroom/school corridor.

yet meaningful act of applauding peers who bravely present in front of the class during lessons, as depicted in Fig. 8. Such gestures embody respect and support, fostering a positive and inclusive learning environment.

Fig. 8 illustrates students' empathy toward a bullying victim in the classroom. A male student stands at the front after experiencing bullying, while his peers offer support instead of ridicule or mockery. This support reflects respect for the student's courage to present publicly, demonstrating the concrete application of the *Sipakatau* value.

Sipakatau teaches respect for others regardless of background. First, students honour the victim's dignity by refraining from blame and showing care and understanding toward their affected peer. Second, the action reflects an appreciation for fellow human beings, emphasising the importance of each individual within the community. The empathy demonstrated affirms that all individuals deserve to be treated with dignity, even when vulnerable. Fig. 9 demonstrates that the simulation of *Sipakalebbi* (mutual appreciation) underscores implementing these principles in educational environments, highlighting students' active engagement in promoting mutual respect and understanding.

Fig. 9 depicts two male students sitting face-to-face, shaking hands and smiling, symbolising mutual appreciation and warmth. The value of *Sipakalebbi* embodies mutual respect irrespective of social status or background. It emphasises respect, kindness, and the avoidance of belittlement. The handshake represents unity, acceptance, and social reconciliation.

This value is significant in implementing the following conflicts, such



Fig. 8. Simulation of the practice of the value *Sipakatau*.



Fig. 9. Simulation of the value *Sipakalebbi* (mutual appreciation).

as bullying incidents. *Sipakalebbi* is demonstrated when students assist with humility and respect. Holding the victim's hand conveys empathy and emotional support. Such actions express appreciation without superiority, fostering a supportive environment that neither blames nor ostracises the victim. Students actively engage in accompanying and empowering the victim. Every student has the right to be valued, heard, and cared for.

To maintain this value, it is essential to cultivate a culture of mutual admonition. The value of *Sipakainge* is manifested through sitting in a circle and engaging in open discussion, as illustrated in Fig. 10.

Fig. 10 depicts five students seated in a circle on the classroom floor, dressed in traditional attire, creating an inclusive and harmonious atmosphere. One student wearing a red *Passappu* speaks with a smile, while others attentively and openly listen. This scene exemplifies the value of *Sipakainge*: mutual reminding for the common good.

Sipakainge emphasises gentle and respectful awareness-raising rather than harsh reprimands. The circular seating arrangement symbolises equality and the absence of social hierarchy within interpersonal relationships. This value is practised through collective advising, where students engage in open, friendly dialogue without shaming the individual involved. Offenders are encouraged to change without punishment or judgment. *Sipakainge* prioritises restoration over social sanction, fostering peer solidarity that promotes behavioural change and emotional support. Consequently, the school becomes a safe space for growth and mutual correction. This approach is reflected in the roles played by various members of the Bugis-Makassar community in preventing bullying, as shown in Table 7 below. The table illustrates how each stakeholder, including the government, religious leaders, teachers, police, parents, students, and community leaders, contributes to



Fig. 10. Simulation of the value *Sipakainge* (mutual reminding).

creating a supportive environment based on the cultural values of *Sipakatau* (mutual respect), *Sipakalebbi* (mutual appreciation), and *Sipakainge* (mutual admonition). These roles help integrate cultural wisdom into bullying prevention efforts, ensuring that each participant actively promotes a culture of respect, understanding, and non-judgmental correction (see Table 8).

The table above illustrates the essential roles that various stakeholders play in preventing bullying through the lens of Bugis-Makassar cultural values, specifically *Sipakatau* (Mutual Respect), *Sipakalebbi* (Mutual Appreciation), and *Sipakainge* (Mutual Admonition). The government plays a critical role by formulating and enforcing anti-bullying policies that promote respect and equality within schools. Religious leaders offer ethical guidance to foster empathy and respect among students, while teachers implement character education and peer mediation, directly integrating these cultural values into their daily teaching practices. The police ensure the safety of students by enforcing laws and educating them about their legal rights, while parents instil cultural values in their children, encouraging respectful behaviour both at home and in school. Students are encouraged to practice these values with their peers, creating an inclusive and respectful school environment.

