

Impact of Bullying on Social-Emotional Behavior in Elementary School Students: A Qualitative Case Study at SD Negeri 115 Palembang, Indonesia

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Abstract: This qualitative case study analyzes the impact of bullying on social-emotional behavior among students (N=11) at SD Negeri 115 Palembang, Indonesia, using observation, interviews, and documentation (March–June 2025). The findings reveal significant social and emotional consequences, including social withdrawal, aggression, reduced self-confidence, isolation, disrupted class dynamics, and increased dropout risk. Emotionally, students exhibited anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, anger, stress, and sleep disturbances. Novel solutions were identified, such as counseling for emotional support, fostering a secure school environment, promoting positive peer interactions, forming anti-bullying task forces, integrating character education, involving parents in recovery, and implementing regular monitoring. The study contributes to the literature by highlighting the multifaceted effects of bullying in an Indonesian elementary school context and offering actionable strategies for mitigation. Practical implications include the adoption of holistic anti-bullying programs that combine psychosocial support, peer involvement, and parental engagement to restore students' social-emotional well-being. This research underscores the urgency of institutional interventions to create safer, more inclusive educational environments.

Keywords: Impact of Bullying, Social Emotional Behavior, Social Interaction

A. Introduction

Bullying is a social phenomenon that has become a global concern in recent decades. This action includes aggressive behavior that is intentional and repeated and involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. The forms of bullying vary from physical, verbal, and emotional to cyberbullying, which has developed along with technological advances. Data shows that bullying can occur in various environments, such as schools, workplaces, and even social media (Manuri & Setyawati, 2023). This phenomenon occurs in all countries, including Indonesia, and is a serious problem. Bullying cases are very worrying because they can result in permanent disability or death for victims and are always broadcast through

announcements in the mass media (Ameen & Faye, 2024). In fact, we are often surprised when bullying information circulates and is published directly by the perpetrators through social media. It is not uncommon for cases to result in death due to acts of violence and cases where victims are threatened with suicidal thoughts because they feel pressured (Lodge, 2020).

In Indonesia, bullying has become a serious issue, especially among children and adolescents. A survey by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KPPPA) shows that cases of violence in schools, including bullying, are still high. Based on data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) throughout 2022, there were 226 cases of physical and psychological violence, including bullying, and this number will continue to increase until now (BBC News Indonesia, July 22, 2022). In addition, in 2018, the Program for International Students Assessment (PISA) released research data showing that up to 41.1% of students in Indonesia admitted to having been bullied (Hanani & Yudistira, 2024). Children's social and emotional changes can be influenced by various factors, such as social interactions at school, cognitive development, personal experiences, and family environment. Parents play an important role in providing guidance and facilities for students. Bullying is also a juvenile delinquent behavior caused by the perpetrator's aggression in the community, making the victim feel uncomfortable because of repeated incidents (Falla et al., 2022), people who commit harassment generally have a hyperactive, manipulative attitude; like to move; often whine; cry a lot; are temperamental; demand attention; are disobedient; like to challenge; like to destroy; and tend to want to control others. Bullying can occur not only through words but also in ways that are not spoken, such as teasing, speaking harshly, inviting others to not be friends with the victim, and stealing friends' belongings (Sartini & Ismail, 2025; Sehrish et al., 2021).

In this situation, bullying behavior that often occurs is teasing and making fun of each other, which may start as a joke but can end up being serious. In addition to verbal and non-verbal bullying, physical violence can also occur, such as hitting, pinching, or playing rough. In schools, it is important for schools to prevent violence and bullying by teachers or peers (Sainz & Martín-Moya, 2023). Victims of bullying are prone to psychological problems, such as depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and even the desire to end their lives (Balluerka et al., 2023). In addition, the impact of bullying is not only felt by the victim but also by the perpetrator and bystander, who can experience emotional and social disorders (Camodeca & Nava, 2022; Trach & Hymel, 2020). This condition is further exacerbated by the lack of effective interventions to prevent and deal with bullying in various environments.

