

# Bullying Victimization in Elementary School Students in Bandung City

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**Abstract**—Bullying is a severe problem in Indonesia. West Java has a higher rate of bullying cases, where Bandung City is the highest rating among other districts in West Java. This study aims to explore school bullying in Bandung City from the perspective of the bullied students. This study will help to get a better understanding of the reasons students being bullied, locations of bullying incidents in school, and to whom students reported being bullied at schools. This article hopefully will contribute to helping stop bullying at school. Samples of this study were elementary school students age 10-14 year-olds (N = 329; 46.2% boys; 53.8% girls). Samples were chosen randomly using a stratified cluster random sampling technique. Instruments used in this study were from Children's Worlds Survey, which have been adapted into Indonesian. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. All calculations were done with SPSS version 23. Results showed that physical condition and appearance are the reasons for girls being bullied while being well-known at school and religion are the reasons for boys being bullied. Bullying incidents mostly happen in the classroom and the school corridor. Students were preferring to tell parents about being bullied at school rather than telling the teacher.

**Keywords:** *bullying, children, elementary school, Bandung City, victimisation*

## I. INTRODUCTION

In 1972, Olweus defined bullying as an individual or a group of harassing, teasing, or pestering another person [1]. Olweus explained three criteria of bullying: first, it is an aggressive behavior; second, which is carried out repeatedly and over time; third, in the context of an interpersonal relationship characterized by an imbalance of power [2]. There are three types of bullying, which are physical bullying, verbal bullying, and psychological bullying [3].

Bullying is a severe problem that children worldwide have been facing on. The Global School-based Student Health Survey and Health Behaviour in School-aged Children, which involved 144 countries and territories, revealed that 16.1% of children have experienced being bullied physically [4].

Bullying has also been a serious problem for Indonesian children. Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) in 2011 which involved 46 countries showed that 55% of Indonesian children aged 11 to 15 years old were bullied at school [5]. The Global School-Based Health Survey in 2015

revealed that 32% of Indonesian students aged 13 to 17 had experienced physical violence, and 20% have been bullied in their school [6]. This result was considered as one of the highest numbers in Asia. Children's Worlds Survey in Indonesia revealed that 52.5% of elementary students had been bullied physically by other children at school at least once in the past month. 60.6% had been bullied verbally, and 49.6% had been bullied psychologically [3]. Bandung City is one of the districts in West Java that has the highest rate of bullying cases on elementary school students [3].

Several studies revealed that bullying harms children's mental health disorders [7-8]. Being victimization of bullying increased depression [9-10], increased suicidal ideation [11-16], lower academic achievement [17-18], and adverse impacts on children's physical health [19]. These studies showed how serious being victimization of bullying affected children's life. Being bullying victimization lower children's subjective well-being [20-22]. Some studies even revealed the effect of bullying on children's later life [7]. Bullying victims reported having psychosomatic and depression later in life [23], antisocial personality disorder, anxiety, panic disorder, and suicidality [7].

Since bullying affected children's mental health, it is important to stop bullying and help our children from being victimized. Therefore, this study aims to explore bullying victimization in elementary school students in Bandung City to get a better understanding of the incidents. This article will describe descriptive data of bullying incidents by age and gender. This article also will explain the reasons for students being bullied, locations of a bullying incident in school, and to whom students reported that they were bullied at schools. This article hopefully will increase awareness among parents, teachers, and researchers about bullying victimization, so that parents and teachers would be able to prevent bullying incidents in school.

## II. METHOD

### A. Sampling Technique

Sampling was designed to obtain a representative sample of elementary school students in Bandung City, West Java, Indonesia. The sampling procedure was clustered - schools being the sampling unit -, stratified by the rank of the public

and private schools and by the rank of the religious and non-religious schools. Participants were elementary school students (N=814) from Grades 4, 5, and 6. After database cleaning and depuration, as explained in the next section, the final pooled sample was N = 329. Details of the final sample are presented in Table 1.

TABLE I. SAMPLE CHARACTERISTIC

	Boys	Girls	Total
10-year-olds	63	81	144
11-year-olds	50	58	108
12-year-olds	31	34	65
13-year-olds	7	4	11
14-year-olds	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>329</b>

**B. Data Depuration**

Depuration procedure of this study followed three steps. First, cases with incomplete questionnaires were deleted. Second, students who did not answer whether they were victims or not were also deleted. Five students have been deleted from the database. Therefore, from 814 students who participated, only 809 students who stayed in the databased. Third, since analysis only focuses on bullying victimization, students who perpetrators and not bullying victims were not included in the data analysis. Therefore, the final sample was only 329 students who analyzed on this study.

