

The Correlating Factors Aligned with Bullying Acts at Elementary Schools in Sumenep Regency

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Received: 07/07/2023

Revised: 20/10/2023

Accepted: 16/11/2023

Abstract

Recently, cases of bullying in the education sector have become increasingly prevalent in Indonesia. Bullying cannot be taken lightly as the emotional scars of infliction can damage a child's mental health, and it is not uncommon for victims of bullying to become bullies themselves in the future. This study aims to describe the correlating factors aligned with the bullying of elementary students in Sumenep Regency. Two hundred eighty-eight elementary school students from 14 schools participated in this research, and the data was analyzed using bivariate tests. The results of this study indicate that 68.1% of the respondents reported experiencing direct bullying, with 50% of those being boys.

Additionally, 128 male students (44.4%) were reported as bullies. There is no significant relationship between gender and the experience of being bullied; every child has the potential to become a victim or perpetrator of bullying at school. Bullying is also closely related to academic achievement. The study does not expose any relationship between the experience of being bullied and the living situation of the students. Students feel sad and lacking in confidence when they are bullied, and they have tried to report this to relevant parties such as parents or teachers. However, the culture in Sumenep still considers bullying to be a common occurrence among children. Therefore, all parties must work together in addressing bullying, given the significant psychological impact it can have on children.

Keywords

Bullying; Elementary School Students

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Phenomenon of bullying has become a serious concern in education (Muhopilah & Tentama, 2019). Bullying in children is considered a public health issue (Huang et al., 2022). Bullying is defined as repeated aggressive behavior to harm the victim (Engelhart & Moughamian, 2003). Some behaviors experienced by the victims include verbal and physical intimidation (Wu et al., 2023), as well as the increasingly prevalent form of bullying known as cyberbullying, which occurs in the online world (van Verseveld et al., 2021). Bullying should not be taken lightly, as the victims may experience psychological disorders such as depression (Pradhan et al., 2022), demotivation in learning, excessive anxiety, sleep disorders (insomnia), lack of motivation to engage in social interaction with others, or schoolmates (Cook et al., 2010), and even suicidal tendencies (Klomek et al., 2009). Furthermore, some bullying victims also report experiencing stomachaches, headaches, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, behavioral problems (Kim et al., 2015), and poor academic performance (Glew et al., 2005).

According to Depoedu.com, a survey conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO) through the Global School-Based Student Health (GSHS), it has been concluded that approximately 21% or around 18 million children aged 13-15 years have experienced bullying in the past month. The GSHS survey also reveals that 25% of these cases involved physical fights, with boys reporting a higher percentage (36%) than girls, who reported only 13%. The report depicts the impact of bullying, indicating that 1 in 20 or 20.9% of teenagers in Indonesia have suicidal tendencies. These statistics are supported by the latest data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) in 2022, which reported a total of 226 cases of bullying involving both physical and mental violence in school settings, including 18 cases of cyberbullying (Peren, 2022).

In our society's traditions, bullying is considered a common occurrence and is often normalized by all parties involved despite the significant psychological impact it can have. The trauma and emotional wounds inflicted on elementary school students can have a lasting impact on their lives and may even be passed on to their children in the future (Klomek et al., 2009). This study focuses on the patterns of bullying among elementary school students. Based on literature reviews, elementary school students are rarely included as research subjects in studies related to bullying. The researchers have also not found any studies on bullying patterns among elementary school students in Sumenep Regency, East Java Province. It is also possible that elementary school students do not report such incidents to the appropriate authorities, such as teachers, parents, or school officials, making them more closed off to the bullying around them, or they may not be victims of bullying at all but instead are perpetrators of bullying in their environment. Currently, bullying is a global challenge that leads to negative consequences in a child's social development, educational outcomes, and health status (Cho et al., 2022). Public concern has been escalating since the 1990s due to a proliferation of excessive aggressive behavior among students, suicide attempts, and incidents of shootings and other forms of violence arising from bullying (Zhang et al., 2021). At the elementary school age, students undergo significant physical and mental growth. Still, they have not fully developed the social skills they need, making them vulnerable to bullying situations, whether as victims or perpetrators. This phenomenon also indicates that children and adults are not yet aware of the negative effects of bullying behavior. However, the trauma of bullying experienced at an early age can have a significant impact on a child's mental health risk.