Another study by Harmiasih et al. (2023), their research related to the impact of bullying on children's social emotions. This study was conducted because of bullying that occurred in children in the school environment and society. This study aims to see how bullying affects children's social-emotional development. The results of the

study show that bullying can affect the social-emotional behavior of elementary school students. Research by Munawarah (2022) shows that bullying can affect children's social development. How bullying affects the emotional development of early childhood. The study aims to determine the effects of bullying at a young age on children's social-emotional development. The results of bullying can hinder children's social-emotional development, make children more isolated and afraid to socialize, and often make them feel afraid. Children's social-emotional development is influenced by environmental treatment (Tamblyn et al., 2023).

School is a place where children interact and learn with peers and learn to appreciate differences such as socio-economic situations, physical conditions, and intelligence levels that can cause bullying. Bullying can be aggressive behavior carried out by someone who feels powerful over those who are considered weak, is done repeatedly, and makes it difficult for victims to protect themselves (Almira & Marheni, 2021). Some types of bullying include verbal bullying, such as teasing, criticizing, insinuating, and spreading gossip to friends (Sa'diyah, 2024). Types of physical abuse include punching, kicking, pinching, and tripping. While non-verbal abuse includes threats, unusual behavior, prohibiting someone from joining a group, and manipulating friendships (Fintari, 2024). Although the impact of bullying has been widely studied, the approach to understanding the causal factors, mechanisms, and solutions to reduce its impact still requires further study. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the impact of bullying holistically, covering psychological, social, and academic aspects on victims, as well as its implications for long-term life. Thus, the results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of more effective intervention strategies to overcome bullying in Indonesia (Fadillah et al., 2022).

The problem of bullying or bullying among students has become an increasingly worrying issue in recent years (Grinshteyn et al., 2021). Bullying behavior does not only occur in developed countries but is also rampant in Indonesia, including in elementary school environments. Repeated bullying can have a significant negative impact on the psychological and social-emotional development of victims (Sintasari et al., 2024). Based on the results of initial observations conducted by us at SDN 115 Palembang, this bullying behavior still occurs in the school environment involving students. The results of these observations indicate that the bullying behavior that occurs among students is physical bullying, verbal bullying, and cyberbullying. The school has taken firm action so that this bullying behavior can be resolved and does not happen again in the school environment. In addition, based on the results of interviews conducted with the principal of SDN 115 Palembang, it was found that bullying practices had indeed occurred at the school. To overcome this so that it does not happen again, the school has taken action, one of which is by providing services to students involved in the bullying behavior, both as perpetrators and victims of bullying.

Elementary School 115 Palembang, as one of the elementary education institutions in the city of Palembang, is not free from bullying problems. Bullying behavior that occurs in this school can have a negative impact on the social-emotional behavior of students. Bullying victims tend to experience decreased self-confidence, social isolation, anxiety, depression, and aggressive behavior as a form of response to the unpleasant treatment they receive. Seeing the importance of this problem, this study aims to analyze the impact of bullying on the social and emotional behavior of students at Elementary School 115 Palembang. By understanding the impacts that arise, it is hoped that it can contribute to efforts to prevent and handle bullying in the school environment. This study focuses more on how bullying impacts the social-emotional behavior of students at Elementary School 115 Palembang. Meanwhile, the sub-focus of the research conducted by us is the types of bullying that occur in SD Negeri 115 Palembang, the impact of bullying on the social behavior of students in SD Negeri 115 Palembang, and the impact of bullying on the emotional behavior of students in SD Negeri 115 Palembang. Based on the description above, we are motivated to conduct a study entitled "Analysis of the Impact of Bullying on the Social Emotional Behavior of Students in SDN 115 Palembang."

