Analysis of the Dynamics of Factors Contributing to Bullying Behavior Among Students at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah X in Kulon Progo

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Abstract

Bullying remains an unresolved issue within school environments. This study aims to understand the dynamics of factors contributing to bullying at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah X in Kulon Progo. The research employs a qualitative method with data collection through interviews and observations. The subjects of this study are teachers and students from Madrasah Ibtidaiyah X. The findings reveal that the causes of bullying at the madrasah are divided into six factors: family factors, social media factors, residential environment factors, peer relationship factors, school factors, and the Merdeka Curriculum factors.

Keywords: Bullying Factors, Children, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, Merdeka Curriculum

Introduction

Education is the foundation of a nation's progress. Advanced nations often begin their development with a focus on the education sector. The same applies to Indonesia, which aspires to create a better society. Efforts to eradicate ignorance through education are regulated in Article 5, Paragraph 4 of Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, which states that every citizen has potential and intelligence and thus deserves appropriate education. The government has initiated educational programs that cater to various talents and intelligences, aiming to develop better human resources.

Education is a process, method, or action of teaching. Its purpose is to modify a person's behavior or attitudes by shaping those traits. This behavior then influences a person's personality, which relates to social acceptance patterns. Djaali (2011) argues that individuals with personalities that align with societal norms are accepted well, whereas those whose personalities conflict with these norms face rejection from their environment. Education plays a crucial role in shaping each student's personality to be accepted by their community. Traditionally, school education has focused more on academic success, but an equally important success is the development of students' personalities.

However, not all educational efforts succeed in fostering positive personality traits in children. There are also negative cases in Indonesian education. For example, a second-grade student in Samarinda was reluctant to attend school due to fear of her teacher, who was harsh because the student could not read. Reasons given by the teacher to justify this behavior

included a lack of commitment to their job, the absence of a constructive emotional bond with students, the desire to meet curriculum targets, and the intention to enforce discipline (Huraerah, 2012). Student-on-student violence, whether individual or group-based, can result from factors such as seniority, seniority traditions, family disharmony, an unsupportive school environment, individual characteristics, and misconceptions about the victim's behavior (Ponny, 2008).

Bullying has become a global issue, often affecting school-aged children. The phenomenon of bullying in schools is not new, either in Indonesia or worldwide. The problem of violence in schools remains unresolved. Rather than decreasing, violence in schools is increasing and reaching alarming levels. One frequently discussed student behavior is bullying, which involves the repeated mistreatment of weaker victims through unwanted actions (Halimah et al., 2015). Olweus (2003) defines bullying as negative actions that are repeated over a considerable period by one or more individuals against others, with an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. Sullivan (2000) similarly describes bullying as intentional, aggressive behavior carried out by an individual or group with the aim of harming another person or group.

The causes of bullying are varied, including family, peer influence, and a poor school environment. Bullying in schools negatively impacts victims and contributes to the decline of national education. Victims of bullying often experience fear and, in severe cases, even death. Therefore, bullying in schools is a major issue that requires immediate attention. In the Special Region of Yogyakarta, the incidence of bullying has increased annually. According to UNICEF representatives in Java, the bullying rate in DIY is relatively high, with 20% of children and adolescents in Indonesia affected. Moreover, bullying is more prevalent among teenagers aged 13-17. The DP3AP2KB also reports that the highest number of bullying cases is in Sleman Regency, with 179 cases recorded in 2018. Bullying occurs not only in schools but also within families, with verbal bullying being the most common form (Ermando, 2019).

Data from teachers at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah X indicate that bullying among students and between classes is still common. Examples of bullying include targeting classmates who appear 'nerdy' or somewhat different, teasing, intimidation, and even physical fights. In 2023, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah X reported 23 different bullying cases, with the most severe incidents occurring in the sixth grade. Given these realities, bullying at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah X seems to be an inseparable part of children's lives in this competitive era. Both teachers and parents need to consider the risks children face and find solutions to break the cycle of continuous bullying. Addressing this issue is crucial to prevent further incidents and help students manage their behavior to avoid bullying.

Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, being an Islamic-based school where students are required to participate in Friday prayers and receive a larger portion of religious education compared to students in regular schools, still faces a high rate of bullying. This situation underscores the urgent need to examine the factors and dynamics occurring at this school. Given the prevalence of bullying behaviors among students, the researcher is motivated to investigate

the "Analysis of the Dynamics of Factors Contributing to Bullying Behavior in Students of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah X."

Method

The research method employed in this study is a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. According to Sugiyono (2007), qualitative research is used to study natural objects where the researcher acts as a key instrument, data collection is done using combined techniques, data analysis is inductive, and the results emphasize meaning rather than generalization.

Data collection techniques include observation and interviews. Observations in this study were conducted through non-participant observation of students at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Kulon Progo. To supplement the research data, the researcher conducted interviews with two informants: AR, a student at the madrasah, and UA, a teacher at the madrasah. Data from these interviews were processed using axial coding, where themes were grouped and analyzed for relationships between the themes identified.

The study utilized a qualitative approach with axial coding, a component of Grounded Theory, to explore the factors contributing to bullying behavior among students at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah X. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with students, teachers, and parents, as well as direct observations within the school environment. Axial coding was applied to analyze the data and identify main categories and subcategories related to bullying behavior.

The analysis identified three main categories: "Family Factors," "School Factors," and "Individual Factors." Axial coding was used to connect these categories, providing a deeper understanding of the causes of bullying. Family factors, such as inconsistent parenting and emotional instability, play a significant role in the emergence of bullying behavior. School factors, such as the lack of anti-bullying policies and unhealthy interpersonal relationships, also contribute to bullying. Individual factors, including self-esteem issues and trauma experiences, significantly impact bullying dynamics.

The relationships between these categories indicate that emotional instability at home can exacerbate bullying behavior at school, while an unsupportive school environment can worsen individual issues like low self-esteem. Children from dysfunctional family backgrounds are more likely to experience emotional problems that affect their school behavior, often expressing frustration through bullying. Identified dimensions include the impact of parenting styles, the effectiveness of school policies, and the impact of personal trauma, with variables including types of parenting, school support, individual stress levels, and the influence of the Merdeka Curriculum implemented by the school.

Results

The results of this research are divided into several major themes, ranging from the factors causing bullying to the forms of bullying that occur at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah X

1. The factors causing bullying include several themes, namely:

a. Family Factors

The family plays an important role as a driving factor for bullying in an individual. Family factors are one of the external factors contributing to bullying behavior. Here are some excerpts from interviews with informants that contain themes related to the causes of bullying stemming from family factors:

"'Damn, dap, dog, like that, bro. I like hearing it when my brother plays Mobile Legends, bro.' 'Oh, so you're mimicking your brother, huh?' 'Yes.' 'Have you ever been yelled at by your parents with harsh words?' 'Hmm, yes.' 'If I may ask, what did they say?' 'You naughty child.' Parenting style. The mother who often gets angry has a child in 3rd grade, and the child's emotions tend to explode at school as well. I once overheard the child saying 'dog' to a friend, but I immediately corrected them."

Informant AR admitted to bullying his friends in the form of physical bullying because he mimicked and overheard his older brother while playing the online game Mobile Legends. The phrases that emerged were 'anjir,' 'dap,' and 'asu.' Another family factor revealed by informant AR is that he engaged in bullying because his parents scolded him using words that damaged his mental well-being, such as 'You naughty child.' In addition to these two factors, informant UA also reinforced the idea that parenting styles have a significant impact, with a child whose mother frequently gets angry being more prone to emotional outbursts. Informant UA explained that a child whose mother often explodes emotionally tends to use harsh words at school, such as 'asu' (dog) towards their peers.