Furthermore, community leaders contribute by incorporating these cultural values into broader social practices through community outreach programs aimed at promoting harmony. The collective responsibility of all stakeholders ensures a unified approach to bullying prevention, where mutual respect, appreciation, and guidance are crucial to creating a positive school climate. By embedding these Bugis-Makassar values into both formal education and community life, a culture of empathy and respect can be nurtured, ultimately leading to a reduction in bullying incidents. This integrated approach not only addresses bullying directly but also contributes to the long-term social cohesion of the community.

5. Discussion

This study's findings illustrate the potential of Bugis-Makassar cultural values *Sipakatau* (mutual respect), *Sipakalebbi* (mutual appreciation), and *Sipakainge* (mutual admonition) as a framework for bullying prevention among schoolchildren. These concepts underscore moral accountability, compassion, and respect in interpersonal relationships. The research indicates that kids who embody *Sipakatau* demonstrate enhanced resilience against bullying, corroborating previous studies that associate respect and appreciation with less aggression in school settings (Lin et al., 2022; Ran et al., 2020).

The study demonstrated that peer support behaviours, such as students encouraging each other despite prior taunting, exemplified *Sipakatau* in action. This corroborates with studies indicating that peer affirmation promotes diversity within educational institutions (Fu et al., 2022; Van Ryzin et al., 2024). Conversely, when *Sipakatau* is neglected, pupils are more prone to exhibit exclusionary behaviours, hence corroborating the notion that bullying arises from a deficiency of empathy (Devleeschouwer et al., 2025; Wang et al., 2025).

The practice of *Sipakalebbi*, exemplified by peer reconciliation actions such as handshakes following conflicts, corresponds with the principles of character education that prioritise mutual appreciation. This idea has effectively diminished peer victimisation (Meter et al., 2025; Van Ryzin et al., 2022). The research illustrates that prosocial conduct may be cultivated in collectivist settings by employing indigenous cultural frameworks, extending beyond conventional socio-emotional learning models. The handshake, a conventional gesture, signifies social reconciliation, aligning with previous studies on the significance of cultural symbols in mitigating youth conflicts (Eko & Putranto, 2021).

Sipakainge, the practice of providing constructive peer reminders, shown in school circle discussions, fosters restorative approaches and opposes punishing measures. This methodology corresponds with

Table 7

Roles in preventing bullying using Bugis-Makassar cultural values.

Role	Government	Religious Leaders	Teachers	Police	Parents	Students	Community Leaders
Create/enforce anti-bullying policies.	✓						
Promote mutual respect in society.	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Support ethical/moral guidance.		✓	✓				
Facilitate character education.			✓				
Implement peer mediation.			✓				
Encourage law enforcement and safety.				✓			✓
Promote socio-legal education.				✓			
Model respectful behaviour at home.					✓		
Support students' social-emotional learning.					✓		
Engage in community outreach programs.							✓
Support the application of cultural values.	✓	✓	✓				✓
Foster social responsibility and empathy.		✓	✓				

Table 8Of pros and cons of implementing *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge* in bullying prevention.

Aspect	Pro (Benefits)	Con (Drawbacks)
<i>Sipakatau</i> (Mutual Respect)	Fosters reciprocal respect, mitigates discriminatory conduct, and cultivates a more inclusive atmosphere.	It can be employed to compel social conformity, marginalising those who diverge from societal standards or cultural practices. Individuals who deviate from anticipated clothes or conduct may experience isolation or exclusion.
<i>Sipakalebbi</i> (Mutual Appreciation)	Promotes reciprocal appreciation, cultivates camaraderie, and mitigates bullying by emphasising positive reinforcement.	May promote social hierarchies, as persons receiving more frequent approbation or acknowledgement may perceive themselves as superior, while others may feel marginalised or neglected.
<i>Sipakainge</i> (Mutual Admonition)	Enhances social responsibility and reciprocal correction, diminishing aggressive conduct and boosting social interactions.	Risks are employed to manipulate individual behaviour unjustly, enforcing conformity and marginalising dissenters. Individuals who diverge in thought or behaviour may experience excessive reprimand, resulting in stigma or ostracism.

