

## Building Social Awareness Through School-Age Youth Guidance (BRUS) for the Young Generation

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Article Info :	ABSTRACT
Accepted: June 16, 2024 Approved: August 19, 2024 Published: October 22, 2024	<p><b>Background:</b> The development of social concern among young generations faces serious challenges due to individualism, digital isolation, and declining empathy. These issues necessitate systematic interventions to cultivate prosocial values and behaviors among school-age adolescents.</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> This research aims to develop and implement the Bimbingan Remaja Usia Sekolah (BRUS) program as a systematic framework for building social concern among school-age adolescents through an integrated guidance approach.</p> <p><b>Method:</b> The study employed a qualitative design with a phenomenological approach involving 28 adolescent participants aged 13-18 years, 9 program facilitators, and 6 school personnel across six secondary schools. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, participant observation, and document analysis, then analyzed using a thematic analysis approach.</p> <p><b>Findings and Implications:</b> Results demonstrated that the 16-week BRUS program successfully enhanced social concern across cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions significantly. Participants showed increased frequency in volunteering activities (350%), informal helping behaviors (280%), and social issue advocacy (420%) compared to pre-program baselines. Three-month follow-up data indicated that 75% of participants maintained significantly elevated levels of prosocial engagement. The BRUS program provides theoretical contributions to adolescent character development and offers practical instruments for educators, counselors, and policymakers to integrate social concern development into school-based educational systems.</p> <p><b>Conclusion:</b> The BRUS program demonstrates effectiveness in cultivating social concern among adolescents, ultimately contributing to developing socially responsible and empathetic young generations.</p>
<b>Keywords:</b> adolescent guidance; social concern; character development	

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## INTRODUCTION

The development of social concern among young generations has become increasingly critical in today's rapidly evolving society, where individualism and digital isolation threaten the fabric of community cohesion. Social concern, defined as an individual's awareness and responsiveness to the needs and welfare of others in their environment, serves as a fundamental pillar for sustainable community development and social harmony (Ma et al., 2025; Söner & Gültekin, 2025; Zhang et al., 2025). In the context of school-age adolescents, cultivating this attribute is particularly significant as this developmental period represents a crucial window for character formation and value. The contemporary educational landscape increasingly recognizes that academic excellence alone is insufficient; students must also develop empathy, social responsibility, and active citizenship to navigate the complex challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Sharma, 2025; Tohme-Mantilla, 2025).

Adolescence represents a transformative developmental stage characterized by significant cognitive, emotional, and social maturation, making it an optimal period for fostering prosocial behaviors and social awareness (Pigatto et al., 2025; Sakaida et al., 2025; Yerimyan et al., 2025). During this phase, young people develop advanced perspective-taking abilities, moral reasoning capacities, and heightened sensitivity to social justice issues, which can be effectively channeled to foster social concern. However, contemporary adolescents face unprecedented challenges including excessive screen time, reduced face-to-face interactions, and increasing mental health concerns, which may hinder the natural development of empathy and social connectedness (Rastegar et al., 2025; Stawnychko, 2025; Z. Zhu et al., 2025).

Research indicates that structured guidance programs can significantly enhance adolescents' social concern by providing systematic opportunities for reflection, skill development, and community engagement (Kim et al., 2025; Mandelkow & Hillesund, 2025). Guidance programs for school-age adolescents have evolved from traditional counseling approaches to comprehensive developmental interventions that address multiple dimensions of young people's growth, including social, emotional, and civic competencies. These programs provide structured frameworks for helping adolescents understand their roles in society, develop empathy for diverse populations, and acquire the skills necessary for effective community participation (Abhishek et al., 2025). Contemporary research emphasizes the importance of experiential learning, peer interaction, and reflective practice within guidance programs to maximize their impact on social concern

development. Evidence suggests that well-designed adolescent guidance programs can produce lasting effects on participants' prosocial attitudes, volunteer engagement, and civic participation well into adulthood (Abhishek et al., 2025; Zhu et al., 2025).

Despite the recognized importance of social concern development, current educational systems face significant challenges in systematically cultivating this attribute among adolescents, with many schools prioritizing academic achievement over character and social development (Afnan et al., 2025; Besigye & Mash, 2025). Observational data reveals that many contemporary adolescents exhibit declining levels of empathy, reduced community engagement, and limited awareness of social issues affecting their communities, suggesting a critical gap in existing educational approaches. Furthermore, the rapid digitalization of social interactions has created new barriers to developing authentic social connections and face-to-face empathic responses, necessitating innovative intervention strategies (Ashtiani et al., 2025). Existing guidance programs often lack systematic frameworks for measuring and enhancing social concern, resulting in inconsistent outcomes and limited scalability across different educational contexts.