Various studies have indicated that children who are frequently subjected to bullying and intimidation in their environments are at an increased risk of experiencing various mental health issues, such as depression. Depression encompasses a range of symptoms, including a loss of control, low mood, introspection, and feelings of helplessness and despair (Worsley et al., 2017). Other mental health conditions outside depression include loneliness, anxiety carried on by peer rejection, and low self-esteem in contrast to peers (Hartley et al., 2017). Untreated and chronic mental health issues can escalate the risk of suicidal attempts or engaging in anarchic and violent behavior.

Furthermore, research has shown that bullying victims are often reluctant to report the bullying

they endure (Stives et al., 2019), even though reporting situations to adults is one of the most frequently advised tactics for reducing child victimization (Black et al., 2010). This reluctance is often attributed to the socio-cultural norms in Sumenep society, which tend to normalize bullying. This normalization encourages violent behavior and hurts kids' mental health. Victims of bullying do not receive the necessary support to maintain their mental well-being, thereby resorting to aggressive actions that may harm themselves or others.

This research is particularly interesting as it explores the correlating factors aligned with bullying acts in elementary school-aged children in the Sumenep District, given that bullying is highly likely to occur at the elementary school level. Many studies have focused on bullying behavior among middle and high school students, but it cannot be denied that bullying has often occurred in elementary school environments. It is indeed distressing, but this is the phenomenon that occurs. This is a concern for parents and educators worldwide, including in Indonesia. Therefore, this research examines the correlating factors aligned with bullying among elementary school students in the Sumenep District.

2. METHOD

This study adopts a quantitative approach using a survey method. Two hundred eighty-eight elementary school students participated in this research as respondents, selected through random sampling. The number of male students involved was 144, while the number of female students was also 144. The average age of the sample was 11 years. The questionnaires were distributed using Google Forms during April 2022, involving 14 target schools from the KM (Kampus Mengajar) Batch 4 of 2022 program in the Sumenep District. The participating students included those from grades 1 to 6. During the questionnaire completion process, the students were guided by the 4th batch of Kampus Mengajar students without interfering with their responses. Some schools also printed out the questionnaire to facilitate student completion. The students were informed that their participation was voluntary, and the questionnaire was anonymized using only initials without revealing the school's name. The distributed questionnaire was adapted based on the bullying questionnaire released by bansm.kemdikbud.go.id. All the questions in the questionnaire have involved the validity and reliability tests, attached in the appendix.

This validity test was conducted to measure whether the data obtained from the research is valid using the measurement tool (questionnaire) (Sugiono, 2013). The validity test was conducted on 288 elementary school students as respondents. The following are the decision-making criteria to acknowledge the validity of a variable:

If r value count $>$ r table, the statement is considered valid.

The statement is considered invalid if the r value count $<$ r table.

Table 1. Validity Test

Variable	Item	R count	R table	Notes
Bullying Acts	P1	0.778	0.138	Valid
	P2	0.804	0.138	Valid
	P3	0.798	0.138	Valid
	P4	0.811	0.138	Valid
	P5	0.841	0.138	Valid
	P6	0.843	0.138	Valid
	P7	0.794	0.138	Valid
	P8	0.774	0.138	Valid
	P9	0.863	0.138	Valid
	P10	0.728	0.138	Valid
	P11	0.874	0.138	Valid
	P12	0.776	0.138	Valid

Variable	Item	R count	R table	Notes
	P13	0.778	0.138	Valid
	P14	0.804	0.138	Valid
	P15	0.798	0.138	Valid
	P16	0.811	0.138	Valid
	P17	0.841	0.138	Valid
	P18	0.843	0.138	Valid
	P19	0.794	0.138	Valid
	P20	0.774	0.138	Valid

Table 1 shows that the r value count of all statement items is greater than the r table (0.361), which indicates that H_a is accepted, in which all the statements are valid for use.