**C. Ethical Clearance**

The ethical committee at Universitas Padjadjaran, Bandung approved conducting a research project with elementary school students. The research team also has permission from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Religion at the district level of Bandung City to collect data in 11 schools randomly chosen that agreed to participate. Written parents' consent was obtained. Children also were informed that the data would treat confidentially, and they were free to answer or not answer the questions.

**D. Questionnaires**

Questionnaires from the Children's Worlds Survey have been used in this study. Questionnaires asked about school bullying incidents (physical, verbal, and psychological) [3] which has been translated into Indonesian [24]. Children also answered the questions about the reasons being bullied, the location being bullied at school, and to whom they reported when they were bullied by other students.

**III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

TABLE II. DESCRIPTIVE DATA OF BULLYING BY AGE

		10 y.o.	11 y.o.	12 y.o.	13 y.o.	14 y.o.	TOTAL
How often being hit by other children at school	Never	35	27	11	3	0	76
	%	24.8	26.2	18.0	27.3	0	24.0
	> 3 times	106	76	50	8	1	241
	%	75.2	73.8	82.0	72.7	100	76.0
<b>Total</b>		141	103	61	11	1	317

Table 2. Cont.

How often called unkind names by other children at school	Never	19	13	7	2	0	<b>41</b>
	%	13.4	12.4	10.9	18.2	0	<b>12.7</b>
	> 3 times	123	92	57	9	1	<b>282</b>
	%	86.6	87.6	89.1	81.8	100	<b>87.3</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>142</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>323</b>
How often left out by other children in class	Never	22	24	24	4	0	<b>74</b>
	%	15.7	22.6	39.3	36.4	0	<b>23.2</b>
	> 3 times	118	82	37	7	1	<b>245</b>
	%	84.3	77.4	60.7	63.6	100	<b>76.8</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>140</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>319</b>

Table 2 showed that bullying incidents were quite frequent happened in the five age groups for physical, verbal, and psychological bullying. Being left out by other children in class occurred more prevalent in the 10-year-olds group, while being hit and being called unkind names by other children at school more frequent in 12-year-olds group. Being called unkind names is the most frequent bullying incident compare to other bullying types. There were in total is 323 (98.18%) students reported being called unkind names. This result is in line with a study by Borualogo and Casas [22] using a representative sample from West Java in the third wave of Children's World Survey in Indonesia.

TABLE III. DESCRIPTIVE DATA OF BULLYING BY GENDER

		Girls	Boys	TOTAL
How often being hit by other children at school	Never	55	21	<b>76</b>
	%	32.7	14.1	<b>24.0</b>
	> 3 times	113	128	<b>241</b>
	%	67.3	85.9	<b>76</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>168</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>317</b>
How often called unkind names by other children at school	Never	21	20	<b>41</b>
	%	12.0	13.5	<b>12.7</b>
	> 3 times	154	128	<b>282</b>
	%	88.0	86.5	<b>87.3</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>175</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>323</b>
How often left out by other children in class	Never	33	41	<b>74</b>
	%	19.4	27.5	<b>23.2</b>
	> 3 times	137	108	<b>245</b>
	%	80.6	72.5	<b>76.8</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>170</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>319</b>

Table 3 showed that more boys being hit more than three times by other children at school compare to girls. While girls were more frequently victimization of psychological bullying and verbal bullying.

These results are in line with other studies on school bullying. Boys tend to be more overt to express their aggressive behavior towards other boys [25-27] while girls engage in a more relational [25] and indirect aggression [26]. Girls were more likely to be passive victims [28]. These results explain why girls experienced more frequent psychological and verbal bullying at school, while boys experienced more frequent physical bullying at school.

**TABLE IV. THE REASONS BEING BULLIED**

		<b>Girls</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Total</b>
Physical condition	Count	90	63	153
	%	58.8	41.2	100
Appearance and dress/clothes	Count	41	30	71
	%	57.7	42.3	100
Physical disabilities	Count	7	10	17
	%	41.2	58.8	100
Behaviour consider ill-mannered	Count	40	41	81
	%	49.4	50.6	100
Got highest score in school	Count	50	41	91
	%	54.9	45.1	100
Got lowest score in school	Count	48	34	82
	%	58.5	41.5	100
Parents are poor financially	Count	24	25	49
	%	49.0	51.0	100
Parents are rich financially	Count	18	18	36
	%	50	50	100
The origin of tribe/culture	Count	27	27	54
	%	50	50	100
Religion	Count	19	28	47
	%	40.4	59.6	100
Being famous (well-known)	Count	8	15	23
	%	34.8	65.2	100
Being liked by teachers	Count	42	34	76
	%	55.3	44.7	100

