



## THE EMPATHY BASED ON CULTURE OF STUDENTS IN LAMPUNG

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**Abstract:** Empathy is the cognitive and emotional activity of feeling what others feel from their point of view without losing one's identity. The empathy that is not well developed can be detrimental to the social community, especially high school students. High school students are the most difficult stage in building a personality, so it can affect life in terms of life development. On the other hand, the philosophical values of Lampung's cultural subculture show an openness to diversity that supports the development of the importance of empathy. This article aims to measure student empathy at the high school level and in terms of the Lampung cultural subculture. The research method uses a quantitative approach with a survey research design. This study was analyzed using the Rasch model to map the reliability and validity of the participants in answering the instrument comprehensively. The study results indicate that the philosophy of the Lampung community influences the majority of high school students by showing a high level of empathy. The research results are expected to provide a new perspective on culture that must be preserved to maintain and increase the value of empathy for the people of Lampung.

**Keywords:** Empathy, Lampung Culture, High School student

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## INTRODUCTION

Empathy is a person's ability to accurately understand another person's inner state and interrelated emotional meanings. This explanation clarifies that empathy is one of the social elements of society, including interpersonal skills (Decety, 2010; Zaki, 2020). Therefore, one's chances of survival will increase if one's ability has the talent to "read" one's circumstances (Eklund et al., 2009; Gerdes et al., 2011). However, feeling and responding to emotional conditions and reading about other people's needs do not necessarily make humans empathize.

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Empathy is important, but a person needs further training and skills to develop into full empathy. Empathy goes beyond the reflection of others or the recognition of basic needs, although both are very important as a foundation for having the ability to empathize. Even holistically, the development of empathy encourages students to be able to promote positive behavior (Breithaupt, 2018). Doing "kindness" can mean many different things to different people. It is capable of helping others, contributing to a larger cause, performing acts of kindness, or simply being kind to others. In the perspective of psychology, empathy is considered as a positive interaction between people as a prosocial behavior (Beadle et al., 2015; Huber & MacDonald, 2012; Pavey et al., 2012).

The development of empathy began in the 1900s by Theodor Lipps of Germany and Edward Titchener of the United States, known as the originator of the term "empathy" (Coplan & Goldie, 2012; Diswantika & Yustiana, 2022). Lipps originally used the term empathy to describe the emotions people can feel when they see beautiful works of art. In contrast, Titchener used the term *empathia*, which means "in passion" or "in suffering," to coin the word "empathy," and he similarly used empathy like Lipps (Davis, 1968).

Eisenberg (Losoya & Eisenberg, 2001) explained the concept of empathy as an affective response that comes from an emotional state similar to his own. It is described as follows: "We define empathy as an affective response that stems from the apprehension or comprehension of another's emotional state or condition and is similar to what the other person is feeling or would be expected to feel in a given situation." (Eisenberg, 2005).

Batson et al. (2015) revealed that someone who has complete empathy tends to know the emotional and cognitive state to imagine how the other person feels and thinks. It reinforces that empathy is an important dimension in social life to become a complete and optimal human being so that it is beneficial for himself and others. Although several theories discuss empathy, empathy is not universally defined based on research findings from various journals (Hall & Schwartz, 2019; Sachdev & Mohan, 2013; Warner, 2004).

Research trends show that someone who has high empathy skills exhibits various behaviors that are considered positive and prosocial (Diswantika & Yustiana, 2022): *cooperation* (Decety & Cowell, 2015; Goldstein & Winner, 2012; Iannotti, 1975; Rumble et al., 2010), *altruism* (Eisenberg, 2003; Litvack-Miller et al., 1997; Panksepp & Lahvis, 2011; Pavey et al., 2012), *morality* (Bloom, 2017; Decety, 2010; Oxley, 2011; Zaki, 2018), *compassion* (Angantyr et al., 2011; Anthony & Dan, 2020; Meyers et al., 2019; Moyn, 2006), and *justice* (Decety & Yoder, 2016; Pedwell, 2012, 2014; Segal, 2011). Furthermore, empathy is also related to the dimension of happiness (Morelli et al., 2014; Rueckert et al., 2011). However, research relating the influence of culture to the quality of a person's empathy is still or rarely studied. Moreover, Indonesia has a very distinctive cultural diversity which certainly has philosophical values that reflect empathy, one of which is Lampung culture. In the last ten years, research on empathy in Bandar Lampung has not been studied based on the culture or culture that the people believe of Bandar

Lampung. Research on empathy focuses on the junior high school level (Juhri et al., 2018; Romadi, 2021) and college students (Sari, 2021; Susi, 2014).

