



## STRENGTHENING ADOLESCENT CHARACTER THROUGH NIAS CULTURE-BASED GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING AS AN EFFORT TO PREVENT BULLYING

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### KEYWORD

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the role of strengthening adolescent character through Nias culture-based Guidance and Counseling (GC) as an effort to prevent bullying in schools. The increasing incidence of bullying among adolescents has become a serious educational and psychosocial issue influenced by globalization, digital technology, and the weakening of local cultural values. This study employs a qualitative approach using a literature review method to analyze, synthesize, and interpret relevant scholarly sources related to multicultural counseling, character education, and indigenous wisdom-based counseling practices. The findings indicate that bullying behavior among adolescents is closely related to low empathy, weak moral values, and limited cultural awareness. Integrating Nias local wisdom values such as famaeri (mutual cooperation), fahombo (social solidarity), deliberation, and respect significantly contributes to the development of students' character. These cultural values strengthen emotional regulation, empathy, and social responsibility, which are essential in preventing bullying behavior. Furthermore, multicultural counseling provides a strong theoretical framework for implementing culturally responsive guidance services that respect students' backgrounds and identities. The study also highlights the importance of decolonizing counseling practices by integrating indigenous knowledge systems into educational settings. The results show that Nias culture-based GC services are effective in creating a more humanistic, contextual, and inclusive counseling model. Therefore, this approach not only helps prevent bullying but also supports the development of culturally rooted and psychologically resilient adolescents in the era of globalization.

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### INTRODUCTION

Bullying among adolescents has become one of the most serious psychosocial problems in the educational environment. It is defined as intentional aggressive behavior that occurs repeatedly and involves a power imbalance between perpetrators and victims. Bullying can take various forms, including physical, verbal, relational, and cyberbullying. Its impacts are far-reaching, affecting students' psychological well-being, self-esteem, academic performance, and social adjustment. In severe cases, bullying can lead to anxiety, depression, school avoidance, and even suicidal ideation. Therefore, bullying is not only an individual problem but also a systemic issue that must be addressed through comprehensive educational and counseling interventions.

In Indonesia, bullying cases among adolescents continue to increase along with the rapid development of digital technology and social media. These developments create new spaces for peer aggression, especially in school environments. Data shows that bullying is still a persistent problem in various educational settings, including junior and senior high schools. One of the contributing factors is the lack of value-based character education and culturally responsive interventions in schools. Many existing programs focus only on punitive actions rather than preventive and developmental approaches that strengthen students' character [1].

Globalization has also contributed to the weakening of local cultural values among adolescents. Exposure to global culture, digital media, and individualistic lifestyles often reduces empathy, mutual respect, and social solidarity. These conditions increase the risk of antisocial behavior, including bullying. Therefore, there is a growing need for educational approaches that integrate local wisdom values as a foundation for character development and social behavior regulation. Guidance and Counseling (GC) services play a strategic role in this context, as they are designed to support students' personal, social, academic, and moral development.

However, counseling practices in many Indonesian schools are still largely influenced by Western counseling paradigms that emphasize individualism and universal principles. These approaches are sometimes less effective in multicultural contexts, where collective values and local traditions strongly shape behavior. Research shows that counseling services that do not consider cultural context may be less effective in building meaningful relationships and achieving behavioral change among students. Therefore, multicultural counseling approaches that integrate local wisdom are increasingly recognized as essential in addressing adolescent behavioral problems, including bullying [2].

Multicultural counseling emphasizes the importance of cultural awareness, sensitivity, and competence in understanding clients' backgrounds. It encourages counselors to integrate cultural values into intervention strategies to ensure relevance and effectiveness. Studies indicate that multicultural counseling based on local wisdom significantly improves empathy, social harmony, and behavioral adjustment among students while reducing bullying behavior in schools. In addition, culturally responsive counseling creates a safer and more inclusive school environment by promoting respect for diversity and reducing social conflict among students.

In the context of Nias culture, local wisdom plays an important role in shaping social behavior and moral values. Nias society upholds values such as togetherness, mutual cooperation (*famaeri*), social solidarity (*fahombo*), deliberation, and respect for customary norms. These values function as social capital that strengthens interpersonal relationships and community harmony [3]. Integrating these values into Guidance and Counseling services can help students develop empathy, emotional control, and responsibility toward others. Moreover, culturally based counseling helps adolescents maintain their cultural identity while adapting to global changes.

