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## Bullying Among Students in Bengkulu City : A Perspective from the Differential Association Theory

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**Abstract:** Violence such as bullying often occurs in the school environment, which should be a safe place to get protection. The number of bullying cases that occur among students has spread to all regions in Indonesia, including Bengkulu city. This shows that it is important to carry out comprehensive enforcement and that specific regulations are needed to prevent, protect, and resolve bullying. The problems in this study focused on the forms and characteristics of bullying behaviour that occurred and the factors that caused bullying by being analysed through differential association theory to be able to solve those problems by analysing it with the theory. This study uses a type of empirical research with the data sources used as primary data derived from interviews and questionnaires and secondary data in the form of literature studies. The results of the study found that the form of bullying that often occurs among students in Bengkulu City is verbal bullying with behavioural characteristics in the form of calling other students with abusive nicknames and being used as funny material, threatening and forcing someone, mocking and calling parents names. The factor that causes students to bully is because the family and environment have a negative impact on the character of students. In terms of differential association theory, these factors are in accordance with several propositions in theory, so students tend to study bullying behaviour from the surrounding environment.

**Keyword:** Bullying, Students, Association, Differential.

### INTRODUCTION

Violence is the hardness, coercion, and actions of a person or group that cause injury or death to others. (Johan Galtung, 1992:62) Violence is prevalent in vulnerable groups, such as children. The Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) said that Indonesia was having an emergency of violence against children, especially in the educational field, where educators should have obligations and responsibilities to protect children in schools. (Singgih Wiryono & Bagus Santosa, 2023)

Violence in education is a phenomenal problem that has attracted many party's attention. The rise in cases of violence against children stems from bullying.

Bullying, according to KOMNAS HAM, is a form of physical and psychological violence that has long-term impacts. It is perpetrated by a person or group against someone who is unable to defend themselves, causing hurt, fear, depression, trauma, and helplessness. (Fitria Chakrawati, 2015:11)

Violence, such as bullying, actually comes from the school environment, which should be a safe place to get protection. In this case, it is inversely proportional to Article 9 Section (1a) of Law Number 35 of 2014 amends several provisions in Law Number 23 of 2002 on Child Protection, which states :

“every child shall be entitled to protection against violence and abuse from teachers, school managers, and schoolmates both in the schools and other parties.”

Bullying cases in schools are widespread in Indonesia, including in the city of Bengkulu. Data from the Network for Education Watch Indonesia (NEW Indonesia) shows that from January to August 2023, 379 school-age children were victims of physical violence and bullying in the school environment. (Pythag Kurniati, 2023) However, the number of cases is still unknown because many cases have not been revealed and can be accessed by the public. (Bagong Suyanto, 2018:82)

One of the bullying cases that has received attention from the public is the case experienced by female students at an Elementary School in Gresik, SAH, which happened in 2023. It caused that girl's right eye to be blind because the offender stabbed her eye with a meatball skewer. This incident began when that girl was participating in a competition on the 78th Independence Day of the Republic of Indonesia. Another student, her senior, was pulled to an alley between the teacher's room and the school fence. The girl was forced to give her money, but she refused it so, which made the offender angry and stabbed her right eye with a meatball skewer. This incident was not the first time they had done that, but they have been doing that since she was in the first grade of elementary school.

A behaviour can be called bullying not only when it involves direct physical touch. Words, statements, or calling names that make someone offensive can also be bullying because they contain elements of mocking and intimidation. That characteristic of bullying, if carried out continuously, can lead to aggressive behaviour and develop into criminal behaviour.

Cases of bullying not only occur between students, but teachers, as educators who should be supposed to protect students, actually become offenders. This situation is not in alignment with Article 54 Section (1) of Law Number 35 of 2014 amends several provisions in Law Number 23 of 2002 on Child Protection, which states :

“children in and around the educational unit are required to receive protection from acts of physical, psychological violence, sexual crimes, and other crimes committed by educators, education staff, fellow students, and other parties.”