The Lampung Tribe is an indigenous people who have built a diverse social life system for centuries and is very interesting because of the uniqueness of local cultural traditions. (Pahrudin & Hidayat, 2007). In addition to the unique language and script that have been used for a long time, the Lampung tribe also has values that come from cultural values and ethical systems and normative, philosophical, and social orders. Guidelines for individuals, families, interactions in groups, and relationships with other parties outside the Lampung ethnic group (Nurdin, 2009).

One of the cultures believed by the people of Lampung is "*Nengah Nyappur*." This culture is a process of socialization by opening wide doors to the general public so that the people of Lampung have the knowledge and can participate in all things that are good with various other cultures in Lampung. Thus, social interactions and community activities bring progress and can always adapt to the times (Pahrudin & Hidayat, 2007; Ratnaningsih, 2019). Of course, with this attitude of self-disclosure, the cultural principle shows the values of understanding intercultural differences that enter the fabric of Lampung society.

However, the reality of the pluralistic Lampung society above can not only become a regional development force. Still, it can also cause potential and real conflicts and social vulnerabilities in the form of disputes. Historically, several clashes have occurred in the Lampung area (Pahrudin & Hidayat, 2007), such as the SARA cases in 1975, 1985, and 1986 to 1994. Likewise, the national uproar in how the Jepara riots claimed many victims in the form of loss of housing and human lives. These conflict-prone things can happen because of a lack of community empathy for differences (Rasoal et al., 2011). Thus, this study aims to reveal the level of empathy in high school students and is studied based on the analysis of the socio-cultural philosophy that the people believe in Lampung.

## **METHOD**

### ***Research Participants and Design***

To reveal and map the profile of the level of empathy in high school students, the method used is a quantitative approach with statistically significant data (Creswell, 2012). In its implementation, the methodology will be carried out using a survey design. Research with a survey design will describe quantitatively related the level of empathy in high school students (Creswell, 2014). This research is implemented by collecting, classifying, and analyzing or processing data, making conclusions and reports to describe a situation in a description accurately.

The research design that was constructed was survey research. Survey research design is a procedure in quantitative research. The research surveys a sample or an entire population of people to describe the population's attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or

characteristics. The research sample technique used probability random sampling, and the number of participants was 101, randomly distributed in high schools in Bandar Lampung City, as can be seen in table 1.

**Table 1. Participants distributions**

Age	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Below 15 years old	2	1	3
15 years old	15	13	28
16 years old	18	15	33
17 years old	13	18	31
Above 17 years old	2	4	6
Total	50	51	101

### ***Instruments***

The instrument scale in this study uses an ordinal scale instrument, based on consideration of independent research data, which is not normally distributed, and the variables are continuous (Furqon, 2011). The concept of the instrument that will be used to collect data about the level of empathy behavior is based on the applicable theory. The grid of data collection instruments created combines the two research instruments proposed by Joliffe & Farrington (2006).

BES is based on the definition of empathy put forward by Cohen and Strayer (1996) as sharing and understanding the emotional state or context of others resulting from experiencing the emotional (affective) state and understanding the emotions (cognitive) of others.

The BES measures five basic emotions (fear, sadness, anger, and happiness) with more general measures related to cognitive and affective empathy and not to non-specific affective states (e.g., anxiety). For a 40-item scale, reverse wording items have been included, with 20 items requiring a positive response and 20 items requiring a negative response (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006). A short version of 20 items is also available, used with adults in France (Carré et al., 2013). However, the BES, which can be considered a two-factor scale, does not consider recent conceptions of empathy, where several studies have suggested that empathy depends on three components (Jackson et al., 2006; Smith et al., 2017).

