

# THE EFFECTS OF BULLYING TO THE MAIN CHARACTER IN THE MOVIE *JOE BELL*

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## **Abstract**

Bullying is an aggressive behavior that is intentional and repetitive, aimed at harming, intimidating, or dominating others. This behavior can manifest in various forms, including physical, verbal, social, and cyberbullying. Bullying can occur in different settings, such as schools, workplaces, and social environments, and can have serious effects on the mental and emotional health of the victims. This research identifies the types and effects of bullying depicted in the movie *Joe Bell*. The research design is qualitative. Using Spradley theory, including domain analysis, taxonomic analysis, componential analysis, and cultural theme analysis. This method is used to describe and analyze bullying in the *Joe Bell* movie. Data collection involved watching the film *Joe Bell*, capturing scenes, and documenting dialogues that indicate the types and impacts of bullying. Data analysis was conducted by classifying the types of bullying in the film *Joe Bell* using Coloroso (2015), theory and examining the effects of bullying using Olweus (1993) theory. The research findings reveal twenty-one data of four types of bullying experienced by the main character in the *Joe Bell* movie, they are physical bullying, verbal bullying, relational bullying, and cyberbullying. Additionally, the study identifies twenty-nine data of the impacts of bullying, including psychological effects, social effects, academic effects, and physical effects.

Keywords: bullying, effects of bullying, movie *Joe Bell*.

## **INTRODUCTION**

According to Smith (2004), bullying in schools is a prevalent and significant issue that concerns teachers, parents, and government officials alike. It not only harms the individual victims but also negatively impacts the overall educational environment, making it unhealthy for all students. Bullying is characterized in the literature as repeated aggressive behaviors

between individuals of similar status, such as peers at school or colleagues at work. These behaviors can manifest as physical, verbal, social, or digital abuse, including interactions via social media. The enduring consequences of bullying may involve psychological problems, diminished self-esteem, and a higher likelihood of dropping out of school. Thus, efforts to prevent and address bullying are crucial for ensuring a safe school environment and fostering positive growth for every student.

Movies frequently depict both physical and verbal bullying, and the movie *Joe Bell* (2021) provides a poignant illustration of such experiences. The movie portrays the real-life story of Jadin, a high school student and cheerleader who faces relentless bullying from school athletes. Jadin reveals to his father that this harassment is rooted in his sexual orientation. As a member of the cheerleading squad, Jadin's life was marked by significant hardships, exacerbated by the constant bullying from his peers, which led to severe stress and depression. The depth of his distress ultimately drove him to contemplate suicide.

Bullying has long been a topic of research, and studies often explore the same subjects through various theoretical lenses. One such study is by Sakinah (2021), titled "The Types and Impacts of Bullying on Taylor Hillridge in the Cyberbully Movie." This research focuses on identifying the types and effects of bullying experienced by the character Taylor Hillridge in the film "Cyberbully." Sakinah employs Coloroso's (2007) theory to analyze the types of bullying depicted in the movie. For examining the effects of bullying, the study draws on SEJIWA's (2008) and Buckie's (2013) theories.

The second study, conducted by Ningrum (2018) and titled "The Impacts of Bullying on the Main Character in the Movie Carrie," explores the effects of bullying on the protagonist of the film "Carrie." In this research, Ningrum identifies the various types of bullying and details their impact on the main character. The study utilizes Ken Rigby's theory to describe the effects of bullying and relies on data categorized by the National Centre Against Bullying (2019) to identify the types of bullying.

The third research done by Sirly (2017), entitled "*Bullying Portrayed in Mean Girls Movie: A Psychoanalysis*" discusses negative behaviors in cases of bullying. The theory used to address this is Rigby's (2003) theory as mentioned in Darmawan (2010:23), aiming to identify the impacts of bullying. The findings indicate that the dominant types of bullying is social bullying. In Indonesian, social bullying can be interpreted as "social squeezing" or "social intimidation."

The fourth study, conducted by Afina (2021) and titled "An Analysis of Bullying Faced by August Pullman in the Wonder Movie (2017): A Psychoanalytic Approach," investigates the different types of bullying depicted in the film "Wonder." The research focuses on identifying these types of bullying and analyzing the elements of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory—namely, the Id, Ego, and Superego—as they pertain to the character of August Pullman. The study's findings reveal that verbal bullying is the predominant form of bullying experienced by August Pullman.