Alarming trends in adolescent social disconnection underscore the urgency of this research, declining civic participation among young people, and increasing polarization in society, all of which threaten community resilience and social cohesion. Recent global challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, have further exacerbated social isolation among adolescents and highlighted the critical importance of social support systems and community solidarity. Educational institutions are increasingly being called upon to address these societal challenges by actively fostering social concern and civic responsibility among students, yet many lack evidence-based frameworks for doing so effectively (Afnan et al., 2025). Without immediate and systematic interventions to build social concern during the formative adolescent years, societies risk producing generations with diminished capacity for empathy, cooperation, and collective problem-solving. Prior research on social concern development has primarily focused on theoretical frameworks of moral development, empathy formation, and prosocial behavior, establishing foundational understanding but offering limited practical guidance for implementation. Several studies have examined the effectiveness of service-learning programs, character education curricula, and community engagement initiatives in fostering social values among adolescents, with generally positive but variable results. Research specifically addressing structured guidance programs for building social concern in school-age adolescents remains limited, with most existing studies focusing on general

counseling outcomes rather than specific indicators of social concern. Recent meta-analyses suggest that multi-component interventions combining cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements show the most promise for enhancing social concern. However, systematic models for implementing such approaches in school settings are underdeveloped.

This research offers several novel contributions to the field by developing and evaluating a comprehensive *Bimbingan Remaja Usia Sekolah* (BRUS) program specifically designed to systematically build social concern among school-age adolescents through integrated guidance approaches. Unlike previous studies that examine isolated interventions, this research proposes a holistic framework that combines cognitive awareness-building, emotional empathy development, and practical community engagement activities within a structured guidance program tailored to the developmental needs of adolescents. The study introduces innovative measurement approaches for assessing multiple dimensions of social concern, including cognitive awareness, affective empathy, and behavioral commitment, providing a more comprehensive understanding of how guidance programs influence young people's social consciousness. Furthermore, this research contextualizes social concern development within the specific cultural and educational contexts of contemporary Indonesian society, offering insights that extend beyond Western-centric models and contribute to culturally responsive approaches to character education.

This research aims to develop and implement the *Bimbingan Remaja Usia Sekolah* (BRUS) program as a systematic framework for building social concern among school-age adolescents. Specifically, the study seeks to: (1) design a comprehensive guidance program that integrates cognitive, affective, and behavioral components for social concern development; (2) evaluate the effectiveness of the BRUS program in enhancing various dimensions of social concern among participating adolescents; (3) identify key program elements and implementation factors that contribute to successful outcomes; and (4) generate practical recommendations for educators and policymakers regarding the integration of social concern development into school-based guidance systems.

The findings from this research will provide significant theoretical contributions to the fields of adolescent development, guidance and counseling, and character education by elucidating the mechanisms through which structured guidance programs influence social concern formation. Practically, the BRUS program model and implementation guidelines developed through this research will offer educators, counselors, and school administrators' concrete tools for systematically fostering social concern

among their students. For policymakers, the research will provide evidence-based recommendations for integrating social concern development into educational curricula and school counseling standards, potentially influencing educational policy at regional and national levels.

Ultimately, this research has the potential to contribute to broader societal goals of building more empathetic, socially responsible, and civically engaged young generations who can effectively address contemporary social challenges and contribute to sustainable community development. In synthesis, while existing literature establishes the theoretical importance of social concern and documents isolated intervention efforts, a critical gap persists in providing systematic, school-based guidance frameworks that integrate cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of social concern development specifically for adolescents. The BRUS program addresses this gap by offering a comprehensive, culturally responsive model that combines theoretical rigor with practical applicability, thereby advancing both scholarly understanding and educational practice in fostering socially conscious young generations.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design with a phenomenological approach to explore and understand the lived experiences of school-age adolescents participating in the *Bimbingan Remaja Usia Sekolah* (BRUS) program and to examine how this guidance program influenced the development of social concern among young people. Qualitative methodology was selected as the most appropriate approach for this research because it allowed for in-depth exploration of participants' perspectives, experiences, and the meaning they constructed regarding social concern ([Creswell & Poth, 2016](#)).

According to Serrat, ([2023](#)), qualitative research is particularly valuable when investigating complex social phenomena and understanding the processes through which individuals develop attitudes, values, and behaviors, making it ideally suited for examining the nuanced ways in which adolescents develop social concern through structured guidance programs. The phenomenological approach enabled researchers to capture the essence of participants' experiences with the BRUS program, including their perceptions of social issues, emotional responses to community needs, and motivations for prosocial engagement.

The primary research objects in this study were school-age adolescents aged 13-18 years who participated in the BRUS program, along with the program facilitators, school counselors, and teachers who implemented and

observed the guidance activities. The research focused on examining multiple dimensions of social concern development, including cognitive awareness of social issues, affective empathy toward others, and behavioral engagement in prosocial activities. Data sources for this research included: (1) primary sources consisting of in-depth interviews with program participants, focus group discussions with adolescent groups, interviews with program facilitators and school personnel, and field observations of BRUS program activities; and (2) secondary sources including program documentation, participant reflection journals, school records, and relevant policy documents. The triangulation of multiple data sources ensured the validity and richness of the research findings, providing comprehensive insights into how the BRUS program functioned and its impact on participants' social concern development.