**TABLE V. LOCATION OF BULLYING INCIDENTS**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>%</b>
Classroom	247	76.2
School corridor/outside of the class	185	56.2
In front of the school/outside of the school	175	53.4
School yard	159	48.3
Canteen	88	26.7
Rest room/toilet	38	11.6

Table 4 showed different reasons for boys and girls being bullied. Girls reported that they were bullied most likely because of their physical condition and their appearance. Physical condition including the color of the skin, the hair condition, being pretty or not. Appearance, including their clothes, shoes, and bags. Boys reported that they were bullied most likely because of their physical disabilities. These results are in line with other studies stated that bully-victims usually being physically weaker than their peers [29]. Individuals with disabilities are also at risk of being bullied [30-31].

Table 4 also showed there are more girls reported being bullied because of their academic achievement, whether getting the highest or the lowest scores in class compare to boys. These results are in line with Olweus' statement [29] that students who are having high or low academic achievement are one of the characteristics of bully-victims.

Economic status can also put individuals at high risk of bullying victimization. Several studies showed that lower economic status leads individuals to be bullied [32]. In this study, both economic status (lower and high) are also the reason for students being bullied at school. The incidents are quite the same among both boys and girls.

Another reason that girls also reported they were bullied because they were liked by teachers. Mostly boys (65.2%) also reported that the main reason they were bullied was that they were famous (well-known) in school. Boys also reported that they were bullied because of their religion. For boys and girls, behavior considers ill-mannered and the origin of culture are also the reasons they were bullied. This condition explained about school climate in where students interact with teachers and other students at school. Teachers need to take this into account. Teachers have to interact with all students without discriminating based on like or dislike. Teachers also need to pay more attention to children who consider ill-mannered by other students and teach them to behave following school rules.

Table 5 showed that bullying mostly happened in the classroom (76.2%) and the school corridor (56.2%). Bullying also happened outside of the school (53.4%), in the schoolyard (48.3%), in the canteen (26.7%), and in the toilet (11.6%). These results shall be taken into account. Teachers shall be aware that bullying might happen in the classroom while teachers are there. Teachers need to pay more attention to the possibilities of bullying incidents in the classroom, especially when the learning process is running in the classroom. Other studies showed that the prevalence of being mocking other students at school, raising the possibilities of bullying incidents happen in the classroom [33]. This is in line with these findings, where students might mocking other students in the class that then ended up being bullied.

**TABLE VI. TO WHOM CHILDREN TELL ABOUT BEING A VICTIM**

	<b>Girls</b>		<b>Boys</b>	
	<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>
Friends	95	53.7	72	47.7
Parents	103	58.2	74	48.7
Teachers	82	46.3	70	46.4

Table 6 showed that boys and girls were preferring to tell parents about being a victim of bullying at school. Teachers were least chosen by both groups of gender to tell bullying incident which students experienced at school. These are interesting findings. Although the incidents happened at school, students decided to say to parents rather than to tell teachers. This condition might be because students do not feel comfortable enough to report the bullying incidents to teachers. Teacher's involvement is one of the important aspects of the school climate. Teachers can build the school climate to prevent bullying [34]. Teachers who perceive bullying as normative behavior will make students believe that bullying is accepted. Teachers who were letting students mocking other students in the class will make students aware that teachers do not concern about bullying. Therefore, students do not tell teachers when they were victimized by other students. Another study also showed that victims have a positive relationship with parents [28]. Therefore, victims feel more comfortable to tell parents about their bullying incidents. Table 5 also showed more girls who chose friends to share about being victimization at school compare to boys.

For future study, it is an interesting idea to test the relationship between teachers and students at school, as well as the relationship between parents and students, and among students at school in the contribution of bullying incidents at school.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Bullying is severe problem that need to be taken into account and prevent raising the incidents. Being called unkind names by other children at school is the most frequent bullying incidents among elementary students in Bandung City. Boys most likely being victimized physically, while girls being victimized psychologically and verbally.

Having limitations and differences in physical condition (e.g., weak, the skin color) as well as having physical disabilities are reasons for girls and boys being bullied. Having the lowest or the highest academic scores are also reasons for girls being bullied. Boys most likely being bullied because they were famous or well-known at school.

Having a good relationship with teachers is also a reason for children being bullied. Other students feel that teachers are not neutral in class and focus on only students that teachers like.

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