The last study, conducted by Ramadhani (2023) and titled "Bullying Portrayed by the Main Character in Anne With an E Series," explores the types and effects of bullying depicted in the series "Anne With an E." Ramadhani employs Rigby's (2002) theory to analyze the types of bullying, which include verbal, physical, and gesture bullying, as outlined in Rigby's book, *\*New Perspectives on Bullying\**. For examining the impacts of bullying, the study draws on Rigby's (2003) journal *\*Consequences of Bullying in Schools\**, which identifies effects such as reduced psychological well-being, poor social adjustment, physical distress, and overall physical unwellness.

In the movie *Joe Bell*, the research focuses on identifying and analyzing the types of bullying experienced by the main character, as well as the effects of this bullying. The study aims to categorize the different forms of bullying that the protagonist encounters and to describe the impact these experiences have on the character.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Psychoanalysis**

According to Jarvis (2019) psychoanalysis as a theory examining the dynamic interplay between the body, mind, and social environment. Originally developed by Sigmund Freud, who practiced medicine in Vienna from 1856 until his death in 1939, psychoanalysis highlights the role of childhood experiences and psychological dynamics in shaping behavior and personality. In the realm of bullying, psychoanalysis offers valuable insights into the motivations behind bullying behavior and its effects on victims. It explores how past traumas or emotional distress can influence how individuals react to and process bullying, often intensifying feelings of fear, helplessness, or low self-esteem. By delving into the underlying causes of bullying, psychoanalysis aims to uncover the unconscious patterns driving both the perpetrator's and victim's actions. This approach can assist individuals in understanding and addressing the

psychological factors influencing their behavior, facilitating deeper emotional healing and recovery.

## **Bullying**

According to Coloroso (2015), bullying is an intentional and deliberate act of hostility aimed at causing harm to others. This can involve aggressive threats, including physical, verbal, or psychological intimidation designed to instill fear. Bullying is characterized by four key elements: a power imbalance, intent to inflict harm, the potential for further aggression, and the creation of terror. It can manifest as planned or spontaneous actions, whether overt or covert, and can occur in the presence of others or behind their backs. It may be overt or disguised under the guise of friendship, and can be perpetrated by individuals or groups. In summary, bullying involves repeated, conscious, and intentional negative actions meant to cause discomfort or harm. The focus of this study is on understanding bullying, particularly its impact on individuals' mental health and academic performance.

## **Types of Bullying**

Types of bullying refer to the different ways or methods used to intimidate, hurt, or humiliate someone. Researchers use Coloroso's theory because of its comprehensive and in-depth approach in understanding the dynamics of bullying. Bullying also occurs in several forms of action. According to Coloroso (2015), below are the different types of bullying that can occur:

### **1. Physical Bullying**

Physical bullying is the most overt and recognizable form of bullying compared to other types of aggression, yet it constitutes less than a third of the bullying incidents reported by students. Forms of physical bullying include actions such as hitting, choking, elbowing, punching, kicking, biting, pinching, scratching, and spitting on the victim. It also involves damaging or destroying the victim's clothing and personal belongings. The severity of physical bullying can increase with the strength and maturity of the aggressor, even if the intent is not to inflict severe harm.

### **2. Verbal Bullying**

Verbal bullying is the most prevalent type of bullying, used frequently by both girls and boys. It is relatively easy to carry out and can be done discreetly, often escaping the notice of adults and peers. On playgrounds, verbal bullying may blend with the general noise, sometimes being dismissed as mere childish behavior. This form of bullying includes name-calling, slander, harsh criticism, insults, and sexually suggestive

or harassing remarks. Additionally, verbal bullying can involve actions such as stealing money or possessions, making rude phone calls, sending intimidating emails, writing threatening anonymous letters, spreading false accusations, and engaging in malicious gossip.

### 3. Relational Bullying

Relational bullying involves deliberately undermining the self-esteem of the victim through neglect, exclusion, or avoidance. Avoidance, as a form of exclusion, is particularly potent in exerting control. Even if a child does not directly hear gossip about them, they can still feel its impact. Relational bullying might involve efforts to isolate or reject a friend, or it can be aimed at sabotaging a friendship intentionally. This behavior encompasses subtle actions like hostile looks, sighs, shrugged shoulders, sneers, mocking laughter, and disrespectful body language.