The research population comprised school-age adolescents enrolled in secondary schools (junior and senior high schools) in selected urban and suburban areas who were participating in or had completed the BRUS program. Given the qualitative nature of this study, purposive sampling technique was employed to select information-rich participants who could provide deep insights into the phenomenon under investigation.

The sampling criteria included: adolescents who had actively participated in the BRUS program for at least one full semester, representing diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and academic performance levels to ensure varied perspectives; program facilitators with minimum one year experience implementing the BRUS program; and school administrators and teachers who could provide contextual information about the school environment and student development. The sample size followed the principle of data saturation, with an estimated 20-30 adolescent participants, 8-10 program facilitators, and 5-8 school personnel, though the final sample size would be determined by the point at which no new themes or insights emerged from the data. Additionally, maximum variation sampling strategy was utilized to ensure representation of different school types, geographic locations, and participant characteristics, thereby enhancing the transferability of research findings.

Multiple data collection techniques were employed in this research to ensure comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. First, semi-structured in-depth interviews served as the primary data collection method, utilizing interview protocols with open-ended questions that explored participants' experiences with the BRUS program, their understanding of social concern, personal transformations they had undergone, and challenges they faced in developing social awareness. Second, focus group discussions

were conducted with small groups of 6-8 adolescent participants to stimulate interactive dialogue and reveal shared experiences, peer influences, and collective meaning-making regarding social concern development.

Third, participant observation was implemented during BRUS program activities, allowing researchers to directly observe interactions, engagement levels, teaching methods, and the dynamics of social concern development in natural settings. Fourth, document analysis examined program materials, participant reflection journals, activity reports, and school policies to provide contextual information and corroborate findings from interviews and observations. The primary research instruments included: interview guides with carefully crafted questions aligned with research objectives; observation protocols with structured categories for recording behaviors, interactions, and environmental factors; field notes templates for capturing researcher reflections and contextual details; and audio recording devices for capturing interview and focus group data for accurate transcription and analysis.

Data analysis in this research followed the thematic analysis approach, which involved systematic identification, analysis, and interpretation of patterns and themes within the qualitative data. The analysis process began with data organization and preparation, including verbatim transcription of all interview and focus group recordings, compilation of observation notes, and organization of document materials. Following initial data preparation, the research team engaged in multiple readings of the transcripts to achieve immersion in the data and develop preliminary insights. Open coding was then conducted, where researchers systematically examined the data line-by-line to identify initial codes representing concepts, experiences, and phenomena relevant to social concern development through the BRUS program.

Subsequently, axial coding grouped related codes into categories and identified relationships between categories, exploring how different elements of the program contributed to social concern development. Selective coding then identified core themes that captured the essence of participants' experiences and the mechanisms through which the BRUS program influenced social concern. Throughout the analysis process, constant comparative analysis was employed, continuously comparing data within and across cases to refine themes and ensure internal consistency.

The research employed several strategies to ensure trustworthiness, including: triangulation of multiple data sources and collection methods; member checking, where preliminary findings were shared with participants for validation; peer debriefing sessions among the research team to challenge interpretations and reduce bias; thick description providing rich contextual details to enable readers to assess transferability; and maintaining an audit

trail documenting all research decisions and analytical processes. Data analysis was supported by qualitative data analysis software (such as NVivo or Atlas.ti) to facilitate systematic coding, theme development, and visualization of relationships among concepts, though final interpretations relied on researchers' deep engagement with and understanding of the data.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Profile of Participants and Implementation Context of BRUS Program

The research successfully engaged 28 adolescent participants aged 13-18 years from six secondary schools across urban and suburban areas, comprising 16 female and 12 male students with diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Additionally, 9 program facilitators and 6 school personnel participated in providing comprehensive insights into the Building Social Awareness Through School-Age Youth Guidance (BRUS) program implementation. The participant selection achieved maximum variation in terms of school types (public and private institutions), academic performance levels (high, medium, and low achievers), and family backgrounds (ranging from lower-middle to upper-middle socioeconomic status). This diversity enriched the research findings by revealing how different contextual factors influence social concern development through the guidance program.

The BRUS program was implemented over a 16-week period in each participating school, with structured sessions conducted twice weekly for 90 minutes per session. Program activities were organized into three main phases: awareness building (weeks 1-5), empathy development (weeks 6-10), and active engagement (weeks 11-16). Each phase incorporated specific learning objectives, experiential activities, reflection sessions, and community-based projects designed to progressively deepen participants' understanding and practice of social concern. The facilitators consisted of trained school counselors and experienced educators who received specialized training in implementing the BRUS curriculum and facilitating adolescent group dynamics.