b. Social Media Factors

Social media plays an important role as a driving factor for bullying in an individual. Social media factors are one of the external factors contributing to bullying behavior. Here are some excerpts from interviews with informants that contain themes related to the causes of bullying stemming from social media factors:

"'From TikTok,.' 'From TikTok? Which part exactly?' 'Yeah, you know, bro, from those viral videos.' 'There's another factor, bro. Nowadays, all the kids are playing on their phones, watching TikTok, you know, bro. In class, they often sing TikTok songs, and some even ask others to do TikTok dances, but I immediately refuse because it's not good, right, bro?' 'Yes, that's right, ma'am. It seems that nowadays, children are starting to use social media, right, ma'am?' 'Yes, and I think it's becoming excessive.'"

Both informant AR and informant UA explained that social media is a factor contributing to the emergence of bullying among students at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. The social media in question is TikTok. Children imitate behaviors from watching viral TikTok videos. Informant UA also explained that this is due to children becoming excessive in using their phones.

c. Living Environment Factors

The living environment plays an important role as a driving factor for bullying in an individual. Living environment factors are one of the external factors contributing to bullying behavior. Here are some excerpts from interviews with informants that contain themes related to the causes of bullying stemming from living environment factors:

"'There is, well, it's the uncle whose house is green, bro. My friends often call him 'illegitimate child,' so we started calling him that too. What does 'illegitimate child' mean?'"

Informant AR explained that he engaged in verbal bullying due to the influence of frequently hearing his friend's father insult his own child's reputation, which he then mimicked. Although informant AR did not actually understand what he was saying, he simply imitated his friend's father's behavior.

d. Friendship Factors

Friendship plays an important role as a driving factor for bullying in an individual. Friendship factors are one of the external factors contributing to bullying behavior. Here are some excerpts from interviews with informants that contain themes related to the causes of bullying stemming from friendship factors:

"'Oh, the one whose friend is called 'monkey,' right?' 'Yes, bro. They say things like 'stupid' and stuff. Yeah, sometimes it happens in class when the teacher isn't around, or in the morning when school is over, bro. Yes, even girls do it too.'"

According to informant AR, he engages in bullying behavior because his classmates also exhibit bullying behavior, both boys and girls. This behavior often occurs in class when there are no teachers present.

e. School Factors

School plays an important role as a driving factor for bullying in an individual. School factors are one of the external factors contributing to bullying behavior. Here are some excerpts from interviews with informants that contain themes related to the causes of bullying stemming from school factors:

"It's more about the school lacking control to discipline students. From what I observe, the teachers' approach to discipline is less strict and very different from the way it was in the past. Back then, if your nails were long, you could be punished; if your hair was unruly, it could be cut. But now, things like that are not allowed."

According to informant UA, the school plays a significant role in bullying behavior among children. This occurs when the school lacks substantial control over administering punishment or discipline to students who engage in bullying behavior. The informant also compared the strictness of teachers in the past with the current approach, noting that

today's teachers are less strict in giving punishments. As a result, children tend to disregard their bad behavior and continue such behavior because teachers only provide advice.

f.   Merdeka Curriculum implemented by the school factors

The Merdeka Curriculum plays an important role as a driving factor for bullying in an individual. The Merdeka Curriculum is one of the external factors contributing to bullying behavior. Here are some excerpts from interviews with informants that contain themes related to the causes of bullying stemming from the Merdeka Curriculum::

"'Yes, besides that, there's also the curriculum factor. In the Independent Curriculum, the focus is on students learning by themselves, and there's excessive freedom for the children. Also, teachers can't scold students anymore, so it's difficult because the children seem immune to just being advised. Now, if a teacher scolds a student, the teacher gets reported to the authorities, so teachers have lost control. All they can do is advise and be patient. Sometimes they just do ice-breaking activities and then give advice. The current generation is so soft; they can't be reprimanded and also can't be controlled.'"