Islamic educational perspectives, wherein reciprocal reminders are regarded as ethical duties and precautionary counsel (Memon et al., 2024; Succarie, 2024). Unlike exclusively religious or Western restorative techniques, sipakainge is profoundly embedded in Bugis-Makassar culture, rendering it contextually suitable for students in South Sulawesi.

These findings both corroborate and expand upon current research about bullying prevention. Previous research in Indonesia has emphasised the significance of cultural values, such as rukun (peace) and gotong royong (mutual collaboration), in alleviating violence in educational institutions (McCoy et al., 2025; Muser et al., 2025). This paper presents *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge* as essential indigenous concepts, proposing that local knowledge systems enhance global anti-bullying initiatives. The study, however, deviates from Western methodologies that emphasise individual assertiveness to avoid bullying (Al Ali et al., 2025; Lepe-Salazar et al., 2024; Soto-García et al., 2024). The Bugis-Makassar viewpoint underscores moral interconnectivity and communal responsibility, accentuating the significance of cultural context in formulating intervention tactics.

The suggested model corresponds with global research emphasising the significance of restorative behaviours, empathy (F. K. Fitriyah et al., 2021; Suhardita et al., 2024), and respect as protective factors against (Harrison et al., 2025; Malin & Gumpel, 2023; Siregar et al., 2024).

Nonetheless, integrating these methods within local cultural frameworks diverges from Western models. Analogous to studies on gotong royong and rukun in Indonesian schooling (Fitriyah et al., 2022; Mur-tadlo et al., 2024; Susanto et al., 2025). The *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge* framework offers a culturally pertinent strategy for bullying prevention.

This research introduces a bullying prevention framework grounded in the Bugis-Makassar cultural tenets of *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge*. The results indicate that integrating these values into the classroom establishes a comprehensive framework for bullying prevention. *Sipakainge* advocates for restorative reminders via polite dialogue, *Sipakalebbi* facilitates reconciliation and peer support post-conflict, and *Sipakatau* enhances empathy and dignity to counteract mocking. Collectively, these elements underscore a societal obligation to maintain tranquillity, transcending personal coping mechanisms.

5.1. Implications for education

Implementing *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge* in educational environments can augment value-based learning. Educators can incorporate these principles into classroom management, peer mediation, and character development initiatives (Jones, 2022; Padmakumari et al., 2025). This study illustrates the application of cultural values in real-life bullying scenarios, providing a framework for culturally responsive pedagogy. Given the fragmented nature of such initiatives, this study highlights the necessity for educational institutions to formulate policies that systematically integrate cultural values into curricula.

This concept enhances bullying prevention ideas by prioritising communal cultural accountability rather than individual assertiveness. The results indicate that indigenous values can be methodically integrated into frameworks conceptualising bullying prevention via restorative practices and socioemotional development (Rizqi, 2025; Smith et al., 2022). This study operationalises *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge*, enhancing the cross-cultural development of educational psychology and cultural psychology, while emphasising the significance of local wisdom in influencing prosocial behaviour.

The *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge* models provide a culturally attuned strategy for bullying prevention. Educators can incorporate these ideals into anti-bullying measures through character education programs, peer mediation exercises, and daily classroom interactions (Lešková & Haburajová Ilavská, 2023; Sainz & Martín-Moya, 2023; Shrestha et al., 2025). This methodology can also inform the formulation of school policies that position bullying prevention as a moral and cultural imperative. Educators can utilise this model to instruct students on applying these principles in practical circumstances, thereby advancing character education at the policy level.

In addition to incorporating these cultural principles into educational materials, schools can take further action to combat bullying by engaging in practical community involvement and outreach programs. For instance, *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge* can be integrated

into textbooks and other instructional resources used in the classroom, particularly in subjects such as social studies, ethics, and character education. Through the use of case studies, role-playing exercises, or culturally relevant narratives, students can gain exposure to real-world applications of these values in addressing bullying. By embedding these cultural principles within the curriculum, educators ensure that students not only acquire knowledge about cultural values conceptually but are also provided with tangible frameworks to implement these values in their social interactions.