The reliability test was conducted on 288 elementary school students as respondents, using questions considered valid in the validity test, and their reliability will be determined. An instrument used in research is considered reliable if the reliability coefficient α is >0.6 .

Table 2. Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach Alpha	Notes
Bullying Acts	0.971	Reliable

Table 2 shows that the reliability test above indicates that Cronbach's alpha coefficient value for all variables exceeds 0.6. Therefore, it can be concluded that all variables are reliable for use.

The questionnaire consists of 20 items that explore the respondents' feelings when experiencing bullying, the frequency of bullying incidents they have encountered, the medium through which elementary school students experience bullying (whether directly or indirectly through online platforms), their academic achievements, and descriptive questions about their feelings during instances of intimidation and their reactions when facing bullying. Additionally, the questionnaire investigates whether the students have ever reported bullying incidents to their school, parents, or family members, their awareness of cyberbullying, and the types of bullying statements they often receive. Only two questions inquire about family factors, specifically who they live with and the number of family members in their household. This limited focus on family-related questions is due to the strong adherence to social norms of politeness in Sumenep Regency, where the study takes place, which avoids delving too deeply into students' family situations. The obtained data will be analyzed using bivariate analysis, specifically the chi-square test, to identify correlations between variables. This statistical analysis will provide insights into the relationships between different factors and help uncover any potential associations or patterns among the variables under investigation.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Bullying has become a critical issue to be addressed nowadays. Almost everyone is not immune to bullying situations. This study explores bullying among elementary school students in Sumenep Regency, East Java Province. The research utilized descriptive statistical analysis. The results of the descriptive analysis can be seen in the table below.

Table 3. Descriptive Analysis

Respondents' Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
Sex Gender	Male	144	50%
	Female	144	50%
Age	6-10 y. o	134	46.5%
	11-15 y. o	154	53.5%
Class Levels	Class 1	12	4.2%
	Class 2	43	14.9%

Respondents' Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage	
Living with	Class 3	32	11.1%
	Class 4	66	22.9%
	Class 5	74	25.7%
	Class 6	61	21.2%
Academic Achievement	One Parent	20	6.9%
	Both Parents	236	81.9%
	Other Relatives	32	11.1%
Experience of Bullying Victims	Below Average	32	11.1%
	Average	165	57.3%
	Above Average	91	31.6%
Experience of Bullying Perpetrators	Directly	196	68.1%
	Directly and Indirectly	26	9%
	Indirectly	16	5.6%
	Never	50	17.4%
Total	Ever	247	85.8%
	Never	41	14.2%
Total	288	100%	

The above descriptive analysis in Table 3 shows that based on gender, male and female respondents have an equal number of 144 students (50%). Based on age, most respondents are aged 11 to 15 years, with a total of 152 students (52.8%) and an average age of 11. The majority of respondents are from grade 5 with 74 students (25.7%), followed by grade 4 with 66 respondents (22.9%), grade 6 with 61 respondents (21.2%), grade 2 with 43 respondents (14.9%), grade 3 with 32 students (11.1%), and grade 1 with the fewest respondents, with only 12 students (4.2%). All respondents come from 14 schools in Sumenep Regency.

A total of 236 respondents (81.9%) claimed to live with both parents, and 32 respondents claimed to live with other relatives such as grandparents or siblings of their father or mother. In comparison, 20 respondents reported living with only one parent (6.9%). Based on academic achievement, most respondents have an average academic achievement with 165 students (57.3%), while the least respondents have below-average academic achievement with 32 students (11.1%).