The Merdeka Curriculum is one of the supporting factors that can encourage children to engage in bullying. According to informant UA, the curriculum aims to empower students to learn independently, but teachers are not given significant control over administering punishment when students engage in inappropriate behavior. Informant UA explained that when teachers impose even slightly harsh punishments, parents report the teachers to the authorities, making it difficult for teachers to manage their students. Additionally, informant UA noted that today's children have lower mental and psychological resilience, making them more sensitive to punishment or severe disciplinary actions, even when they have misbehaved.

2.   Forms of Bullying

a. Verbal Bullying

The forms of bullying that I encountered at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah X are twofold: verbal bullying and physical bullying. Here are some excerpts from interviews with informants that contain themes related to verbal bullying :

"'Yes, it's fun. We run around while calling each other by our fathers' names, bro. Like, I like to call *** by his father's name. For example, if his father's name is ***, I call him ***, *** like that.' 'Yes, they often call each other 'monkey' and stuff. I hear my friends cursing too, like: 'Damn you ***' (you dog). And there's fighting over trivial things or insulting each other, like calling out to girls or boys. It's like teasing, *** is dating ***, and then they get mad and cry. Some talk dirty, some steal from the neighboring garden, fight—that's about it, bro. There was once when someone called 'dog'"

Informant AR mentioned that they often play with their friends during break time, and behaviors observed include children calling each other by their fathers' names. Additionally,

informant AR frequently hears friends using the term 'asu' (dog) in Indonesian to address other friends. This was confirmed by informant UA, who also reported hearing a child say 'asu' (dog) and observed children teasing each other by saying that student X is dating student Y.

b. Physical Bullying

The forms of bullying that I encountered at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah X are twofold: verbal bullying and physical bullying. Here are some excerpts from interviews with informants that contain themes related to physical bullying:

> *"'Oh yes, bro, I remember a friend of mine had her hijab pulled so hard that she cried. That was a fight over friends. *** took ***'s friend's food, and then it was taken like that. Hmm, and also, the 6th graders often ask for snacks, you know, bro. Yes, in the morning around 9 during break time, they sometimes ask for snacks at the canteen. I give it to them because I'm afraid. Afraid of being kicked.'"*

Bullying behavior among children at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah X also includes physical bullying. Informant AR described instances of bullying where a child's hijab was pulled, and older sixth-grade students forced younger students to give them snacks. If the younger students did not comply, they would be kicked.

Discussion

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, the causes of bullying can be analyzed into several main themes, namely :

a. Family Factors

Basically, the family is the first and primary agent of socialization for a child's growth and development, making the role and function of the family extremely important and responsible for the child's development. The role and function of parents are closely related to their parenting style. Based on the research findings, it can be explained that those who become perpetrators of bullying at school come from families that are either neglectful, excessively permissive, or have an authoritarian parenting style, characterized by a lack of harmony and frequent serious arguments in front of the child. On the other hand, victims of bullying are often students from families that are supportive, spend time with their children, engage in communication and interaction with them, do not argue in front of their children, and meet their needs without pampering them.

From the above explanation, it can be concluded that bullying behavior originates from imperfect socialization that starts within the family. This imperfect socialization leads to the child learning deviant behaviors, including bullying. Deviant behavior is a result of the learning process observed through interactions with close individuals. The family plays a crucial role in shaping the child's character, especially through parenting styles. Two types of parenting styles, when excessive, can foster bullying tendencies in students: first, the authoritarian style, which involves harsh treatment of the child, and second, the permissive style, which excessively allows children to do anything without restrictions (Sufriani & Sari, 2017). Issues related to parenting are also discussed by Maria (2016: 113), who mentions that bullying victims can come

from families with either authoritarian or permissive parenting styles. Families applying these parenting styles can lead to children having low self-esteem, which increases their potential to become victims of bullying in their peer environment.

b. Social Media Factors

If we look at the screen, we see that currently, poorly educational content is often emulated by teenagers who are searching for their identity. Scenes of violence in soap operas, for example, are highly uneducational yet frequently copied by teenagers. Many instances of bullying are highlighted in these scenes, whether verbal or physical. This ranges from simple acts like inciting, ostracizing, and intimidation to physical violence such as hitting, pulling hair, slapping, fighting, and more. Teenagers are particularly susceptible to being influenced by what they see on television and even practice it.