Moreover, schools can organise outreach initiatives that extend classroom teachings into the broader community. These programs could include workshops or seminars focused on bullying prevention, where students, teachers, and parents work together to raise awareness about the detrimental effects of bullying and the potential role that cultural values can play in mitigating it (Artinopoulou, 2025; Hua et al., 2024; Tulenbaevna et al., 2025). For example, community-based efforts might involve storytelling sessions, engagement with local cultural leaders, or parents sharing their experiences on how these cultural values have contributed to resolving conflicts and fostering social harmony.

A specific outreach initiative could involve the establishment of peer mediation programs, where trained students are assigned the responsibility of resolving conflicts among their peers by applying the principles of *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge*. Such programs would not only aid in preventing bullying but also empower students to take an active role in fostering a supportive school environment. These peer-led initiatives could be further developed to include mediation sessions for resolving interpersonal conflicts in a restorative, culture-sensitive manner.

Furthermore, schools could create safe spaces where students are able to report bullying incidents confidentially. These spaces would be staffed by trained counsellors and peer mediators who can use the cultural values to guide students through the conflict resolution process, promoting a community built on trust and accountability. This approach allows bullying prevention to be viewed not merely as a reactive response, but as a proactive, community-driven effort rooted in local cultural values.

By implementing these initiatives, schools can ensure that bullying prevention becomes a consistent, integrated aspect of school culture, extending beyond the classroom to permeate the entire school environment. These efforts would contribute to a school climate where respect, empathy, and mutual understanding are fundamental, ultimately leading to a safer, more inclusive environment for all students.

5.2. Complexity and contradiction

While the *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge* model holds potential for bullying prevention, it is crucial to recognise the complexity and contradictions involved in applying cultural values. Cultural standards might, in certain instances, foster conformity or exclusion instead of prosocial conduct. *Sipakainge* (mutual admonition), which underscores courteous reminders, may coerce compliance or suppress dissenting opinions, rather than promoting productive conversation. Furthermore, cultural symbols such as *Pasappu* (common status) and *Songko Racca* (high social status) may perpetuate social hierarchies, potentially resulting in exclusion or ridicule, despite the egalitarian principles of *Sipakatau*. (M. Mahmud, 2013). This illustrates the dual function of cultural norms as both safeguarding mechanisms and instruments of social regulation (Chugh, 2024; House et al., 2019; Meyer & Waskitho, 2021; Mu & Gelfand, 2020). These contradictions emphasise the necessity for meticulous, context-aware implementation of cultural frameworks in anti-bullying strategies.

Implementing *Sipakatau* promotes tolerance and diversity (Pangalila et al., 2024; PF et al., 2025), reducing discrimination based on social background. However, it may unintentionally enforce conformity, marginalising persons who do not fit to mainstream norms, particularly those with varied cultural expressions or lower social status. *Sipakalebbi*

fosters mutual respect, encourages unity, and alleviates harassment (Ferdiansyah et al., 2025; Hegseth, 2024). Nonetheless, it can intensify social hierarchies, causing individuals who receive frequent accolades to view themselves as superior, while others may face isolation, increasing their vulnerability to bullying. *Sipakainge* fosters accountability and ethical behaviour (Kadir & Alka, 2025), reducing bullying. However, it presents a risk of enforcing conformity, perhaps leading to unwarranted rebuke or stigmatisation for individuals who deviate from the norm, resulting in social marginalisation. While *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge* can alleviate bullying and promote respect (Junaid et al., 2023). Their execution must be scrupulously monitored to avert social hierarchies and conformity entrenchment.

The *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge* model is not universally applicable; it necessitates continuous reflection, educator oversight, and contextual modification to guarantee that it empowers pupils instead of reinforcing disparities. Educational institutions must recognise the possible hazards of cultural norms being employed to rationalise conformity or perpetuate existing power structures. Integrating these values into anti-bullying activities necessitates ongoing assessment and modification to guarantee they genuinely promote empathy, respect, and inclusion.