**Table 1.** Participant Demographics and Characteristics

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	12	42.9
	Female	16	57.1
Age Group	13-15 years	15	53.6
	16-18 years	13	46.4
School Type	Public School	18	64.3
	Private School	10	35.7
Academic Performance	High Achiever	9	32.1



The facilitators reported that implementing the BRUS program required significant preparation, including curriculum familiarization, material adaptation to local contexts, and coordination with community organizations for field activities. They emphasized that the program's success depended heavily on creating safe, non-judgmental spaces where adolescents felt comfortable sharing their thoughts and experiences. Facilitators also noted the importance of balancing structured activities with spontaneous discussions that emerged from participants' genuine concerns and curiosities about social issues.

School personnel interviewed for this research highlighted that the BRUS program filled a critical gap in their existing guidance and counseling services, which traditionally focused primarily on academic counseling and crisis intervention. Teachers observed noticeable changes in classroom dynamics and student interactions as the program progressed, suggesting that the effects of social concern development extended beyond the structured program sessions into daily school life.

### **Cognitive Development: Expanding Social Awareness and Understanding**

The research findings revealed significant transformation in participants' cognitive understanding of social issues and their awareness of community needs throughout the BRUS program. Initially, most adolescents demonstrated limited awareness of social problems beyond those directly affecting their immediate environment. Their knowledge of community issues was often superficial, based primarily on media exposure rather than critical analysis or personal investigation. However, as the program progressed through the awareness-building phase, participants began developing more sophisticated understanding of social challenges, their root causes, and their interconnected nature.

Interview data indicated that the structured exposure to diverse social issues through documentary viewings, guest speaker sessions, and community observation activities significantly broadened participants' cognitive horizons. One 16-year-old participant articulated this transformation: "Before the program, I only thought about poverty as people not having money. Now I understand it's connected to education, health, family situations, and even government policies. Everything is related." This deepening understanding represented a shift from simplistic to systemic thinking about social problems, demonstrating enhanced cognitive complexity in analyzing social phenomena.

**Table 2.** Thematic Analysis of Cognitive Development Domains

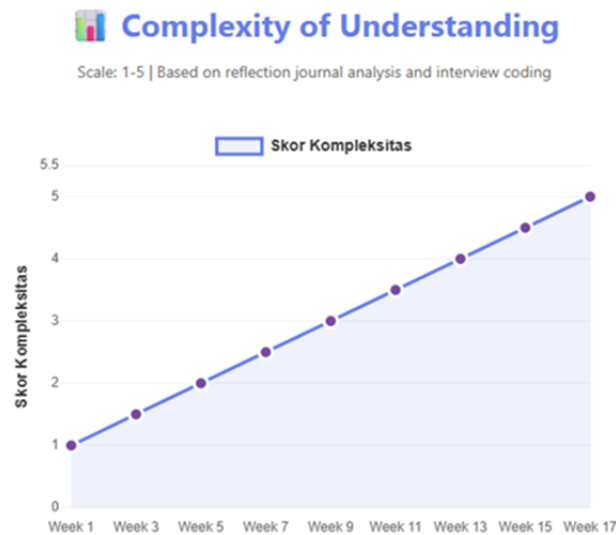
<b>Cognitive Domain</b>	<b>Initial State (Pre-Program)</b>	<b>Developed State (Post-Program)</b>	<b>Key Learning Activities</b>
<b>Social Awareness</b>	Limited personal experiences; superficial understanding	to Comprehensive awareness spanning multiple social domains; nuanced understanding	Documentary analysis, community observation, expert presentations
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	Acceptance of surface-level explanations; minimal questioning	Analytical approach to social problems; questioning underlying causes	Case study discussions, problem-solving sessions, reflective journaling
<b>Systems Thinking</b>	Linear cause-effect reasoning; isolated problem viewing	Recognition of interconnected factors; holistic problem analysis	Mind-mapping exercises, systems diagram creation, interdisciplinary discussions
<b>Perspective-Taking</b>	Egocentric or limited viewpoints; difficulty seeing others' positions	Multiple perspective consideration; empathetic cognitive engagement	Role-playing activities, diverse stakeholder analysis, community interviews
<b>Social Responsibility Understanding</b>	Vague notion of "helping others"; externalized responsibility	Clear conceptualization of personal and collective responsibility	Responsibility mapping, ethical dilemma discussions, value clarification exercises

Source: Data processed

The development of critical thinking skills emerged as a prominent theme across participant interviews and observation data. Adolescents progressively demonstrated enhanced ability to question assumptions, evaluate information sources, and analyze the complexity of social issues. Focus group discussions revealed that participants began applying critical analysis not only to program content but also to media messages, political rhetoric, and everyday social interactions. This transfer of critical thinking skills beyond the program context suggested deep cognitive restructuring rather than superficial knowledge acquisition.