Moreover, 236 respondents (81.9%) reported living with both parents, 32 respondents with other relatives such as grandparents or aunts/uncles from their parent's side, and 20 respondents (6.9%) reported living with only one parent. Based on academic achievement, most respondents had an average academic achievement, comprising 165 students (57.3%), while the fewest respondents had below-average academic achievement, comprising 32 students (11.1%).

Based on the above exposition, it is asserted that bullying has occurred among elementary school students in Sumenep Regency. Some adults consider bullying as a normal behavior among children without realizing that it has a detrimental impact on the psychology of the child. Bullying can cause depression (Pradhan et al., 2022), loss of motivation to learn, excessive anxiety, sleep disorders (insomnia), withdrawal from the environment (Cook et al., 2010), and even suicide attempts (Klomek et al., 2009). Moreover, victims of bullying in the past may become perpetrators of bullying in the future or retaliate to save their self-esteem from bullies (Walters, 2021).

The Relationship Between Sex, Gender, and The Experience of Bullying Victims

Table 4 shows the relationship between gender and the experience of bullying victims. The results indicate that 104 male respondents (36.1%) have experienced direct bullying, while 92 female respondents (31.9%) have experienced direct bullying. Meanwhile, only six male respondents (2.1%) have experienced direct and indirect bullying. The table's significance value (p-value) is 0.019, which is less than α (0.05). Therefore, we accept the alternative hypothesis (H_a) with the conclusion that there is a significant relationship between gender and the experience of being a victim of bullying. The findings suggest that male students are more vulnerable to bullying in this study, which may be attributed to

the cultural norms in Sumenep that allow boys to play with peers for a longer time than girls. This is consistent with previous research conducted by (Wang et al., 2019), which found that male children are more susceptible to bullying, while female children receive higher levels of social supervision than males (Song et al., 2020).

Table 4. The Relationship Between Sex, Gender, and The Experience of Bullying Victims

Bullying Victims	Sex Genders				Total		P-value
	Male		Female		f	%	
	f	%	f	%			
Directly	104	36.1	92	31.9	196	68.1	0.019
Directly and Indirectly	6	2.1	20	6.9	26	9	
Indirectly	6	2.1	10	3.5	16	5.6	
Never	28	9.7	22	7.6	50	17.4	
Total	144	50	144	50	288	100	

The Relationship Between Sex, Gender, and The Experience of Bullying Perpetrators

Table 5 presents the relationship between gender and the experience of being a bullying perpetrator. Most male respondents admitted to being bullies, with 128 students (44.4%), while female respondents who had been bullies amounted to 119 students (41.3%). Meanwhile, 16 male respondents (5.6%) claimed they had never been bullies. The p-value in this table is 0.129, greater than α (0.05), leading to the decision to reject H_a with the conclusion that there is no significant relationship between gender and the experience of being a bully. Based on the findings of this study, it is highly recommended that both boys and girls possess good emotional intelligence to act as a filter for forming meaningful relationships with others (Peachey et al., 2017). The results of this study demonstrate that anyone can become a victim or perpetrator of bullying. Elementary school students who engage in bullying tend to exhibit externalizing behaviors, such as uncontrolled actions characterized by challenging, aggressive, disruptive, and non-compliant behavior, as well as internalizing behaviors (Cook et al., 2010). Previous research has found that boys are more susceptible to being victims and perpetrators of bullying (Wang et al., 2019). However, this differs from the study titled "Gender Differences in the Link Between Cyberbullying and Parental Supervision Trajectories. Crime and Delinquency" conducted by Song et al. (2020) (Song et al., 2020), which found that girls are more likely to be involved in bullying situations. A similar trend is observed in the research by Bjärehed et al. (2020), which explicates that boys tend to be more frequently engaged in direct forms of bullying, whereas girls are more inclined towards indirect forms of bullying.