To develop a comprehensive empathy instrument and refer to the recommendations of various previous studies (Carré et al., 2013; Cuff et al., 2016; Jackson et al., 2006), the Indonesia Basic Empathy Scale (I-BES) refers to three main components in empathy. The construct of empathy instrument measures empathy contagion (affect empathy), cognitive empathy, and emotional disconnection. Empathy contagion is a situation in which a person will automatically adjust his emotions to the emotions or conditions of others. Cognitive empathy is a situation where a person has the ability to understand and animate emotions based on the influence of other people's emotions or conditions. And emotional disconnection is a regulatory factor that involves

self-protection against distress, pain, and emotional impact based on emotions or conditions from others.

Given that the research was conducted in Indonesia, the items were translated into Indonesian and adapted to the context of the research participants. Language switching was carried out to avoid irrelevant construct variables caused by the language skills of the participants. The instrument which initially had 20 items was adjusted to 15 items based on the results of the empirical test. A 4-point Likert scale made in the form of statements with a total of 60 statements. The participants were asked to choose a statement that corresponded to themselves from 4 statements on each item.

### ***Research Procedures and Data Analysis***

The standard procedure for conducting this research begins with obtaining a permit to conduct research from the campus. Then after that, the researcher contacted the relevant school that had been designated as the research sample and formed a positive relationship before executing data collection in accordance with the research code of ethics.

After obtaining permission and student data (with the permission of the relevant school), under the supervision of the school, the researcher contacted the class president and the head of the class to invite his classmates to participate in this study (snowball technique). Once approved, the researcher distributed the instrument online using a Google Form.

In analyzing and data processing, this study uses an ordinal scale instrument based on independent research data, not normally distributed, and the variables are continuous (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). The concept of the instrument formed will collect data on aspects of empathy that are adapted to the culture of the Lampung people. The statement of empathy comes from emotional contagion, cognitive empathy, and emotional disconnection, which refers to the concept of empathy constructed by Jolliffe & Farrington (2006) and developed by Carré et al. (2013). The statement on the instrument is not limited to citing and developing but constructing a new instrument based on the concepts of the two studies.

The technique used to examine the quality of the research instrument is Rasch modeling which has latent traits that represent the main concepts of item response theory (IRT) (Muslihin et al., 2022; Nur et al., 2020). The exception of these traits cannot be observed empirically; the manifestation of characteristics, properties, and interactions with the environment will lead to an empirical indicator that can be measured or observed (Sumintono, 2018).

### ***Instrument Validity Test***

To test the validity and reliability of the instrument, the researcher used the Rasch Model with the Winsteps 3.75 version to process data that had been found. The validity

testing criteria based on the Rasch model are as follows (Muslihin et al., 2022; Sumintono, B., & Widhiarso, 2014; Sumintono, 2018):

- a) Outfit Mean Square (MNSQ) value received:  $0.5 < MNSQ < 1.5$  to test the consistency of respondents' answers with the difficulty level of the statement items
- b) Outfit Z-Standard (ZSTD) value received:  $-2.0 < ZSTD < +2.0$  to describe how much (measure result column) is an outlier item, does not measure, or is too easy or difficult.
- c) Point Measure Correlation (Pt Measure Corr.) value received:  $0.4 < Pt Measure Corr < 0.85$  to describe how good (SE) the statement items are not understood, responded differently, or confused with other items.

Based on the research findings, the results of the validity of the instrument used are as follows in table 2.