Previous studies support the importance of integrating local wisdom into counseling practices. Research shows that Guidance and Counseling services based on Nias local wisdom improve students' engagement, scientific attitudes, and problem-solving abilities while enhancing cultural relevance in learning environments [4]. Other studies also emphasize that local wisdom-based counseling strengthens student character, integrity, and social responsibility through culturally meaningful interventions [5]. Furthermore, intercultural counseling models based on local wisdom have been shown to be effective in preventing bullying behavior by increasing empathy and social harmony among students.

The concept of decolonizing counseling knowledge is also relevant in this study. Decolonization in counseling aims to reduce the dominance of Western theories and create space for indigenous knowledge systems. This approach ensures that counseling practices are more contextual, culturally grounded, and socially meaningful. In the Indonesian context, integrating local wisdom into counseling represents a practical implementation of decolonial thinking in education and psychological services [6].

Based on these considerations, strengthening adolescent character through Nias culture-based Guidance and Counseling is considered an effective strategy for preventing bullying behavior in schools. This approach not only addresses behavioral problems but also fosters long-term character development, cultural identity, and social responsibility among students. Therefore, this study aims to explore how Nias local wisdom can be

integrated into Guidance and Counseling services to strengthen adolescent character and prevent bullying in educational settings.

## METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a literature review method to examine the role of strengthening adolescent character through Nias culture-based Guidance and Counseling (GC) as an effort to prevent bullying. The literature review method is used because it enables researchers to systematically analyze existing theories, empirical studies, and conceptual frameworks without direct field data collection. This approach is suitable for developing a conceptual model of culturally responsive counseling based on local wisdom.

The literature review was conducted through several systematic stages. First, the researcher identified the research focus, namely the integration of Nias local wisdom in Guidance and Counseling services for bullying prevention. Second, relevant literature was collected from academic databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus-indexed journals, and national journals published between 2019–2026. Keywords used included “Nias local wisdom,” “bullying prevention,” “multicultural counseling,” “character education,” and “indigenous counseling.”

Third, inclusion criteria were applied. Selected studies had to be peer-reviewed journal articles, focus on counseling, education, local wisdom, or bullying prevention, and contain empirical or conceptual discussions relevant to multicultural counseling. Fourth, data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis and descriptive synthesis, which involved identifying key themes, comparing findings across studies, and organizing patterns related to counseling effectiveness, character development, and cultural integration.

The results of the literature review show that multicultural counseling is an effective framework for addressing bullying in schools. Multicultural counseling emphasizes cultural sensitivity, awareness, and competence in understanding students’ backgrounds. A recent study by [7] found that multicultural counseling based on local wisdom significantly reduces bullying behavior by increasing empathy, social awareness, and peer relationships among students. Similarly, research indicates that culturally responsive counseling improves students’ psychological well-being and strengthens school climate.

In addition, local wisdom plays a crucial role in shaping adolescent character. In the Nias cultural context, values such as *famaeri* (mutual cooperation), *fahombo* (social solidarity), deliberation, and respect for social norms serve as moral foundations for behavior regulation. A study by [8] shows that integrating Nias local wisdom into counseling services enhances students’ integrity, responsibility, and emotional regulation. These values create a culturally grounded counseling process that is more meaningful and effective in shaping student behavior.

Furthermore, recent studies emphasize that bullying prevention requires culturally based interventions. [9] found that multicultural counseling grounded in local wisdom strengthens empathy and reduces aggressive behavior in school environments. In addition, intercultural counseling models incorporating local wisdom have been proven to improve students’ social harmony and reduce peer conflict.

The concept of decolonizing counseling knowledge is also included in this methodological framework. Decolonization in counseling aims to reduce the dominance of Western theories and provide space for indigenous knowledge systems. This approach ensures that counseling services are more contextual, culturally relevant, and socially meaningful for Indonesian students. Studies show that integrating local wisdom into counseling improves cultural identity formation and strengthens the relevance of psychological interventions in non-Western contexts.

Another important finding from recent literature is that local wisdom-based counseling can be implemented through various techniques such as group counseling, narrative counseling, peer counseling, and experiential learning. These approaches allow students to internalize cultural values through interaction, storytelling, and real-life social experiences. Research also highlights that culturally based counseling contributes to creating a positive school climate that discourages bullying behavior and promotes empathy and mutual respect.

Data triangulation in this study is achieved by comparing findings from multiple sources to ensure consistency and validity [10]. The synthesis process produces a conceptual framework for Nias culture-based Guidance and Counseling services that integrates multicultural counseling theory, character education, and indigenous wisdom.