Table 5. The Relationship between sex gender and the experience of bullying perpetrators

Bullying Victims	Sex Genders				Total		P-value
	Male		Female		f	%	
	f	%	f	%			
Ever	128	44.4	119	41.3	247	85.8	0.129
Never	16	5.6	25	8.7	41	14.2	
Total	144	50	144	50	288	100	

The Relationship Between the Bullying Victims and Academic Achievement

The findings from Table 6 suggest a significant relationship between being a victim of bullying and academic achievement. Specifically, the majority of respondents who had experienced bullying directly and had average academic achievement were 110 students (38.2%), while no respondents who had not experienced bullying and had below-average academic achievement were found. The p-value of 0.000 is less than the α level of 0.05, indicating that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted, concluding that there is a significant relationship between being a victim of bullying and academic achievement. The descriptive data mentioned that bullies in elementary school often mock their victims' academic performance with phrases such as "you're stupid," "you can't solve

such an easy question," or other similar statements that belittle academic achievements. Students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) are more likely to be victimized than their peers, and they may even be more likely to act as perpetrators of bullying episodes by using more direct verbal aggression (Kokkinos & Antoniadou, 2013).

Table 6. The Relationship Between Bullying Victims and Academic Achievement

Bullying Victims	Academic Achievement						Total		P-value
	Above Average		Average		Below average		f	%	
	f	%	f	%	f	%			
Directly	54	18.8	110	38.2	32	11.1	196	68.1	0.000
Directly and Indirectly	7	2.4	19	6.6	0	0	26	9	
Indirectly	10	3.5	6	2.1	0	0	16	5.6	
Never	20	6.9	30	10.4	0	0	50	17.4	
Total	91	31.6	165	57.3	32	11.1	288	100	

The Relationship Between the Bullying Victims and The People Who They Live With

Table 7 presents the relationship between being a victim of bullying and living arrangements. The majority of respondents who had experienced bullying directly and lived with both parents were 158 students (54.9%). The p-value in the table is 0.125, greater than the alpha level of 0.05. Therefore, the decision is made to reject the alternative hypothesis (Ha) with the conclusion that there is no significant relationship between being a victim of bullying and living arrangements. This study explored bullying patterns among elementary school students. Qualitative data analysis revealed several statements of intimidation and bullying that children often encounter, such as calling a child by their parents' names like "Jupri, oh Jupri" (response from questionnaire item no. 96), commenting on physical appearance (you're dark-skinned, you're ugly, you smell, you're fat, you're skinny, you're left-handed), or mocking other families, such as "your father doesn't have fingers," "you're an adopted child," "you don't have a father."

Table 7. The Relationship Between the Bullying Victims and The People Who They Live With

Bullying victims	The people who they live with						Total		P-value
	A parent		Both parents		Other relatives		f	%	
	f	%	F	%	f	%			
Directly	12	4.2	158	54.9	26	9	196	68.1	0.125
Directly and indirectly	0	0	22	7.6	4	1.4	26	9	
Indirectly	2	0.7	14	4.9	0	0	16	5.6	
Never	6	2.1	42	14.6	2	0.7	50	17.4	
Total	20	6.9	236	81.9	32	11.1	288	100	

Bullying can occur anywhere, with schools being a prominent setting, particularly among classmates (Coelho & Sousa, 2021). The results of this study also reported the post-bullying effects experienced by students, including a loss of motivation to learn, school absenteeism, self-hatred, and withdrawal from their environment. These experiences can become lasting negative memories for students throughout their lives. Involvement in childhood bullying can persist into late adolescence (Wolke et al., 2014) and even. When students witness bullying at school, they have a greater risk compared to students who are directly involved as victims or perpetrators (Rivers et al., 2009). All of us must address and heal the trauma experienced by bullying victims, such as symptoms of depression, to prevent and alleviate bullying among children (Huang et al., 2022). One prevention effort is to increase parents' closeness to children and good relations with their peers (Deng et al., 2022).