**Table 2. Summary of 15 Measured**

SUMMARY OF 15 MEASURED (NON-EXTREME) Item								
	TOTAL SCORE	COUNT	MEASURE	MODEL ERROR	INFIT		OUTFIT	
					MNSQ	ZSTD	MNSQ	ZSTD
MEAN	340.7	101.0	.00	.16	1.11	.3	.99	-.2
S.D.	34.2	.0	.73	.05	.33	1.7	.34	1.5
MAX.	389.0	101.0	1.14	.26	1.71	2.9	1.95	3.9
MIN.	271.0	101.0	-1.37	.11	.62	-3.0	.68	-2.0
REAL RMSE	.18	TRUE SD	.71	SEPARATION	3.86	Item	RELIABILITY	.94
MODEL RMSE	.16	TRUE SD	.72	SEPARATION	4.40	Item	RELIABILITY	.95
S.E. OF Item MEAN = .20								

Based on the criteria that have been described, the average value of OUTFIT MNSQ is 0.99, and the average OUTFIT ZSTD is -0.2. Based on the findings in the two criteria, it can be seen that the findings of the item analysis represent that the higher the MNSQ OUTFIT average is closer to 1, and the ZSTD OUTFIT average is closer to 0, the better the instrument is. While for Pt. Measure Corr. shows numbers below 0.4 (0.386). Thus, the items on the instrument used can be fit because they have met at least one of the three criteria.

***Instruments Reliability Test***

The reliability test will show the level of constancy or determination of the measurement results of an instrument (Sukmadinata, 2012). A reliable instrument is an instrument that tends to produce the same results when used by the same person under the same conditions (for categorization, in Sumintono, B., & Widhiarso, 2014). The findings obtained are as follows in table 3.

**Table 3. Summary of 101 Measured**

SUMMARY OF 101 MEASURED (EXTREME AND NON-EXTREME) Person

	TOTAL SCORE	COUNT	MEASURE	MODEL ERROR	INFIT		OUTFIT	
					MNSQ	ZSTD	MNSQ	ZSTD
MEAN	50.6	15.0	1.33	.41				
S.D.	5.2	.0	.80	.23				
MAX.	60.0	15.0	4.74	1.84				
MIN.	35.0	15.0	-.22	.28	.30	-2.2	.30	-1.8
REAL RMSE	.49	TRUE SD	.63	SEPARATION	1.28	Person	RELIABILITY	.62
MODEL RMSE	.47	TRUE SD	.64	SEPARATION	1.36	Person	RELIABILITY	.65
S.E. OF Person MEAN = .08								

Person RAW SCORE-TO-MEASURE CORRELATION = .89  
 CRONBACH ALPHA (KR-20) Person RAW SCORE "TEST" RELIABILITY = .69

Based on Table 3, it was found that Cronbach's Alpha of 0.69 was in a good category, while personal reliability of 0.62 was in the weak category. It shows that the respondents are less careful in answering the instrument. While the reliability items in table 1. of 0.94 are in a special category.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### *The Empathy of High School Students in Bandar Lampung*

After the validity and reliability of the instrument have been investigated with the results showing it is feasible to use, the next step is to describe the range of scores based on the values obtained. Determination of data categorization based on the ideal score formula as follows in table 4.

**Table 4. Score range**

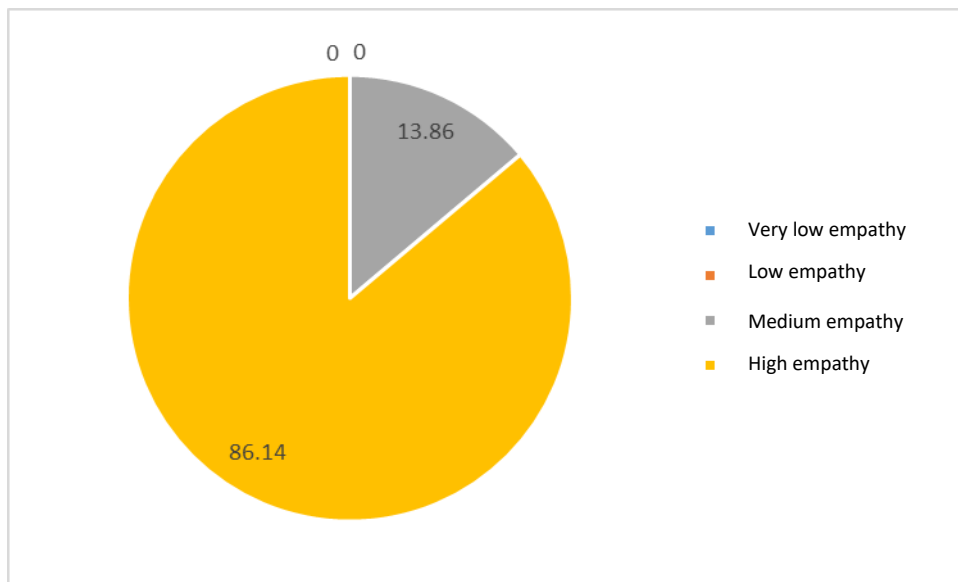
Score Range	
Very low empathy	1 – 14
Low empathy	15 – 29
Medium empathy	30 – 44
High empathy	45 – 60