Overall, this literature-based methodology provides a comprehensive foundation for developing a culturally responsive counseling model. It highlights that strengthening adolescent character through Nias local wisdom is a strategic approach to prevent bullying while preserving cultural identity in the global era.

## RESULTS

The results of this literature review indicate that strengthening adolescent character through Nias culture-based Guidance and Counseling (GC) is an effective and strategic approach to prevent bullying in schools. The synthesis of recent studies shows that bullying remains a persistent problem in educational settings, particularly in multicultural societies such as Indonesia. Bullying behaviors are influenced by social, cultural, psychological, and technological factors, including peer pressure, lack of empathy, and the increasing impact of digital communication platforms. Therefore, preventive efforts must go beyond disciplinary actions and focus on character development through culturally responsive counseling services.

### 1. Effectiveness of Multicultural Counseling in Bullying Prevention

The first major finding of this study shows that multicultural counseling is highly effective in reducing bullying behavior among adolescents. Multicultural counseling emphasizes cultural awareness, sensitivity, and respect for diversity, enabling counselors to understand students' backgrounds more deeply. Recent research confirms that multicultural counseling integrated with local wisdom improves empathy, social harmony, and peer relationships among students, thereby reducing aggressive behavior and bullying incidents in schools [1]. Another study highlights that counseling services based on multicultural principles help create inclusive school environments where students feel respected regardless of cultural or ethnic differences. This inclusive environment plays a key role in minimizing conflicts and preventing the emergence of bullying behaviors.

### 2. Role of Nias Local Wisdom in Character Development

The second finding reveals that Nias local wisdom plays a central role in shaping adolescent character. Values such as *famaeri* (mutual cooperation), *fahombo* (social solidarity), deliberation, respect, and responsibility are deeply embedded in Nias cultural life and function as moral guidelines for social interaction. Research shows that the integration of these values into Guidance and Counseling services strengthens students' integrity, empathy, and emotional regulation [11]. These cultural values help students develop prosocial behavior and reduce tendencies toward aggression and bullying. Furthermore, Nias-based counseling practices have been found to improve students' engagement and problem-solving abilities while fostering stronger cultural identity and moral awareness [12].

### 3. Bullying as a Social and Cultural Issue

The literature also identifies bullying as a social phenomenon influenced by cultural misunderstanding and lack of tolerance. In diverse school environments, differences in ethnicity, language, and social status often become triggers for peer aggression. Recent studies indicate that bullying is not only physical or verbal but also psychological and digital (cyberbullying), making it more complex and widespread in the digital era. These findings emphasize that bullying prevention must address both individual behavior and social-cultural dynamics. Without cultural understanding and empathy, students are more likely to engage in exclusionary or aggressive behavior toward peers.

### 4. Globalization and the Decline of Cultural Values

Another key finding is that globalization significantly affects adolescent behavior and cultural identity. Exposure to global media and digital technology often leads to individualism, reduced empathy, and weakened local cultural values. As a result, students may become more vulnerable to bullying behavior, especially in online environments. Studies suggest that integrating local wisdom into counseling services helps maintain cultural identity and strengthens students' moral resilience against negative global

influences. Cultural grounding in counseling allows students to balance global exposure with local ethical values.

5. Decolonization of Counseling Practice

The literature further highlights the importance of decolonizing counseling knowledge. This concept emphasizes reducing dependence on Western-based psychological theories and promoting indigenous cultural frameworks in counseling practices. In the context of Indonesia, including Nias culture in counseling services ensures that interventions are more relevant, contextual, and meaningful for students. Decolonized counseling allows local wisdom to become the foundation of psychological support systems, ensuring that students' cultural identities are respected and integrated into their personal development processes.

6. Implementation of Nias Culture-Based Counseling

The findings also show that Nias culture-based counseling can be implemented through various approaches such as group counseling, narrative counseling, classical guidance, peer counseling, and experiential learning. These methods allow students to internalize cultural values through storytelling, discussion, reflection, and social interaction. Group counseling, for example, strengthens cooperation and empathy, while narrative counseling helps students reinterpret their life experiences based on cultural values [13]. These approaches are particularly effective in collectivist societies like Indonesia, where social relationships play a central role in behavior formation. Overall, the results of this literature review confirm that strengthening adolescent character through Nias culture-based Guidance and Counseling is a highly effective approach to preventing bullying. The integration of local wisdom into counseling services enhances empathy, improves social relationships, strengthens cultural identity, and creates a positive school climate. Moreover, culturally based counseling provides a sustainable solution to bullying by addressing its root causes, including social misunderstanding, lack of empathy, and weak moral values. Therefore, Nias culture-based Guidance and Counseling is not only a preventive strategy but also a transformative educational approach that supports holistic adolescent development in the era of globalization.