### 4. Cyberbullying

This represents a modern manifestation of bullying propelled by the rapid advancement of technology, the internet, and social media platforms. Essentially, the victim is subjected to ongoing negative communications from the perpetrator, spanning various channels such as SMS, online messages, and other social media platforms.

## **Effects of Bullying**

The effects of bullying refer to the negative impacts or consequences experienced by individuals due to acts of bullying or intimidation. The research use Olweus theory to analyze the effects of bullying because it is one of the most comprehensive and widely recognized theories in the study of bullying. By using Olweus theory, researcher can analyze the effects of bullying in more depth, both from an individual and social. According to Olweus (1993), effects of bullying are divided into four, namely:

1. Psychological effects encompasses the negative mental state resulting from bullying, including mood swings, depression due to frequent bullying, thoughts of revenge, a desire to escape, or even suicidal tendencies.
2. Social effects involves the victim's ability to interact and adapt socially, manifesting as shyness, isolation, passivity, lack of confidence, and struggles in social situations.
3. Academic effects pertains to the effects on a victim's academic pursuits, like decreased performance, difficulty concentrating, school avoidance, or even dropping out due to school-related anxieties.

4. Physical effects refers to the bodily effects on the victim, such as experiencing pain, appearing anxious or unhealthy, avoiding eye contact, and displaying body language indicating low self-esteem. If left unaddressed, sometimes these impacts can lead to long-term trauma for the victim or, in some cases, turn the victim into a perpetrator of future violence.

## **Synopsis**

The movie "*Joe Bell*" is a family drama based on a true story and depicts the journey of a father, Joe Bell, who walks from his hometown in La Grande, Oregon, to New York City, covering over 2500 miles, to raise awareness about bullying. The story follows *Joe Bell*, a 45-year-old man, who embarks on this journey six months after experiencing a traumatic loss - the death of his son, Jadin. The narrative begins with a flashback to nine months earlier when Jadin was still alive. Jadin, Joe's first child with his wife Lola, was subjected to bullying at Canyon Ridge High School in Idaho due to his sexual orientation. Despite confiding in his father about being gay, Jadin received no support and was instead told to fight back, receiving little assistance from his family or the school. Feeling isolated and mistreated, Jadin tragically took his own life.

## **METHOD**

The researcher employs a qualitative research method, which focuses on descriptive data. This approach involves providing detailed descriptions and explanations of phenomena or objects, rather than presenting numerical data as seen in quantitative research. According to Moleong (1998), qualitative research data comes from spoken or written words observed by the researcher, as well as from objects observed in detail. This method aims to uncover and interpret the underlying meanings within documents or objects.

The main data source that the researcher uses in this research is a movie entitled movie *Joe Bell* (2021) by Reinaldo Marcus Green. The movie duration is one our and thirty four minutes. By finding out about types and effects of bullying to the Jadin Bell character in this movie. The research data were in the form of utterances, gestures, and scenes co nait of bullying experienced by Jadin Bell in the movie *Joe Bell*.

The researcher acts as the primary tool in the study by viewing the movie and analyzing the data. After watching *Joe Bell*, the film will be examined thoroughly using content analysis. The researcher plays a crucial role in managing and interpreting the data

collected throughout the research process. Additionally, the researcher is responsible for choosing the most suitable methods for data collection.

The steps below are the data collection in answering research problem about kinds of bullying and the effects of bullying in the movie *Joe Bell*:

1. Watching and understanding *Joe Bell*.
2. Identifying the data pertinent to the issue addressed in this study.
3. Capturing scenes from the film and documenting the dialogue and gestures that indicate the types and effects of bullying in *Joe Bell*.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

In this table the researcher shows the relationship between questions number one and number two. This section explains research findings related to types of bullying and the effects of bullying, about the depiction of bullying experienced by the main character in the movie *Joe Bell*. These results were taken into account to find conclusions in the cultural theme analysis.

**Table 4.1 Types and Effects of Bullying**

Types	Effects				Total
	Psychological	Social	Academic	Physical	
<b>Physical</b>	6	2	1	6	15
<b>Verbal</b>	2	6	-	-	8
<b>Relational</b>	1	1	1	-	3
<b>Cyberbully</b>	2	-	1	-	3
<b>Total</b>	11	9	3	6	29

### Physical Bullying

Physical bullying is the most overt and recognizable form of bullying compared to other types of aggression, yet it constitutes less than a third of the bullying incidents reported by students. Forms of physical bullying include actions such as hitting, choking, elbowing, punching, kicking, biting, pinching, scratching, and spitting on the victim. It also involves damaging or destroying the victim's clothing and personal belongings. The severity of

physical bullying can increase with the strength and maturity of the aggressor, even if the intent is not to inflict severe harm.