Adopting *Sipakatau* fosters tolerance and inclusivity, mitigating discrimination based on social background. Nonetheless, it may inadvertently impose conformity, marginalising individuals who do not adhere to societal norms, including those with diverse cultural expressions or diminished social position. *Sipakalebbi* promotes reciprocal admiration, cultivates solidarity, and mitigates bullying. However, it can exacerbate social hierarchies, leading those who receive regular commendation to perceive themselves as superior, while others may experience exclusion, heightening their susceptibility to bullying. *Sipakainge* promotes accountability and ethical conduct, hence mitigating bullying. Nonetheless, it poses a risk of enforcing conformity, potentially causing those who diverge from the norm to experience undue reprimand or stigmatisation, resulting in social marginalisation. Although *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge* can mitigate bullying and foster respect, their implementation must be meticulously regulated to prevent the reinforcement of social hierarchies and compliance. Subsequent research should investigate how these principles might be implemented to mitigate any downsides while continuing to foster unity, respect, and empathy among students.

Analysing the Bugis-Makassar cultural values of *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge* via empathy theory is crucial for comprehending their impact on students' behaviour and emotional reactions. Integrating Davis's (Davis, 2018) The four-component model of empathy enhances our understanding of how these values foster emotional and social development while alleviating any adverse effects. *Sipakatau*, which underscores mutual respect and the humanisation of others, corresponds with perspective-taking, prompting pupils to contemplate the emotions and experiences of their peers prior to taking action. *Sipakalebbi*, which promotes mutual appreciation, is linked to empathetic care, as it encourages kids to experience warmth, compassion, and a willingness to assist others, especially those vulnerable to bullying. Likewise, *Sipakainge*, which represents reciprocal warning, aligns with individual suffering, fostering empathy that motivates students to intervene upon observing detrimental behaviours. The imaginative aspect of empathy, which is the capacity to understand another's perspective, enhances all three cultural values by allowing pupils to conceptualise how respect, admiration, and reminders might avert bullying. This integration illustrates how Bugis-Makassar cultural values can foster a multifaceted kind of empathy, improving students' capacity to acknowledge, connect with, and respond to the experiences of others, so promoting a more compassionate and restorative educational environment. Fig. 11 illustrates how these values and components of empathy are intertwined.

The next stage is to describe how *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge* may be operationalised into a bullying prevention paradigm based on the knowledge of how they foster multidimensional empathy.

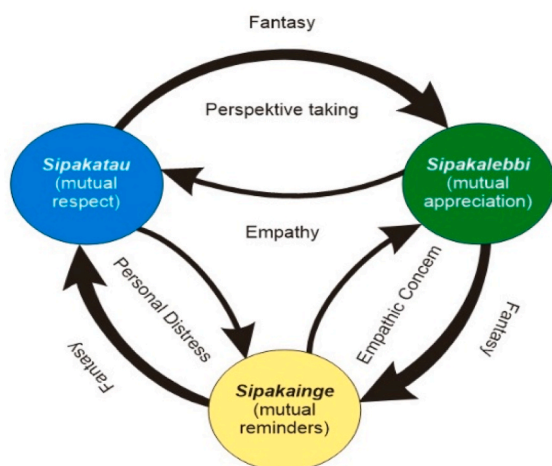


Fig. 11. Integration of values with empathy aspects.

In order to effectively apply cultural values to lessen bullying and promote a more inclusive and peaceful learning environment, this model is intended to offer specific direction for school-based practices and strategies, as illustrated in Fig. 12.

Fig. 12 depicts the *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, *Sipakainge* Bullying Prevention Model, which aims to mitigate bullying behaviour in educational institutions through a culturally rooted and methodical framework. This model is directly informed by the ethnographic data presented earlier in the paper, highlighting the significance of Bugis-Makassar cultural values: *Sipakatau* (mutual respect), *Sipakalebbi* (mutual appreciation), and *Sipakainge* (mutual admonition) in shaping social interactions and mitigating bullying. The model's elements are interconnected, emphasising the essential facets of implementation, impact, intervention, reflection, and understanding.

The initial component, Cultural Foundations, establishes the model within the cultural norms that foster empathy and respect. These ideals are crucial for creating a framework that promotes healthy behaviour and underpins the bullying prevention plan. This part is essential for comprehending how cultural values influence interactions and social norms, as evidenced by the ethnographic data, and it serves as the foundation for implementing further strategies.