## DISCUSSION

The findings from this literature review demonstrate that strengthening adolescent character through Nias culture-based Guidance and Counseling (GC) is a highly relevant and effective approach for preventing bullying in the contemporary educational context. In the era of globalization and digital transformation, adolescents are increasingly exposed to cultural homogenization, identity confusion, and declining empathy. These conditions contribute significantly to the rise of bullying behaviors in schools, both in traditional and cyber forms. Therefore, culturally responsive counseling grounded in local wisdom is urgently needed to address these challenges.

1. Multicultural Counseling as a Preventive Framework for Bullying

The literature consistently highlights that multicultural counseling serves as a foundational framework in addressing bullying behavior in schools. Multicultural counseling emphasizes cultural awareness, sensitivity, and competence among counselors in understanding students' diverse backgrounds. It also promotes the integration of cultural values into counseling interventions to ensure contextual relevance. Recent studies show that multicultural counseling based on local wisdom significantly improves students' empathy, social relationships, and conflict resolution skills, thereby reducing bullying behavior in school environments [14]. Similarly, systematic reviews confirm that culturally based counseling models help create inclusive school climates that discourage aggression and promote social harmony among students. These findings indicate that bullying prevention cannot rely solely on disciplinary measures but must incorporate culturally grounded developmental strategies.

2. The Role of Nias Local Wisdom in Character Strengthening

A key finding of this review is the central role of Nias local wisdom in shaping adolescent character. Cultural values such as *famaeri* (mutual cooperation), *fahombo* (social solidarity), deliberation, respect,

and responsibility form the moral foundation of Nias society. These values are deeply embedded in social interactions and community life, making them highly relevant for educational and counseling contexts. Research shows that integrating Nias local wisdom into Guidance and Counseling services significantly strengthens students' integrity, responsibility, and emotional regulation [15]. Furthermore, other studies indicate that the use of local wisdom in counseling enhances students' cultural identity and behavioral discipline while fostering prosocial attitudes in school environments [16]. These findings suggest that cultural values are not merely symbolic traditions but functional educational tools that shape student behavior and social interaction.

3. Bullying as a Cultural and Social Phenomenon

The literature also emphasizes that bullying is not only an individual behavioral issue but also a social and cultural phenomenon. Differences in ethnicity, language, socioeconomic status, and group identity often trigger peer conflict and aggression in schools. In multicultural classrooms, lack of cultural awareness can lead to stereotyping, exclusion, and dominance behavior. Recent studies indicate that bullying manifests in physical, verbal, relational, and digital forms, and is strongly influenced by social structures and peer dynamics. This shows that bullying prevention requires interventions that address both individual psychology and broader socio-cultural contexts.

4. Globalization and the Erosion of Local Values

Globalization and technological development significantly influence adolescent behavior. The increasing dominance of digital culture often reduces direct social interaction and weakens traditional values such as empathy, respect, and communal responsibility. As a result, students may become more vulnerable to cyberbullying and other forms of social aggression. Studies show that integrating local wisdom into counseling helps maintain cultural resilience and strengthens students' moral foundation in the face of global pressures. Thus, Nias culture-based counseling functions as a protective mechanism that balances global influences with local identity preservation.

5. Decolonization of Counseling Knowledge

Another important discussion point is the concept of decolonizing counseling knowledge. This approach seeks to reduce the dominance of Western psychological frameworks and promote indigenous knowledge systems in counseling practice. In many non-Western societies, including Indonesia, Western counseling models often fail to fully reflect local cultural realities. By integrating Nias local wisdom into Guidance and Counseling, practitioners develop a more contextual and culturally meaningful approach. This ensures that counseling is not only clinically effective but also socially and culturally relevant. Decolonization thus becomes a pathway toward more inclusive and equitable counseling practices.