Continued in Article 54 Section 2, that is

“protection as referred to in paragraph (1) is carried out by educators, education personnel, government officials, and/or the community”

The bullying involving the teacher occurred in one of the schools in Bengkulu City. A student who had an autoimmune disease was a victim of bullying carried out by her teacher and her classmates that is a verbal violence, which caused she felt afraid to go to school. (Cicin Yulianti, 2023)

This case is not the one bullying case that occurred in Bengkulu City, and that city has become the attention of the Indonesian people, so it makes bullying should get special attention to prevent similar cases. This is supported by data on assistance for victims and perpetrators of

bullying by Women's Empowerment Service, Child Protections, Population Control and Family Planning (DP3AP2KB Bengkulu City, which has been increased.

Ermawati, chair of the Regional Technical Implementation Unit for the Protection of Women and Children (UPTD PPA), said that in 2022, only one case was processed and assisted by DP3AP2KB, while in 2023, the number was increased to five cases. (UPTD PPA, 2023)

The amount of data differs between the data exposed and the facts that occur. This causes some cases of bullying to be not reported to the relevant agencies or institutions, so they are only resolved by the school. In fact, many cases did not get a follow-up from the school.

One case of bullying that was not exposed happened at a school in Bengkulu City. On October 19th 2023, an elementary school student with the initials KA was bullied by her classmates. KA experiences blackmail and threatens not to have friends. It was discovered when KA's parents read a message with a promised money bill and threats. The amount of money that was given to the perpetrator is thought to be around IDR 1,500,000.

The large number of cases of bullying in school shows that it is important to take comprehensive action and needs to regulate the prevention, protection and resolution of bullying precisely. It is essential to consider children's position regarding the nature, characteristics, and basis of their actions in committing crimes, whether these actions are based on their feelings, thoughts, desires, or others that influence them to do that. (Randy Pradityo, 2016) Moreover, students are still considered children and vulnerable to controlling themselves, so they can easily be influenced and imitate the actions of people around them. Sometimes, this can be a factor in children committing deviations.

This aligns with the learning or socialisation theory discovered by Edwin H. Sutherland, which is Differential Association. This Differential Association theory states that deviation results from the learning process or what is learned. (Elly M. Setiadi and Usman Kolip, 2011:237) So, the author is interested in conducting research using a direct approach to the perpetrator by studying and analysing the factors that cause this behaviour through the Differential Association theory with the title *Bullying Among Students in Bengkulu City: A Perspective from the Differential Association Theory*.

## **METHOD**

This research uses empirical juridical methods containing facts from direct human actions to obtain the data and information needed to identify and solve problems. (Bambang Waluyo, 2002:15) This research uses a sociological, legal research approach. This approach obtains data from primary data by looking directly at the conditions in the field related to the problems to be studied through interviews, questionnaire distribution, and documentation studies. The data will be analysed using qualitative analysis, describing the data in good sentences.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Form and Characteristics of Bullying among Students in Bengkulu City**

Coloroso said three forms of bullying often occur that are Verbal Bullying, Physical bullying, and Relation bullying. (Erina Agisyaputri, 2023) Rigby Ken, in his book titled *Children and Bullying: How Parents and Educators Can Reduce Bullying at School*, adds specific forms of bullying by adding several other forms of bullying, such as racial bullying, sexual bullying, and cyberbullying.

From the several forms of bullying, in general, the dominant forms that occur among students in the city of Bengkulu, especially in the sample in the research, are verbal bullying, physical bullying, and relational bullying. Based on the results of interviews and distributing questionnaires, data on the forms and characteristics of bullying that occurred among Bengkulu city students were obtained:

**Table 1.** Reported Cases of Bullying in Bengkulu City

Name of School	Form of Bullying			Total
	Verbal Bullying	Physical Bullying	Relational Bullying	
SD Negeri 69 Kota Bengkulu	27	8	3	40
SD Negeri 19 Kota Bengkulu	42	23	17	82
SD Negeri 41 Kota Bengkulu	40	21	17	78
SMP Negeri 4 Kota Bengkulu	35	19	7	61
SMP Negeri 14 Kota Bengkulu	15	7	5	27
SMPIT Iqra' Kota Bengkulu	41	19	19	79
SMA Negeri 2 Kota Bengkulu	27	8	6	41
SMA Negeri 8 Kota Bengkulu	24	14	8	46
SMA Negeri 4 Kota Bengkulu	19	7	12	38

The table above shows that the form of bullying that often occurs among Bengkulu City students is verbal bullying, followed by physical bullying and relational bullying. Verbal bullying is usually the beginning of other forms of bullying. Bullying is often seen as something normal because it is seen as just a joke. But, it is not uncommon for people who are victims actually to feel offended and intimidated.