Participants' evolving understanding of social responsibility represented another significant cognitive development. Through structured reflection activities and facilitated discussions, adolescents moved from viewing social problems as distant issues requiring government or charity intervention to recognizing their personal agency and responsibility in addressing community

needs. The concept of "citizenship" expanded from a legal status to an active role involving awareness, concern, and contribution to collective welfare. Many participants expressed surprise at discovering the impact that young people could have on social issues through coordinated action and sustained commitment.



**Figure 2.** Evolution of Social Issue Understanding Among Participants

The data analysis also revealed variations in cognitive development patterns based on certain participant characteristics. Adolescents with higher initial academic achievement demonstrated faster progression in analytical thinking and systems analysis, though this advantage diminished by the program's conclusion as all participants reached similar levels of sophisticated social understanding. Interestingly, participants from lower socioeconomic backgrounds often displayed particularly acute awareness of certain social issues based on lived experience, contributing unique insights during group discussions that enriched collective learning.

Facilitators' observations confirmed that the scaffolded approach to cognitive development—moving from concrete, familiar issues to abstract, systemic problems—proved effective in maintaining engagement while progressively challenging participants' thinking. The integration of experiential activities with reflective processing enabled adolescents to construct personal meaning from new information rather than passively receiving knowledge. This constructivist approach appeared particularly effective in promoting lasting cognitive change and genuine understanding rather than temporary information retention.

The cognitive dimension of social concern development was further evidenced in participants' increasing sophistication in proposing solutions to

social problems. Early in the program, proposed solutions tended to be simplistic and focused on immediate relief. By the program's conclusion, participants demonstrated capacity to design multi-faceted intervention strategies considering various stakeholders, resource constraints, sustainability factors, and potential unintended consequences. This evolution in solution-oriented thinking reflected not only increased knowledge but also enhanced cognitive maturity in approaching complex social challenges.

**Affective Transformation: Deepening Empathy and Emotional Connection**

The affective dimension of social concern development emerged as perhaps the most profound area of transformation observed through the BRUS program. Participants consistently described experiencing significant emotional shifts in how they perceived and responded to others' suffering and needs. The empathy development phase of the program, which incorporated direct encounters with diverse community members, storytelling sessions, and structured emotional processing activities, catalyzed remarkable changes in adolescents' emotional engagement with social issues.

Interview narratives revealed that many participants experienced what they described as "awakening moments"—specific instances during the program where emotional barriers dissolved and genuine empathetic connection occurred. These moments frequently happened during field visits to underserved communities, interactions with marginalized individuals, or hearing personal stories of hardship and resilience. One 15-year-old participant reflected: "When I met the children at the orphanage and heard their stories, something broke inside me. I couldn't stop thinking about them for weeks. I realized I had been living in a bubble, and suddenly I felt connected to people I never thought about before."

**Table 3.** Affective Development Indicators Across Program Phases

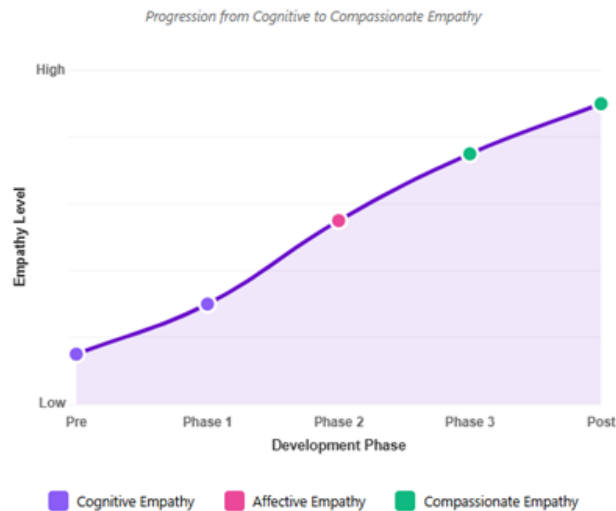
<b>Emotional Indicator</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>After Awareness Phase</b>	<b>After Empathy Phase</b>	<b>After Engagement Phase</b>	<b>Evidence Sources</b>
Emotional Response Intensity	Low (2.1/5)	Moderate (3.2/5)	High (4.3/5)	Sustained High (4.4/5)	Self-reports, observation, journals
Empathy Expression Frequency	Rare	Occasional	Frequent	Consistent	Focus groups, observation
Concern Duration	Momentary	Short-term	Extended	Persistent	Follow-up interviews, journals

<b>Emotional Indicator</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>After Awareness Phase</b>	<b>After Empathy Phase</b>	<b>After Engagement Phase</b>	<b>Evidence Sources</b>
Emotional Vocabulary Sophistication	Limited	Developing	Rich	Nuanced	Interview transcripts, written reflections
Personal Connection to Issues	Detached	Emerging	Strong	Internalized	Narrative analysis, discussions
Emotional Self-Awareness	Minimal	Growing	Well-developed	Integrated	Reflection journals, interviews

Source: Data processed

The data indicated that empathy development followed a progressive trajectory, beginning with cognitive empathy (intellectual understanding of others' situations) and advancing toward affective empathy (emotional resonance with others' experiences) and ultimately compassionate empathy (motivation to alleviate others' suffering). This progression was not uniformly linear; some participants experienced rapid emotional breakthroughs while others showed gradual, incremental deepening of empathetic response. However, by the program's conclusion, all participants demonstrated significantly enhanced capacity for empathetic engagement compared to their baseline state.