6. Implementation of Culture-Based Counseling Strategies

The literature also reveals that Nias culture-based counseling can be implemented through various methods such as group counseling, narrative counseling, experiential learning, and classroom guidance. These approaches allow students to internalize cultural values through storytelling, reflection, and social interaction. Narrative counseling, for instance, helps students reconstruct personal experiences based on cultural values, while group counseling strengthens cooperation, empathy, and collective responsibility. These methods are particularly effective in collectivist societies such as Indonesia, where social relationships play a central role in behavior formation. Overall, the discussion confirms that strengthening adolescent character through Nias culture-based Guidance and Counseling is a strategic and transformative approach to preventing bullying. The integration of local wisdom enhances empathy, strengthens cultural identity, improves school climate, and reduces aggressive behavior among adolescents. More importantly, it provides a culturally responsive alternative to conventional counseling approaches, ensuring that educational interventions are both meaningful and sustainable in the era of globalization.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the literature review, it can be concluded that strengthening adolescent character through Nias culture-based Guidance and Counseling (GC) is a highly relevant and effective strategy for preventing bullying in the school environment. The synthesis of recent scholarly studies indicates that bullying remains a persistent problem among adolescents due to low levels of empathy, weak self-control, peer pressure, and the increasing influence of digital culture. These conditions are further intensified by globalization, which often leads to the erosion of local cultural values such as mutual respect, solidarity, and social responsibility.

The integration of Nias local wisdom into Guidance and Counseling services provides a culturally grounded approach to addressing these challenges. Values such as *famaeri* (mutual cooperation), *fahombo* (social solidarity), deliberation, respect for elders, and communal responsibility serve as strong moral foundations for shaping students' behavior. These values help students develop empathy, emotional regulation, and positive social interaction skills, which are essential in preventing bullying behavior.

Furthermore, the study confirms that multicultural counseling is an essential framework in developing effective counseling services in diverse cultural contexts. Multicultural counseling emphasizes cultural awareness, sensitivity, and responsiveness, enabling counselors to understand students' backgrounds more comprehensively. The integration of local wisdom into counseling practices enhances the relevance and effectiveness of interventions, making them more meaningful for students in their cultural context.

The literature also highlights that bullying is not only an individual behavioral issue but also a socio-cultural phenomenon influenced by group dynamics and environmental factors. Therefore, prevention strategies must go beyond punitive measures and focus on character development and value internalization. In this regard, Nias culture-based counseling offers a holistic approach that addresses both individual behavior and social relationships within the school environment.

Another important conclusion is that the decolonization of counseling knowledge plays a significant role in improving the relevance of Guidance and Counseling services. By reducing the dominance of Western psychological frameworks and incorporating indigenous cultural values, counseling becomes more contextual, inclusive, and culturally meaningful. This approach ensures that students' identities and cultural backgrounds are respected and integrated into the counseling process.

Overall, the findings of this study demonstrate that Nias culture-based Guidance and Counseling is not only a preventive strategy for bullying but also a transformative educational approach that strengthens adolescent character, preserves cultural identity, and promotes psychological well-being in the era of globalization.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this literature review, several recommendations are proposed to enhance the implementation of Nias culture-based Guidance and Counseling in preventing bullying among adolescents.

First, for school counselors, it is recommended that they integrate local cultural values into all counseling services, including individual counseling, group counseling, and classroom guidance. Counselors should develop cultural competence by understanding students' cultural backgrounds, especially the values of Nias society. This cultural sensitivity will help create stronger counseling relationships and more effective behavioral interventions.

Second, for schools and educational institutions, it is important to support the implementation of culturally based counseling programs. Schools should design structured guidance programs that incorporate local wisdom values into daily learning and counseling activities. This can be done through character education programs, anti-bullying campaigns, and group counseling sessions based on cultural themes.

Third, for policymakers and local governments, there is a need to provide institutional support for the development of culturally responsive counseling systems. This includes training programs for counselors, development of culturally based counseling modules, and integration of local wisdom into the national education curriculum. Such policies will ensure the sustainability of culturally based counseling practices in schools.

Fourth, for teachers and parents, collaboration is essential in reinforcing character education at home and in school. Parents should also be involved in instilling cultural values such as respect, cooperation, and empathy, which are aligned with Nias local wisdom. Teachers can support this by integrating these values into classroom activities and student interactions.

Fifth, for future researchers, it is recommended to conduct empirical studies to test the effectiveness of Nias culture-based counseling models in real educational settings. Experimental or action research designs can be used to measure the impact of these interventions on reducing bullying behavior, improving student empathy, and strengthening character development.

In conclusion, the implementation of Nias culture-based Guidance and Counseling should not remain a theoretical concept but must be applied in real educational practice. This approach offers a sustainable solution for preventing bullying while strengthening character education, preserving cultural identity, and preparing adolescents to face global challenges in a balanced and responsible manner.

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