**Datum 1**

**00:18:21 (T1, D1)**



**Figure 4.1 Scene 00:18:21**

The image above depicts the **physical bullying** experienced by Jadin. The type of bullying Jadin is enduring involves hitting, which is a form of physical violence. The impact of this physical bullying are **physical effects** and **social effects**. It can be seen, from the image that Jadin feels immense pain on his face. It showed that Jadin experience physical bullying. Moreover, the social effects of this bullying are also very significant. There are many people around Jadin witnessing the incident, making him feel very embarrassed and humiliated. This embarrassment can lead to feelings of low self-esteem and social isolation, where Jadin feel ostracized or unaccepted by his surroundings.

**Datum 3**

**00:53:54 (T1, D3)**



**Figure 4.3 Scene 00:54:22**



The image above depicts the **physical bullying** situation that Jadin experienced. In the picture, Jadin can be seen walking straight when suddenly he was nudged by his friend. The impact of physical bullying is not only felt **physical effects**, but also has significant **psychological effects**. When touched, Jadin's body movements stopped immediately in shock. This feeling of shock may continue to lead to feelings of anxiety, fear, or insecurity in the surrounding environment. Physical, this kind of bullying can cause pain.

### **Verbal bullying**

Verbal bullying is the most prevalent type of bullying, used frequently by both girls and boys. It is relatively easy to carry out and can be done discreetly, often escaping the notice of adults and peers. On playgrounds, verbal bullying may blend with the general noise, sometimes being dismissed as mere childish behavior. This form of bullying includes name-calling, slander, harsh criticism, insults, and sexually suggestive or harassing remarks. Additionally, verbal bullying can involve actions such as stealing money or possessions, making rude phone calls, sending intimidating emails, writing threatening anonymous letters, spreading false accusations, and engaging in malicious gossip.

### **Datum 7**

**00:18:24 (T2, D7)**

Boyd :"**First down, Faggot!**"

Coleen :"**You guys are such assholes.**"

The dialogue above represents **verbal bullying**, which involves. The impact of the verbal bullying is **social effects**. At that time, Jadin was in the school cafeteria, a place usually crowded with other students eating or socializing. As a result of the taunts he received in front of many of his friends, Jadin felt embarrassed and isolated.

### **Datum 8**

**00:22:25 (T2,D8)**

Jadin and friends :"**Who!yeah!whoooo!**"

Boyd :"**Hey Bell, did you forget your skirt?**"

The bullying present in the dialogue above is **verbal** in the form of sarcasm. The phrase "did you forget your skirt?" is not actually asking if someone forgot to wear a skirt, but it is meant to bully. This phrase is directed at a boy, who is not expected to wear such

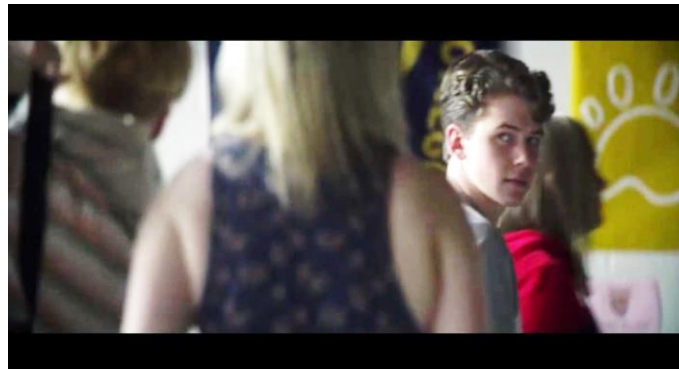
clothing like Jadin does. The impact of this bullying is **social effects**, as Jadin is cheerleading with a large crowd watching around him. Although he feels very embarrassed, Jadin ignores his friend's words and continues his activity.

### **Relational Bullying**

Relational bullying involves deliberately undermining the self-esteem of the victim through neglect, exclusion, or avoidance. Relational bullying might involve efforts to isolate or reject a friend, or it can be aimed at sabotaging a friendship intentionally. This behavior encompasses subtle actions like hostile looks, sighs, shrugged shoulders, sneers, mocking laughter, and disrespectful body language.