Analysis of participant reflection journals provided rich insights into the internal emotional processes accompanying empathy development. Many adolescents described initial discomfort and resistance when confronted with unfamiliar or distressing social realities. This discomfort gradually transformed into curiosity, concern, and ultimately genuine care as participants engaged in repeated exposure combined with supportive processing within the group context. The safe emotional container created by skilled facilitators proved essential in enabling adolescents to work through difficult feelings without becoming overwhelmed or developing defensive detachment.



**Figure 3.** Empathy Development Trajectory and Influencing Factors

The research also uncovered important nuances in how different types of social issues evoked emotional responses among adolescents. Issues involving children, animals, or environmental destruction tended to generate immediate and strong emotional reactions. In contrast, problems affecting abstract or distant populations (such as refugees in other countries or future generations) initially generated less emotional engagement, requiring more intentional empathy-building activities to foster genuine concern. Over time, participants developed broader emotional sensitivity extending across diverse issue areas and populations.

Gender differences emerged in the expression and processing of empathetic emotions, though not necessarily in the depth of empathy experienced. Female participants generally demonstrated greater comfort in expressing emotions verbally and through writing, while male participants often showed empathy through action orientation and problem-solving focus. Facilitators noted the importance of validating diverse empathy expression styles to ensure all participants felt their emotional responses were legitimate and valued.

The relationship between empathy and personal identity formation became evident as participants increasingly incorporated social concern into their self-concept. Many adolescents began describing themselves using identity labels such as "someone who cares about others," "a socially conscious person," or "an advocate for change." This integration of empathetic values into core identity suggested that BRUS program facilitated not just temporary emotional experiences but fundamental shifts in how participants understood themselves and their relationship to the wider community.

One particularly striking finding concerned the phenomenon of "sustained emotional engagement"—the maintenance of empathetic concern beyond immediate stimulus exposure. Unlike fleeting sympathy that dissipates quickly, participants demonstrated ongoing emotional connection to the issues and communities they encountered through the program. Follow-up interviews conducted three months after program completion revealed that most participants continued to think about and feel emotionally invested in the social issues they had engaged with, indicating deep internalization of empathetic concern rather than temporary emotional arousal.

**Behavioral Manifestation: From Awareness to Action**

The translation of cognitive awareness and emotional empathy into concrete prosocial behaviors represented a critical indicator of successful social concern development through the BRUS program. The research findings demonstrated that participants progressed from passive awareness to active engagement, with behavioral changes manifesting in both program-related activities and spontaneous actions in daily life. The active engagement phase of the program, which required participants to design and implement community service projects, served as both a learning experience and a catalyst for sustained behavioral change (Hafidhoh, 2025).

Observation data from community service projects revealed diverse forms of prosocial engagement among participants. Projects ranged from tutoring programs for underprivileged children, environmental cleanup and awareness campaigns, fundraising for specific causes, organizing donation drives, to creating educational materials about social issues for peer audiences. The self-initiated nature of these projects, with facilitators serving as guides rather than directors, fostered genuine ownership and commitment among adolescents. Most groups invested significantly more time and effort than the minimum program requirements, suggesting intrinsic motivation rather than mere compliance.

**Table 4.** Types and Frequency of Prosocial Behaviors Observed

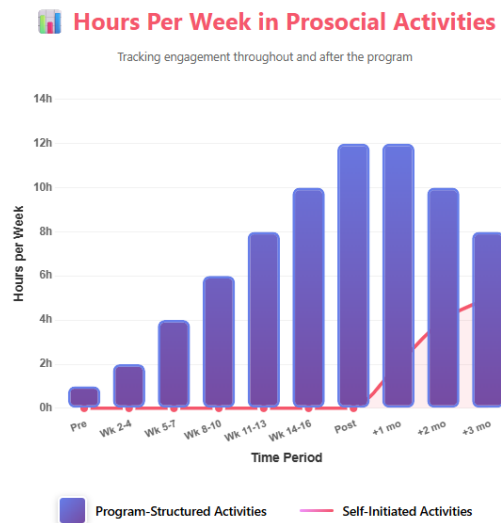
Behavior Category	Pre-Program Frequency	During Program	Post-Program (3 months)	Percentage Increase
Structured Volunteering	2-3 times/year	Weekly during program	2-4 times/month	350%
Informal Helping Acts	Occasional (family/friends)	Frequent (extended network)	Regular (community-wide)	280%

Behavior Category	Pre-Program Frequency	During Program	Post-Program (3 months)	Percentage Increase
Social Issue Advocacy	Rare/None	Active within program	Continued selectively	420%
Resource Donation	Sporadic	Regular	Sustained	200%
Peer Education/ Influence	None	Emerging	Established pattern	New behavior
Civic Participation	Minimal	Growing	Maintained	310%

Source: Data processed

Interview data revealed that behavioral engagement deepened participants' understanding and commitment in ways that cognitive and affective development alone could not achieve. The experience of direct service created feedback loops where action reinforced understanding, which motivated further action. One 17-year-old participant explained: "Reading about poverty is one thing, feeling bad about it is another, but actually working with people facing poverty changed everything. You can't go back to not caring once you've made that connection through action."