Based on the results of distributing questionnaires, the characteristics of bullying behaviour that occurs among Bengkulu City students can be explained as follows :

1. Verbal Bullying

Verbal bullying is a form of intimidation that involves humiliating other people through ridicule/reproach, nicknames from parents, or statements that can undermine a person's motivation. The characteristics of bullying behaviour that often occur are :

- a. Calling other students rude nicknames, making it funny by hurting them.

This kind of behaviour often occurs among students in Bengkulu city. It is not uncommon for this behaviour to become a habit for students and become a mere joke. Based on the results of research, cases of calling someone rude tend to occur frequently at SMP Negeri 4 Bengkulu City and SMPIT Iqra' Bengkulu City. These students tend to first make a call based on things the victim has, which are usually physically related.

- b. Threaten or force him to do something he doesn't want to do.

This behaviour is coercion accompanied by threats if someone does not do what is ordered. This case occurred at one of the high school in Bengkulu City, where a male student was forced to drink alcohol by a friend who was known to have power and was

respected by other people. Besides that, based on research results, the school where cases like this tend to occur frequently is SD Negeri 19 Bengkulu City.

- c. Mocking other people, whether of ethnicity, nation, or parents.

This behaviour is often used as a joke among students, but it actually leads to other criminal behaviour because the victim feels hurt and intends to take revenge. Based on research results, cases like this are often found in SMA Negeri 4 Bengkulu City.

- d. Calling parent's names

These cases have become a habit among students in Bengkulu city. This behaviour has been going on since ancient times and has always been used as a joke. How someone responds to this behaviour depends on how they feel about it. Some feel that it is inappropriate because it is impolite, but others also feel that it is just a joke. Based on research results, this behaviour of calling parent's names often occurs in elementary school children.

## 2. Physical Bullying

Physical bullying is a form of oppression that involves physical contact from the perpetrator to the victim. This type has similarities to abuse. Characteristics of bullying behaviour that often occurs among Bengkulu City students include:

- a. Hit, kick, push, or lock him indoors.

This bullying behaviour tends to occur because it begins with verbal bullying. It is caused by hurt feelings and an intention to take revenge. In several schools that were the research sample, this behaviour tended to coincide with several other friends, leading to beatings between the perpetrator, the perpetrator's friends, and the victim.

- b. Forcing someone to give away their money or belongings.

This behaviour is often called bullying. Based on the research results, it was found that bullying tends to occur in SD Negeri 41 Bengkulu City and SMA Negeri 8 Bengkulu City.

- c. Relational Bullying

Relational bullying is a type of bullying that is very difficult to detect because this action takes the form of neglect, exclusion, or avoidance. (Ana Tasrijah Jannah and Denok Setiawati, 2019) The characteristics of bullying behavior that often occur among Bengkulu city students are inviting other people to stay away from, slandering, and alienating someone. Based on research results, cases with behavioral characteristics like this tend to occur in female students. Based on data obtained by the school, cases like this often happen in SMPIT Iqra' Bengkulu City.

Several forms and characteristics of bullying behaviour among students have resulted in complaints being made to institutions and agencies involved in child protection. Based on the results of interviews, the number of bullying cases reported to the Bengkulu Province PUPA Foundation in 2023 was recorded as 5 (five) verbal bullying complaints. Characteristics of bullying behavior that have been reported to the Bengkulu Province PUPA Foundation include teasing, beatings, blackmail, beatings, and inciting other friends to do something.