### **Datum 12**

**00:18:25 (T3, D12)**



**Figure 4.7 Scene 00:18:25**

The image above depicts **relational bullying**, where Jadin has just been hit by Boyd, and one of Boyd's friends is glaring at Jadin with a sign of pleasure. The impact of this relational bullying is **social effects** damaging. It makes him feel isolated and unaccepted by his surroundings. The social impact of this bullying is significant. However, Jadin pretends that nothing has happened and goes straight to his class.

### **Datum 13**

**00:55:16 (T3,D13)**



**Figure 4.8 Scene 00:55:16**

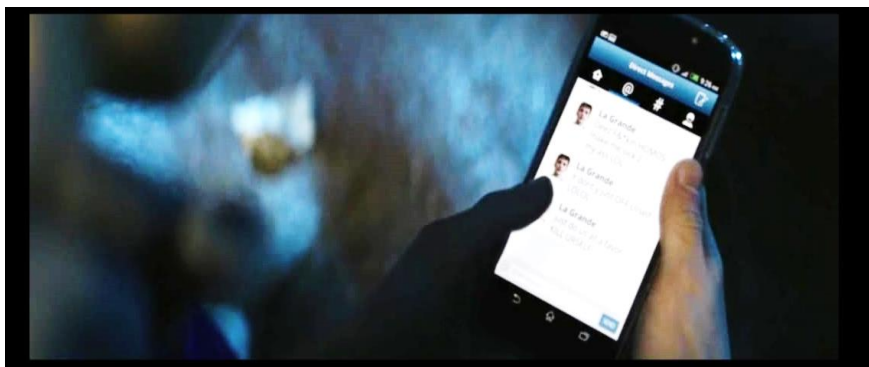
The image above depicts **relational bullying**. In the illustration given, Jadin becomes the victim of this bullying when her friends as a group start it. The impact of bullying is **psychological effects** and **academic effects**. Jadin began to feel deep depression. The feeling of helplessness and hopelessness he experienced made him even more guarded. Increased fear and anxiety caused Jadin to avoid school, a place that should be a safe and supportive learning environment. In the end, the bullying that Jadin experienced led to a bigger tragedy, namely suicide. Jadin's decision to end her life is a reflection of the heavy psychological burden she bears as a result of the bullying.

### **Cyberbullying**

This represents a modern manifestation of bullying propelled by the rapid advancement of technology, the internet, and social media platforms. Essentially, the victim is subjected to ongoing negative communications from the perpetrator, spanning various channels such as SMS, online messages, and other social media platforms.

### **Datum 14**

**00:23:50 (T4,D14)**

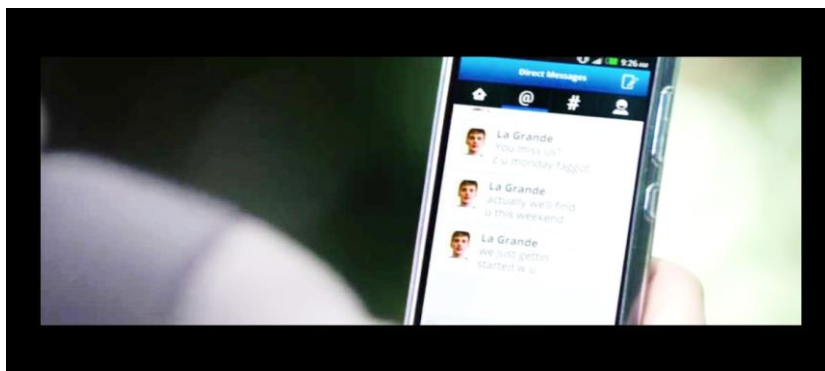


**Figure 4.9 Scene 00:23:50**

The dialogue describes a case of **cyberbullying** experienced by Jadin, where La Grande's twitter account sent messages containing insults and expressions of hate that could be accessed or seen by many people. These insults were not only intended to emphasize Jadin, but also had the potential to damage his image in public. The impact of this bullying is **psychological effects**. Because After reading these hate messages, Jadin's mind became disturbed and restless. Because it makes Jadin feel inferior and anxious.