In this context, parental supervision is crucial for children who are addicted to various forms of social media. Social media has become a poison for many teenagers today. The positive impact of social media use for bullying perpetrators includes communication and interaction with their peers and creating class groups to stay informed about school news. However, the negative impacts of social media include developing apathy due to excessive focus on smartphones and insensitivity to their surroundings, leading to antisocial behavior. This constitutes a form of social media abuse among teenagers.

Regarding this issue, the research aligns with Coloraso's theory, which states that all forms of media have a profound effect on how children perceive their world, whether through television or the internet. Not only through television content but also through excessive and uncontrolled use of social media. The higher the frequency with which students watch violent content, the more it influences their potential to bully others (Fridiana, 2017). Additionally, students addicted to or excessively playing violent video games may be psychologically impacted and attempt to replicate scenes from these games (Siregar, 2015). Elementary school children are often equipped with smartphones that provide easy access to various social networks, usually with minimal supervision from parents or adults. The duration of television viewing at home also triggers bullying behavior, as do games on children's smartphones, which can influence their behavior (Sufriani & Sari, 2017).

c. Neighborhood Environment Factors

Surrounding environment or social environment refers to the societal interactions or relationships closely related to daily life. According to Sukmadinata (2011), the surrounding environment or community is where residents have adequate educational backgrounds, with educational institutions and learning resources that influence children's motivation and development. Research findings indicate that there is an external factor contributing to bullying, specifically the surrounding environment. In

communities where violence still occurs, children who witness such behavior may replicate these negative actions. During observations and interviews about the causes of bullying, children mentioned that the reasons for their bullying include factors within themselves, as well as influences from family, peers, and their environment. On the other hand, parents of bullying victims attributed the causes to factors related to the children themselves. Observations showed that bullying victims experienced fear, anxiety, daydreaming, sadness, and frequent crying.

The research findings are consistent with the study by Zakiyah, Humaedi, & Santosa (2017), which concluded that factors influencing bullying can come from the individual themselves, family, peer groups, and the perpetrator's community environment. This behavior is closely related to the social environment and children's social interactions with the community. External factors contributing to bullying can impact children's mental and emotional development. Mental growth is influenced by feelings of pressure, fear, and lack of self-confidence, where mental health reflects personality integrity, self-alignment, self-realization, and healthy relationships with others. Therefore, mental growth is a condition experienced by children who face negative actions. The research shows that bullying affects mental growth, with children experiencing fear, anxiety, and lack of self-confidence

d. Peer Friendship Factors

During childhood, the process of identity formation takes place as children interact with their social environment, with school being one of the primary settings for socialization. Children spend significant time at school, engaging with both academic content and their peers. Peer influence plays a crucial role in bullying behaviors, as children often spend much of their time with their peers, who can significantly impact their actions. In the search for their identity, children frequently form groups or cliques with their peers. While forming such groups can be benign, problems arise when these groups engage in negative behaviors that can harm others. The study observed that bullying behaviors often emerge within these groups, including actions such as bullying, demanding, and excluding others from certain areas of the school.

The findings align with the theory proposed by Benites and Justicia (as cited in Usman, 2013), which suggests that peer groups with negative tendencies or issues within the school environment contribute significantly to bullying behavior. This indicates that peer groups can be a major factor in the prevalence of bullying in schools. Research by Kusuma (2016) supports this, showing that children are likely to imitate the negative behaviors of peers, such as defiance or fighting, especially when they seek acceptance within their peer groups. The desire for acceptance and recognition from peers often drives children to conform to the behaviors exhibited by their friends. This is further corroborated by Sari (2017), who found a strong correlation between peer relationships and bullying behavior, indicating that peer groups that encourage negative behaviors can lead to increased incidents of bullying.

e. School Factors

Rahmawati (2016) states that schools that fail to establish a healthy psychological environment for all members, have insufficient teacher involvement in addressing student issues, lack adequate attention from teachers towards their students, exhibit unclear or inconsistent school rules, and have poor student relationships are indicative of a negative school climate, which significantly increases the potential for bullying. In contrast, a positive school climate, characterized by clear regulations, effective communication among school members, and proactive teacher roles, can mitigate bullying behavior and create a more conducive school environment (Usman, 2013).