Based on the range of scores, the findings in the field show the student's empathy profile as follows in table 5.

**Table 5. Data Findings**

Mean	50,6039604
Standard Error	0,524088876
Median	52
Mode	52
Standard Deviation	5,26702802
Sample Variance	27,74158416
Kurtosis	0,820379568
Skewness	-0,98795329
Range	25
Minimum	35
Maximum	60
Sum	5111
Count	101

The data findings in Table 4. show that the average high school student in Bandar Lampung is at a high level of empathy. The lowest score of 35 was at the medium level of empathy. In the presentation, the frequency and percentage are as follows:



**Figure 1. The High School Student Empathy in Bandar Lampung**

Based on Figure 1, the level of empathy profile of high school students in Bandar Lampung is 13.86% (n=14) at the medium level of empathy and 86.14% (n=87) at the high level of empathy. It shows that one of the interpersonal skills of high school students in Bandar Lampung has shown a satisfactory level of empathy. There are various factors



behind it. Thus, this finding is able to reflect how the philosophical values of the Lampung people's culture influence them in socializing.

Lampung culture is one of the national cultures with a long history. It can even survive and renew itself to face the changes experienced in the life of the Lampung ethnic community. The ability of Lampung culture to maintain its traditional cultural values may be due to the relevance of cultural content to individuals, families, and even social life in changing circumstances. Another interesting aspect of Lampung culture is the diversity of tribes, cultures, languages, and religions of different travelers who adapt, interact, and socialize with the composition of the Lampung population (the Lampung tribe) (Pahrudin & Hidayat, 2007).

In the context of empathy as one of the interpersonal competencies, Lampung people have traditional values and social philosophies applied in daily life. (Pahrudin & Hidayat, 2007). Empathy is believed to reduce conflicts because there are differences (Batson et al., 1995; Decety & Cowell, 2015; Klimecki, 2019) that Lampung people can avoid by implementing social cultures that accept differences openly and avoid discrimination. The diversity of tribes, cultures, and religions, which is often unavoidable due to differences in attitudes, views, and behaviors, has become a historical reality for the people of Lampung. However, Lampung's cultural values reacted adaptively. In this diversity, the people of Lampung unconsciously recognize this diversity as a social reality. The social philosophy originating from traditional Lampung cultural values is also found in the *Carem Ragem* philosophy. However, this social philosophy is only found in the people of Lampung Abung (*Pepadun*). According to Effendi Sanusi (Pahrudin & Hidayat, 2007), *Carem Ragem* means the necessity to maintain the unity and integrity of the community in the diversity of opinions and tastes, attitudes, and habits, as well as differences in ethnic backgrounds, languages, customs, and religions.

Based on the question items, the results show the following averages:

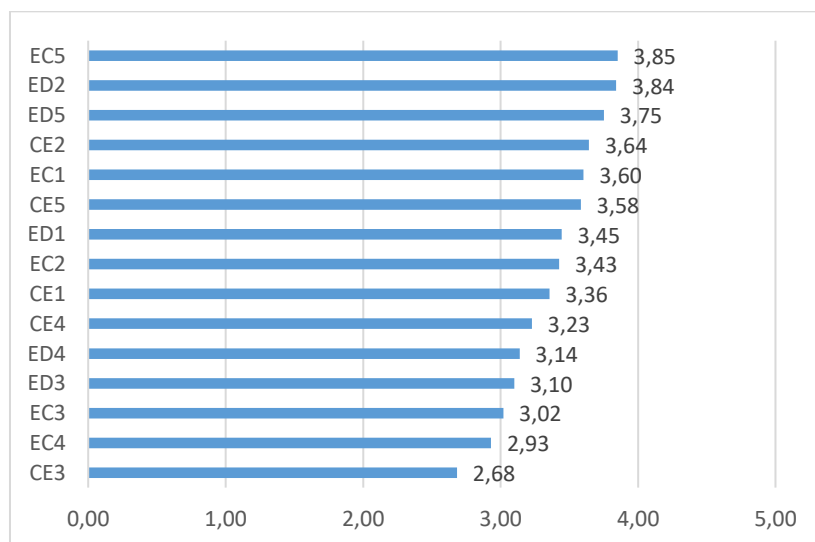


Figure 2. The Student Empathy Based on Item

Figure 2 above shows the average score per item for each respondent's question. If it is categorized that 0-1 shows very low empathy, 1-2 low empathy, 2-3 medium, 3-4 high, then the order of the lowest item (medium category) is: 1) emotional contagion and, 2) cognitive empathy.

In understanding the level of emotional contagion that scores lower than others, participants tend to answer questions on the following aspects:

- EC3 ("Your friend is feeling pressured when you talk to you because you have a disagreement with other people. What do you usually feel?"), which on average was answered in the alternative answer "I feel sorry but can't do anything,"
- EC4 ("How do you usually feel when you read news about violence due to racism?") which, on average, were answered in the alternative answers "I feel sad while reading and wish the best for the victim,"

Emotional contagion (EC) is an individual's ability to respond ("capture") someone's emotional reaction (Hatfield et al., 2013). Emotional contagion in empathy also affects a person's aggressiveness (Richardson et al., 1994). It shows that excessive or misguided empathy will cause a person to become distressed (Eisenberg, 2008), so there is a relationship between personal distress and anger or aggressiveness (Barnett & Mann, 2013). However, the emotional contagion that the person has in this finding, especially in the case of EC3 and EC4, tends to lead to an attitude of not wanting to be involved in someone's sad condition.

These findings prove previous research (Zaki, 2020; Zaki et al., 2014) that a person is might be able to empathize but does not have the desire or motivation to empathize when processing one's emotions. This is also clearly closely related to the philosophical values of the Lampung people's culture. One of the steps to increase cognitive empathy is to involve the philosophical elements of culture that people believe in. In Lampung society, another philosophical value that supports the existence of empathy in the Lampung social community is *nengah nyappur* (Pahrudin & Hidayat, 2007). This value requires Lampung people to have unlimited social skills, ethnicity, social status, rank, and position. According to Muslimin (Punyimbang Coastal community), "With his sociability, it is hoped that he will be accepted during a wide association so that he has a position and position (can be middle or in the middle)." According to Ismail (Pahrudin & Hidayat, 2007), this value should also encourage Lampung people not to choose people or groups in their association and treat all ethnic groups, religions, and social statuses in the same position without discrimination. These values will usually instill principles in the people of Lampung to interact in an unlimited social sphere and treat all social groups fairly and non-discriminatory. By implementing these values, the Lampung people have become collective members of society without losing their identity as Lampung people.

Indeed, empathy is a conscious emotional and cognitive response that involves higher-order emotional and cognitive processes (e.g., empathic attention or abstract

reasoning). Nonetheless, emotional contagion can serve as a precursor to empathy (Eisenberg & Morris, 2001; Hoffman, 1984), and some researchers conceptualize it as a core component of emotional empathy (Hatfield, Rapson, & Le, 2009). That said, the dimension that needs to be increased in student empathy, especially in the Bandar Lampung community is the motivation to empathize with something that is felt necessary to be done, not just being a spectator.

In the other hand, to understand the level of cognitive empathy as one of the item that scores lower than the others, participants tend to answer questions on the following aspects:

- CE3 “What do you do when someone posts an issue on social media?” which, on average, were answered in the alternative answers, "I asked what the problem was and compared it with my problem."