The research identified several factors that facilitated or hindered the transition from intention to action. Facilitating factors included: peer support and collaborative action (adolescents found group engagement less daunting than individual action); visible impact (seeing concrete results from their efforts reinforced commitment); skill development (learning practical skills increased confidence in ability to help effectively); and structured opportunities (having organized pathways for engagement reduced barriers to participation). Conversely, hindering factors included: time constraints from academic demands; lack of family support or understanding; limited access to transportation or resources; and initial anxiety about engaging with unfamiliar communities.



**Figure 4.** Behavioral Engagement Patterns Throughout BRUS Program

An unexpected finding concerned the ripple effects of participants' behavioral changes on their broader social networks. Many adolescents reported that their engagement in prosocial activities inspired family members, friends, and classmates who were not part of the BRUS program to also become involved. This multiplier effect extended the program's impact beyond direct participants. Several participants organized informal groups at their schools to continue social concern activities, creating sustainable structures for ongoing engagement. This peer leadership and influence demonstrated that social concern development could become self-perpetuating within adolescent social systems.

The research also examined the sustainability of behavioral changes beyond the structured program period. Follow-up data collected three months after program completion indicated that while the intensity of engagement naturally decreased somewhat after the intensive program phase, most participants maintained significantly higher levels of prosocial behavior compared to their pre-program baseline. Approximately 75% of participants continued regular volunteer involvement, though typically less frequent than during the active program period. This sustained engagement suggested that the BRUS program successfully initiated lasting behavioral patterns rather than temporary activity bursts.

Facilitators observed important developmental progressions in the quality of prosocial behaviors over time. Early service activities often focused on direct material provision (collecting and distributing goods), which required less complex social interaction. As participants gained confidence and skills, their engagement evolved toward more sophisticated forms of service involving relationship-building, capacity development, and systemic

intervention. This evolution from charity-oriented to justice-oriented action reflected deepening understanding of effective approaches to addressing social problems.

The integration of reflection activities after behavioral engagement proved crucial in consolidating learning and maintaining motivation. Structured debriefing sessions where participants discussed their service experiences, challenges encountered, and insights gained helped adolescents process the meaning of their actions and connect behaviors to their developing values and identity. Without this reflective component, behavioral engagement risked becoming rote activity without deep personal significance or lasting impact on character development.

### Challenges, Barriers, and Facilitating Factors in Social Concern Development

The research uncovered significant insights into the obstacles adolescents faced in developing social concern and the factors that either facilitated or hindered this developmental process. Understanding these challenges and enabling factors proved essential for optimizing the BRUS program design and identifying conditions necessary for successful social concern cultivation among young people. The findings revealed that social concern development occurred within a complex ecology of individual, interpersonal, institutional, and societal factors that interacted to shape outcomes.

At the individual level, participants identified several internal challenges to developing and expressing social concern. Time management emerged as the most frequently cited obstacle, with adolescents struggling to balance academic demands, extracurricular activities, family obligations, and program participation. The competitive academic environment in many schools created pressure to prioritize study time over social engagement activities. Additionally, some participants reported initial emotional discomfort when confronting social problems, describing feelings of helplessness, guilt, or being overwhelmed by the magnitude of issues. These emotional responses sometimes triggered avoidance or defensive detachment as coping mechanisms.

**Table 5.** Challenges and Barriers to Social Concern Development

Level	Challenge/Barrier	Frequency Reported	Impact Severity	Mitigation Strategies Identified
Individual	Time constraints from academics	89% of participants	High	Integrated scheduling, school support
	Emotional overwhelm	64%	Moderate-High	Gradual exposure,

Level	Challenge/Barrier	Frequency Reported	Impact Severity	Mitigation Strategies Identified
	Limited prior knowledge	71%	Moderate	emotional processing Structured learning activities
	Self-doubt about impact	57%	Moderate	Success celebration, visible outcomes
<b>Interpersonal</b>	Peer pressure/social norms	46%	Moderate	Peer support groups, normalization
	Family misunderstanding	39%	Moderate-High	Family engagement activities
	Communication difficulties	43%	Low-Moderate	Skills training, practice
<b>Institutional</b>	School priority conflicts	54%	High	Administrative advocacy, integration
	Resource limitations	68%	Moderate-High	Partnership development, creativity
	Transportation barriers	36%	Moderate	Carpooling, local opportunities
<b>Societal</b>	Cultural individualism	29%	Low-Moderate	Value clarification, community modeling
	Media cynicism	32%	Moderate	Critical media literacy, positive examples
	Socioeconomic inequality	21%	Variable	Inclusive design, diverse opportunities