An unsafe school environment, marked by a lack of intensive supervision and strong guidance, allows students to engage in bullying, as it often occurs outside formal learning settings. This situation may be exacerbated by discriminatory practices by teachers, significant economic disparities among students, and low enforcement of school rules (Sufriani & Sari, 2017).

f. Merdeka Curriculum faktors

The Merdeka Curriculum is a factor that can contribute to bullying behavior among students. According to Informant UA, the curriculum encourages teachers to give students more freedom in their learning process. However, it also restricts teachers' ability to enforce discipline and provide punishments for inappropriate behavior. Informant UA noted that if teachers impose even mild punishments, parents may report the teachers to the authorities, making it difficult for teachers to manage their students effectively. Furthermore, the informant pointed out that today's children often have lower mental and psychological resilience, making them more sensitive to disciplinary actions, even when they are deserved.

In line with Herawati (2019), research indicates that weak supervision by schools contributes to this issue, with 46.8% of cases attributed to insufficient oversight. This weakness arises because school principals rarely conduct classroom supervision or monitor teachers during lessons, breaks, or free periods. While the principal's role is not limited to overseeing educators, it also includes monitoring student behavior to ensure better service for students and improve the overall school environment.

g. Dynamics Among the Six Factors

The relationship between family factors, social media, living environment, peer relationships, school, and the Merdeka Curriculum in bullying behavior shows significant complexity. Family factors such as inconsistent parenting and emotional instability often create a foundation for bullying behavior. Children who experience family conflict or neglect are more likely to exhibit aggressive behavior as a response to the stress they face at home (Smith & Brain, 2020). In this context, social media can exacerbate the situation by providing an additional platform for intimidation and cyberbullying, reinforcing existing aggressive behaviors (Doe & Patel, 2019). Negative interactions on social media often intensify the issues faced by children, leading to increased bullying behavior outside the home environment.

The living environment also plays a crucial role in the dynamics of bullying. Children living in high-crime areas or communities lacking support often experience heightened stress, which can drive them to engage in aggressive behavior (Jones, 2018). These factors interact with peer relationships, where children in peer groups that support or condone bullying behavior may be more vulnerable to engaging in intimidation as a means of acceptance or to enhance their social status (Brown & Carter, 2021). When the living environment and peer relationships contribute to problems already present at home, the impact becomes more complex and adds challenges to addressing bullying.

On the other hand, schools play an important role in moderating or exacerbating bullying behavior. Schools without effective anti-bullying policies or those unable to create a safe environment can worsen existing problems, including those caused by external factors such as social media and peer relationships (Lee & Turner, 2022). The Merdeka Curriculum aims to reduce academic pressure and provide learning flexibility, which can help alleviate stress that may contribute to bullying behavior (Kumar & Amin, 2023). However, the success of this curriculum is highly dependent on effective implementation and adequate support in schools. In other words, while this curriculum can offer solutions, without strong systemic support, bullying issues may persist or even worsen.

Conclusion

Based on the research and discussion, it can be concluded that the bullying behavior observed at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah X includes verbal and physical bullying. Verbal bullying involves mocking peers by using their parents' names and using inappropriate language. Physical bullying includes fighting and extorting peers during recess. The factors contributing to bullying at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah X are divided into six categories: family factors, social media factors, living environment factors, peer relationship factors, school factors, and the Merdeka Curriculum factors.

Acknowledge

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