Cognitive empathy is the ability to understand the condition or state of another person's mind appropriately without losing the actual condition (Sutanti, 2020). Cognitive empathy also influences a person to help others in trouble because he understands what others feel (Persson & Kajonius, 2016). However, the findings analyzed that respondents on average have cognitive empathy, especially in the case of CE3 on standard understanding, which affects the level of empathy of these high school students. Indeed, cognitive empathy can influence a person's attitude in thinking and acting when someone reveals an incident. Thus, the dimension of cognitive empathy needs to be improved for students in Bandar Lampung by involving cultural philosophical values that are believed by the local community. As the research said, someone who has good cognitive empathy will easily understand other people's feelings without finding out the ins and outs of the problems that occur (Mercer & Reynolds, 2002). This might be also related with previous study research that emphasizes perspective taking as an important aspect to mastering full empathy skills. Perspective-taking is defined as adopting another person's mental perspective (Walter, 2012). Perspective-taking is a very broad concept and refers to understanding and experiencing the cognitive states, mental-emotional states, and sensory perceptions of others. In contrast, cognitive empathy refers only to understanding emotional states and appears to activate a different neural network from a cognitive perspective (Ruby & Decety, 2004).

The results of this study intersect with the statement of Kahn et al. (Diswantika et al., 2022), which explains that comprehensive empathy is an essential element that everyone needs to teach, empower, and experience. Empathy will help students develop self-management skills for conflict resolution and anger management by providing conflict resolution counseling services and interpersonal and altruistic skills (Diswantika et al., 2022; Juhri et al., 2018). With this element of empathy, a person will continue to have a sense of maintaining peace and respect for differences. Therefore, as educational institutions, schools must be able to encourage the development of empathy to improve students' skills, especially at the high school level.

Research on empathy should be reviewed from the perspective of intercultural empathy to improve it (Gustini, 2017). Depending on many factors, empathy across cultures can be considered desirable communication to minimize stereotypes, prejudice, and lack of self-cultural sensitivity (Diswantika et al., 2022; Gustini, 2017). Teaching empathy across cultures can improve effective communication by always putting oneself in the other person's shoes so that one can develop interpersonal skills in empathizing between different cultures (Zhu, 2011).

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Empathy is an emotional (affective) response, depending on the interaction between the capacity of traits and the influence of circumstances. Empathic processes are automatically generated but also shaped by top-down control processes. The resulting emotion is similar to one's perception (experienced or imagined directly) and understanding (cognitive empathy) of the stimulus emotion, recognizing that the source of the emotion is not one's own.

The results showed that despite the diversity of ethnic groups in Bandar Lampung, the average high school student still has a high level of empathy. However, even though they are at a high level, some students still have moderate empathy. Even though this is intermediate, this can affect subsequent actions related to the interpersonal self. Based on this research, students who have low empathy still need action to develop their level of empathy for the better.

The implication of this research is to emphasize the importance of the role of guidance and counseling teachers in the classroom to increase students' empathy based on the cultural perspective. This is because guidance and counseling is an integral part of education, so that the point of view of empathy represents individuals should achieve aspects of the need for dynamic cognitive, affective and behavior to obtain optimal self-development. Guidance and counseling have a role in fostering students' empathy skills, so it is necessary to make the development of empathy a part of the school program. The relationship with guidance and counseling shows that guidance and counseling have the same function, namely helping, realizing their potential and providing individuals to develop empathy skills as a form of the ability to think and act to understand others constructively.

The findings of this study are expected to provide a big picture for the science of guidance and counseling that empathy is the main and important concept for humans in socializing in society. Optimal empathy will direct a person to have attitudes that can benefit himself and others.

The recommendation for guidance and counselling teachers is to map out strategies or formulations to increase empathy based on the philosophical values of the local community's culture. The philosophical perspective of culture has a noble value so that there needs to be a deeper integration that is conveyed and taught by guidance and counseling teachers to students so that they are able to socialize well and be useful for

those around them. For further researchers, it is necessary to formulate an instrument that is tested validly and reliably and has values that emphasize the dimension of empathy in the cultural context.

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