**Datum 15**

**00:57:21 (T4,D15)**



**Figure 4.10 Scene 00:57:21**

The dialogue describes a **cyberbullying** situation in which La Grande sends threatening messages to Jadin, who threatens to do something bad when they meet again. These threatening messages were visible to everyone, which made Jadin feel publicly humiliated and intimidated. The impact of this bullying is **psychological effects** and **academic effects**. Jadin felt afraid, traumatized and stressed due to the threat, which caused her to lose her sense of security and self-confidence. Constant fear and psychological pressure finally made Jadin decide to end his life. In addition, the fear and stress he experienced made him avoid school, which had a negative impact on his academic performance and social development.

## **DISCUSSION**

The analysis conducted by researcher reveals that the film \*Joe Bell\* illustrates twenty-nine instances of bullying and their impacts. The most prevalent type of bullying depicted is physical, accounting for nine instances (31.2%). Physical bullying involves direct contact, such as hitting, kicking, pinching, or pushing. In the film, Jadin is frequently

subjected to physical intimidation by his friend Boyd at school. The second most common impact is social, also with nine instances (31.2%), which includes feelings of shame, isolation, passivity, lack of confidence, and difficulties in social interactions. The next significant impact is physical, with six instances (20.69%), referring to bodily effects like pain, anxiety, or unhealthy appearance, as well as signs of low self-esteem such as avoiding eye contact. Verbal bullying is represented by eight instances (27.58%) and involves harmful spoken words such as mocking, slandering, insulting, accusing, and gossiping. Relational and cyberbullying are the least represented, each with two instances (6.90%). Relational bullying involves subtle actions aimed at isolating or rejecting someone, while cyberbullying pertains to sharing negative content online. The film predominantly focuses on Jadin's direct experiences with physical and verbal bullying at school and the tangible effects these forms of bullying have on him.

The research also examined the impacts of bullying, revealing that the most significant impact was psychological, with eleven instances (37.93%). Psychological impacts involve mental or emotional effects resulting from an event or situation. In the film, Jadin's psychological effects include stress, anxiety, depression, and trauma, which ultimately lead him to commit suicide. The least noted impact is academic, with only three instances (10.34%). The film primarily emphasizes the profound emotional and psychological consequences Jadin endures, rather than focusing on academic effects.

This research identified physical bullying as the most prevalent type of bullying. Additionally, the study found that the most significant effects on victims was psychological. Jadin's experiences with bullying led to severe stress, depression, and frustration, ultimately resulting in his suicide. The findings highlight that physical bullying, a form of intimidation or violence, can deeply affect the victim's mental well-being, leading to significant psychological harm.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **Conclusion**

According to the research findings., it can be concluded that bullying in the movie Joe Bell is portrayed through the actions of several characters, primarily targeting Jadin. The study identifies various types of bullying, with physical bullying being the most prevalent. Jadin endures numerous physical assaults, including hitting, elbowing, and punching. The effects of this bullying are multifaceted, encompassing psychological, social, academic, and

physical consequences. Among these, psychological effects are the most pronounced, as evidenced by Jadin's experiences of stress, anxiety, depression, and trauma, ultimately leading to his tragic suicide.

These findings resonate deeply with real-life situations, where bullying often leaves lasting scars on victims, particularly in the form of psychological damage. In reality, the impact of bullying extends beyond the immediate physical harm, affecting a person's mental health, social interactions, academic performance, and overall well-being. The story of Jadin in *Joe Bell* serves as a powerful reminder of the devastating effects bullying can have, highlighting the urgent need for awareness, intervention, and support systems to prevent such tragedies from occurring in real life.

### **Suggestions**

After the researcher completed the analysis of the series., the researcher wanted to provide several suggestions to future researchers. This research has many benefits, but it is not free from shortcomings. Therefore, it is hoped that future researchers will be able to conduct more detailed and in-depth research, and be able to develop this research from various points of view. More comprehensive follow-up research could help fill remaining gaps and provide a more holistic understanding of this topic. Apart from that, The researchers hope that the public and readers will avoid replicating any of the bullying behaviors depicted in the movie *Joe Bell*. Bullying not only has a negative impact on the victim, but also harms all parties involved. Researchers emphasize the importance of empathy and respect for others in everyday life. By not emulating the negative actions depicted in the film, we can contribute to creating a more positive and supportive environment for everyone. Education regarding the impact of bullying and the importance of mutual respect must continue to be disseminated so that people become more aware of the bad consequences of bullying and try to prevent it.

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