Some students act as bystanders (Pellegrini & Van Ryzin, 2011). Bystanders are students who witness bullying without being directly involved as victims or perpetrators and can have a significant impact on bullying incidents (McLoughlin et al., 2021; Salmivalli et al., 2011). Researchers have categorized students' observer responses into four different roles: (a) "assistant," who actively and

directly assists the bullying perpetrator in targeting the victim; (b) "reinforcer," who laughs or simply watches the situation unfold; (c) "outsider" who often disengages or distances themselves from the group, and (d) "defender" who intervenes and comforts the target of bullying (Salmivalli, 2014; Salmivalli et al., 2011).

Harmonious cooperation between parents and teachers is necessary to create a conducive learning environment for students. Within schools, teachers should play a central role in addressing bullying (Oldenburg et al., 2016). Schools are perceived as safer from verbal intimidation than other places (Beran & Tutty, 2002) due to constant supervision from the school board and the principal. Research data indicates that most students report such incidents to their teachers and parents; however, teachers and parents often regard these incidents as trivial and unnecessary to address. In light of this phenomenon, practical anti-bullying and anti-intolerance education is urgently needed. In the Sumenep district, most people work outside the city or as Indonesian migrant workers overseas. Thus, it is not surprising that some respondents stated that they live with one parent or with other family members. It is common for students' parents to live in other cities or countries, resulting in a lack of parental supervision.

In addition to direct bullying and intimidation, this study also reports the prevalence of indirect bullying through the internet, known as cyberbullying. Social media interactions can have negative effects, such as cyberbullying (Bacak et al., 2022), and individuals who engage in traditional bullying have the potential to engage in cyberbullying as well (Cook et al., 2010; Kowalski et al., 2012). In 2019, the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) noted that 48.2% of Indonesian children aged 7-17 had accessed the internet (Naufal Fadhilah, 2022). One of the causes of cyberbullying is students' lack of understanding of digital literacy and social media ethics, as well as a lack of parental supervision. Technology has become increasingly sophisticated, making it easily accessible to anyone, including teenagers. In addition, students' self-esteem and feelings of loneliness can predict their involvement in cyberbullying (Touloupis, 2022). Some studies have also reported the phenomenon of cyberbullying among children under the age of 11 (Monks et al., 2012). Victims of bullying (whether direct or indirect through digital media) feel unsafe and rejected by their school community and are more likely to experience lower academic achievement, with a higher likelihood of being bullied than bystanders. Children who feel unsafe at school are five times more likely to be bullied than those who feel accepted (Glew et al., 2005).

4. CONCLUSION

The present study addresses bullying among elementary school students in the Sumenep district. The findings of this research indicate a high prevalence of bullying among elementary school students in Sumenep, with male students being more frequently involved as both victims and perpetrators of bullying. While male students may exhibit a higher vulnerability to bullying victimization, there is no significant gender-related correlation with the experience of being a bully, implying that anyone can engage in bullying behavior. Academic performance in school also influences bullying behaviors. Descriptive data indicates that students with below-average academic achievement are often subjected to unpleasant attitudes and verbal bullying, such as name-calling by peers and using phrases like 'you are dumb.' This study highlights the absence of a significant relationship between the victim's place of residence and with whom the victim resides. Bullies, in contrast, tend to target victims by referencing their father's name or specific characteristics, such as 'you are dark,' 'you are short,' 'you are overweight,' or other forms of negative comments.

This research also reveals the psychological consequences experienced by students, including diminished or lost motivation for learning, feelings of anger directed inwardly and towards the bullies, self-loathing, school aversion, and social withdrawal. Although there have been no reports of aggressive actions resulting in physical harm to oneself or others, the emotional scars incurred during childhood can become enduring, bitter memories that the child does not easily forget.

These results highlight that bullying is a serious issue that needs to be promptly and seriously addressed. Based on the findings, there is a clear need for an implementable curriculum on anti-intolerance and anti-bullying measures. By utilizing teachers as agents of change, schools can instill positive values during the learning process. Active participation and cooperation from all educational stakeholders are required to address the issue of bullying effectively.

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