Mrs. Ermawati also announced this as Chair UPTD PPA of DP3AP2KB Bengkulu City. Based on the results of interviews, ten bullying cases were recorded and reported to DP3AP2KB in 2023, with four female and six male victims. This has increased quite significantly because, in 2022, only one case was reported to DP3AP2KB Bengkulu City.

Thus, it can be concluded that based on this data, the forms of bullying that often occur among Bengkulu City students are in line with Coloroso's opinion, which divides forms of

bullying into three categories: verbal, physical, and relational. Meanwhile, other forms of bullying, such as cyberbullying, racial bullying, and sexual bullying, rarely occur, especially in the sample in this study.

### **Factors That Cause Bullying Among Students in Bengkulu City By Perspective of Differential Association**

Based on the results of distributing questionnaires, it was found that the factors causing bullying among Bengkulu city students tend to be based on several things, including:

#### **1. Lack of parental attention and supervision towards children.**

Research conducted in nine schools, foundations, and departments working in child protection found that parents have a crucial and important role in shaping children's behavior. Children tend to spend their time at home, so their behavior will tend to be formed from the behavior of their environment at home.

Some cases of bullying happen due to a lack of parental attention and supervision in supervising their children's social interactions outside the home environment, so it is not uncommon for children to make mistakes in their relationships and learn criminal behavior from their relationships.

Based on the research results, the factor causing bullying in several Bengkulu city schools is the formation of a gang or group of friends. This friendship group often has a bad impact on children; for example, it often incites other friends to stay away from someone; even if a child has a problem with someone, it is not uncommon for this behavior to result in being beaten up because this is caused by being provoked and supported by their playing group friends.

Suppose we connect to the propositions in differential association theory. In that case, these factors align with propositions two and three, which state that criminal behavior is learned through interactions with communication partners and through the behavior of groups or individuals who have intimate relationships. In these cases, behavior and information related to bullying tend to be obtained from the environment they meet and communicate with every day, namely their gang friends or play groups.

#### **2. Environmental Influence**

The environment significantly influences how a person behaves. In the case of bullying, a person sometimes carries out bullying behavior based on instigation and support from their environment to carry out this behavior.

In a school environment at the elementary school level, someone carries out bullying behavior because there is a gang leader who has power and is feared by other classmates and then incites someone to stay away from the victim accompanied by threats if they do not comply with his wishes.

Not only the school environment, home has the most significant impact on the occurrence of bullying behavior. Students still classified as children tend to learn and duplicate someone's behavior. It is not uncommon in cases of bullying for a child to become violent because he is treated first by his parents at home and tends to imitate this behavior and then does it at school.

#### **3. There is a specific motive, encouragement, or attitude that give rise to the bullying behavior.**

Certain motives, incentives, or attitudes that can give rise to bullying behavior among students in the city of Bengkulu are related to first receiving the bullying behavior, then responding to it to give satisfaction to oneself because they feel hurt and want to take revenge and to teach the perpetrator a lesson.

Causal factors like this tend to be the most frequent causes of someone carrying out bullying behavior. If we are related to the propositions in differential association theory, the proposition that is in line with these causes is the fourth proposition. Criminal behavior is studied through (a) techniques in carrying it out, ranging from complex to simple, and (b) certain motives, drives, and attitudes that cause a person to commit a criminal act.

## CONCLUSION

Forms and characteristics of bullying behavior that often occur among Bengkulu City students include:

1. Verbal bullying includes calling another student with rude nicknames, making things funny or making fun of him by hurting him, threatening or forcing him to do something he doesn't want to do, and calling their parents names.
2. Relational bullying is like inviting other people to stay away from, slandering, and alienating someone
3. Physical bullying includes hitting, kicking, pushing someone, trapping and locking them in a room, threatening to do what they want, and forcing someone to give them money or belongings.

The factors causing bullying among Bengkulu city students from the perspective of differential association theory are influenced by several factors, including:

1. Lack of attention and supervision from parents towards children
2. Environmental influences, such as characteristics of the area of residence that influence children's attitudes and behavior, as well as gangs or friendship circles that impact children's behavior.
3. Certain motives, drives, or attitudes give rise to bullying behavior

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