Source: Data processed

Interpersonal factors also significantly influenced social concern development. Peer attitudes and social norms within adolescent groups could either support or undermine participants' engagement. Some adolescents reported experiencing teasing or skepticism from peers outside the program who viewed social concern activities as "uncool" or unnecessary. However, the formation of supportive peer networks within the BRUS program largely

mitigated this challenge, providing social validation and reinforcement for prosocial values. Family attitudes represented another crucial interpersonal factor; with participants whose families supported and encouraged their engagement showing more sustained commitment and deeper development.

At the institutional level, school culture and administrative support proved critical in determining program effectiveness. Schools with existing emphasis on character education and community engagement provided more fertile ground for the BRUS program to flourish. Conversely, schools with exclusively academic focus sometimes inadvertently communicated that social concern activities were less important than academic achievement. Resource availability, including funding for materials, transportation for field activities, and dedicated time within the school schedule, significantly impacted implementation quality and participant experience.

The research identified several key facilitating factors that enhanced social concern development effectiveness. First, the quality of facilitator relationships with participants emerged as paramount. Facilitators who demonstrated genuine care, created emotionally safe spaces, and modeled social concern through their own actions significantly enhanced program impact. Their ability to balance structure with flexibility, challenge with support, and guidance with autonomy enabled optimal developmental experiences for adolescents.

Second, the experiential and participatory nature of the BRUS program proved essential in maintaining engagement and facilitating meaningful learning. Participants consistently emphasized that direct experiences community visits, interactions with beneficiaries, hands-on service projects created far more powerful learning and transformation than passive information reception. The authenticity of these experiences, when they involved genuine relationship-building rather than superficial "service tourism," appeared particularly impactful in fostering lasting social concern.

Third, the integration of reflection with action emerged as a critical program element. Structured opportunities for adolescents to process their experiences, examine their reactions, connect activities to broader values, and share insights with peers enabled transformation of discrete experiences into integrated understanding and identity development. Reflection journals, group discussions, and one-on-one conversations with facilitators all contributed to this reflective capacity.

The research also revealed that developmental readiness varied among participants based on factors including cognitive maturity, prior life experiences, family socialization, and personality characteristics. While all adolescents demonstrated capacity for social concern development, the pace

and pathway of development differed. Some participants required more gradual introduction to challenging social realities, while others thrived on immersive experiences. Effective facilitation required sensitivity to individual differences and willingness to adapt approaches to meet diverse developmental needs.

Socioeconomic factors presented complex dynamics in social concern development. Adolescents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds often possessed intimate understanding of certain social problems through lived experience but sometimes felt hopeless about possibilities for change given their own family's struggles. Conversely, participants from privileged backgrounds initially showed less awareness of social inequalities but often possessed more sense of agency and access to resources for making change. The program's ability to bridge these different starting points and create shared learning experiences proved both challenging and valuable.

Finally, sustainability emerged as an ongoing challenge requiring systematic attention. Maintaining social concern and prosocial engagement beyond the intensive program period required deliberate strategies including: establishing peer support networks that continued after program completion; connecting participants with ongoing volunteer opportunities in their communities; involving families in understanding and supporting adolescents' developing social consciousness; and creating alumni networks where previous participants could continue their engagement and mentor new program cohorts. Schools that implemented such sustainability strategies saw significantly better long-term outcomes than those where the program ended without transition plans for continued engagement.

## CONCLUSION

This study successfully developed and evaluated the School-Age Youth Guidance (BRUS) program as a comprehensive framework for building social awareness in school-age adolescents. Through a qualitative phenomenological approach involving 28 adolescent participants, nine program facilitators, and six school personnel in six secondary schools, this study provides evidence that a structured guidance program can effectively cultivate social awareness across cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions. The findings indicate that the development of social awareness follows a progressive trajectory from limited awareness to sophisticated systemic understanding. The 16-week BRUS program facilitated significant transformation with an increase in volunteering frequency (350%), informal helping behavior (280%), and social issue advocacy (420%) compared to the pre-program baseline. Follow-up data three months after the program showed that 75% of participants

maintained significantly increased prosocial engagement. Key elements of the program's effectiveness include a gradual approach from awareness building to active engagement, quality facilitator-participant relationships, experiential and participatory learning, and the integration of action with structured reflection. While the study acknowledges the limitations of its qualitative design and relatively short follow-up period, the findings demonstrate that adolescents have a remarkable capacity to develop sophisticated understanding, deep empathy, and a sustained commitment to social welfare when given the right guidance, opportunities, and support.

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