This section discusses the practical application of cultural values in educational environments through tactics such as classroom

simulations, peer mediation, and character education. These activities are based on ethnographic research, which indicates that implementing culturally relevant practices markedly improves students' empathy and social skills. This phase signifies the execution of the cultural framework and establishes the foundation for tangible behavioural modifications.

The Bullying Context emphasises the comprehension of various forms of bullying, including verbal, social, and symbolic/status-based, that students may encounter. Educational institutions can tackle bullying in culturally appropriate and contextually pertinent manners by implementing the cultural principles of *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge*. This step highlights the necessity of reflection to customise interventions for the distinct types of bullying observed, ensuring that responses are grounded in the cultural context and effectively tackle the basic causes of bullying.

The Intervention component emphasises the measures schools implement to mitigate bullying behaviours directly. These interventions, guided by cultural ideas, foster empathy, respect, and conflict resolution among pupils. The interventions are crafted to be pragmatic and aligned with the ideals inherent in the school culture. This is where the model's cultural roots manifest in concrete acts that students can comprehend and use.

The Prevention Outcomes signify the enduring effects of these actions. The approach establishes a school environment where bullying is less probable by cultivating empathy, dignity, and peer reconciliation. These results correspond with the principles of *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge*, demonstrating the capacity of cultural values to alter the educational environment. Comprehending the impact of these principles on behaviour and cultivating a positive environment fosters enduring change and a more harmonious school culture.

The *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge* Bullying Prevention Model exemplifies a coherent and culturally rooted integration of ethnographic insights. Each component implementation, impact, intervention, reflection, and understanding collaborates to handle bullying effectively and sustainably. Incorporating cultural values at each stage guarantees that the interventions are practical and profoundly resonate with the children, fostering a school atmosphere of respect and empathy.

5.3. Limitation

One of the study's limitations is the small sample size of twelve key informants. This sample could not adequately represent the varied experiences of teachers and students in different schools or geographical areas. Larger, more varied sample sizes should be used in future research

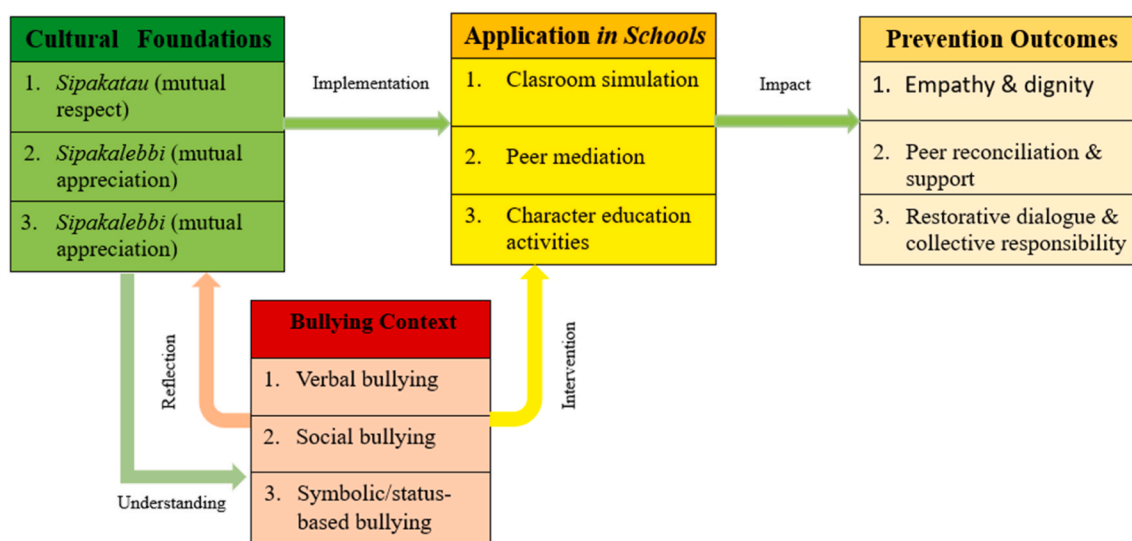


Fig. 12. *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, *Sipakainge* bullying prevention model.

to improve the reliability and relevance of the findings. Furthermore, there is insufficient empirical data to demonstrate a clear causal relationship between the rise in bullying and the deterioration of *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge* cultural values. The qualitative nature of the research, which is based on ethnographic observations and interviews, means that there is insufficient data to prove this connection with certainty. Future studies will therefore concentrate on more thoroughly analysing the connection between the drop in these values and the incidence of bullying. In order to develop a more comprehensive, empirically supported understanding of how incorporating these cultural values may reduce bullying behaviours in school settings, empirical data will be gathered using a combination of longitudinal ethnographic studies, observations, and surveys.

A key limitation of this study is the inadequate provision of an ethnographic investigation. Owing to ethical and contextual limitations, naturally occurring bullying episodes could not be directly observed, as these instances involve minors and are inherently unpredictable within educational settings. Thus, the research utilised controlled simulations to synchronise participants' perceptions and investigate the interpretive application of *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalebbi*, and *Sipakainge* in educational settings. This technique fostered a shared understanding among key informants but constrained the depth of the naturally rich, contextual narratives often anticipated in ethnographic research. This methodological limitation underpins future research, which ought to utilise longitudinal ethnographic observation to elucidate the organic functioning of these cultural values within the intricate social dynamics of schools, thus offering a more thorough and genuine comprehension of indigenous value-based bullying prevention.

A significant limitation of this study is the idealised portrayal of Bugis-Makassar cultural values, specifically *Sipakatau* (mutual respect), *Sipakalebbi* (mutual appreciation), and *Sipakainge* (mutual admonition), which may inadequately address potential drawbacks or adverse applications of these values. The study highlights the beneficial elements of these values in fostering social peace and mitigating bullying, although it inadequately considers their potential use as instruments of social control. *Sipakainge*, which promotes mutual scolding, could be utilised to impose strict conformity within school communities, resulting in the marginalisation of children deemed different or non-conforming.

6. Conclusion

According to the study's findings, bullying in South Sulawesi schools can be significantly reduced by upholding the Bugis-Makassar cultural values of *Sipakatau* (mutual respect), *Sipakalebbi* (mutual appreciation), and *Sipakainge* (mutual admonition). By highlighting the significance of empathy and respect for one another among students, these three principles provide a framework that promotes a more welcoming and peaceful learning environment.

By urging pupils to respect the rights and dignity of everyone, regardless of social or economic background, *Sipakatau* plays a critical role in lowering aggressive and discriminatory actions. By encouraging acceptance of diversity, *Sipakalebbi* builds student unity and lessens the possibility of bullying motivated by socioeconomic status disparities. Using a restorative rather than a punitive strategy, *Sipakainge* serves as a method to encourage pupils to maintain appropriate social behaviour by emphasising mutual reminders and guidance.

These principles have been successfully used in classroom simulations, peer mediation, character education, and other school-based activities to foster peaceful conflict resolution and lessen bullying. Therefore, one practical and long-lasting way to deal with bullying in Indonesian schools is to incorporate these Bugis-Makassar principles into the curriculum. However, the difficulties in putting these ideals into practice should be regularly assessed to ensure they do not marginalise those who are different or promote discriminatory societal practices. All things considered, this study shows how local cultural values can

enhance indigenous wisdom-based bullying prevention tactics.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Salmiati: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Methodology, Data curation, Conceptualization. **IM Hambali:** Supervision, Conceptualization. **Muslihati:** Writing – original draft, Validation, Methodology, Data curation. **Aji Prasetya Wibawa:** Validation, Supervision, Methodology, Conceptualization. **Wan Marzuki Wan Jaafar:** Investigation, Formal analysis.

Declaration of the use of AI assisted technologies

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors employed ChatGPT 4.0 as a language support tool for grammar refinement. All content generated or revised using this tool was subsequently reviewed and edited by the authors. The authors assume full responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of the final version of the article.

Data availability statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are available within the manuscript. Additional data may be provided by the authors upon reasonable request.

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We, the authors of this article, declare that no funding source played a role in developing this research. The entire process and writing of the article were conducted without financial support from my party, thus ensuring our research's independence, objectivity, and integrity.

Ethics statement

This study involved human participants. All procedures performed in this research were in accordance with the ethical standards of the Declaration of Helsinki. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their involvement in the study. Ethical approval was granted by the relevant institutional ethics committee.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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