B. Methods

The research method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive research method with a case study type. This research was conducted at SDN 115 Palembang. This research was conducted from March to June 2025. In this study, informants were determined using a purposive technique, which was selected with certain considerations and objectives, who truly mastered an object that we were studying. This study will examine the analysis of the impact of bullying on the social-emotional behavior of students at SDN 115 Palembang. In addition to studying the principal, we studied 5 teachers who worked at SDN 115 Palembang, as well as 5 students who attended SDN 115 Palembang, so that the number of informants for this study was 11 people. Determining the number of informants needed in this study was based on considerations of the limitations of our abilities, research time, and costs in implementing this research. This research is a descriptive study with a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is research that aims to describe events or phenomena that occur in the field and present data systematically, factually, and accurately regarding the facts or phenomena that occur in the field. The data used in this study were obtained from two types of data sources, namely primary data and secondary data. The data collection methods used were observation, interviews, and documentation. To analyze and check the validity of the data, the technique used was the data triangulation technique. The data triangulation technique is carried out by comparing and checking the degree of informant confidence in the impact of bullying on students' social and emotional behavior. The three data analysis techniques used were data reduction, data presentation, and data verification.

C. Results and Discussion

The Impact of Bullying on the Social Behavior of Students at SD Negeri 115 Palembang

Based on the results of our interview with the principal regarding the impact of bullying on the social behavior of students at SD Negeri 115 Palembang, 1) students withdraw from the environment, tend to be loners, withdraw from their friends, and avoid social interactions, both inside and outside the classroom, and feel afraid or uncomfortable in the school environment because they are worried about being bullied again; 2) Difficulty forming and maintaining social relationships: Students find it difficult to trust peers and others. Students who are victims of bullying feel ostracized and not accepted by their social environment, so they lose their confidence in interacting. 3) Have aggressive or revengeful behavior, experience changes in attitude to become aggressive or reactive, especially if they feel they are not protected by the surrounding environment. Thus, creating a cycle of social violence in schools; 4) Loss of self-confidence in social interactions, experiencing decreased self-confidence, feeling inappropriate, worthless, or ashamed of what they have experienced. As a result, they can be afraid to speak in public, reluctant to ask questions in class, or avoid social roles in school activities; 5) Risk of social isolation and stigma: Students who experience social isolation, whether intentionally or not, feel alienated, which worsens their social and emotional conditions; 6) Disruption of class dynamics, so that solidarity and a sense of togetherness decrease. This can reduce active participation in group learning and damage cooperation between students; 7) Increased risk of dropping out of school or absence or even choosing to drop out of school. Thus, inhibiting social development because they lose the opportunity to learn and develop with their peers; 8) Unhealthy social dependence, because they feel that only they can be trusted. This dependence can be a problem if the relationship is unhealthy or if the friend is also experiencing social pressure.

The results of research conducted by (Armitage, 2021) show that bullying has a negative impact on children, both as perpetrators and as victims of bullying. The impact of bullying on children who become perpetrators is that children tend to have poor empathy and social interaction and tend to have rude behavior, such as hyperactivity towards their surroundings (Salavera et al., 2021; Veronica, 2022). Experiencing mental disorders and mental health issues such as uncontrolled emotions. For children who become victims, they will experience physical and non-physical violence, so they are socially isolated, do not have close friends, do not have good relationships with their parents, and their mental health declines, which can lead to depression and even suicide. Children who are victims of bullying will also experience learning disorders and academic difficulties. One action that can be taken is to provide affection and trust, involve them in positive activities, and provide them with an understanding of the negative impacts of bullying. For this reason, there needs to be cooperation between schools, teachers, and parents to overcome bullying against

children. Meanwhile, the results of research conducted by Febriansyah & Yuningsih (2024) showed that bullying behavior at SMK TI Pembangunan Cimahi was manifested in the form of verbal, physical, and cyberbullying. Bullying is influenced by individual factors, social interaction factors, and family factors. From the family factor, the perpetrators of bullying at SMK-TI come from students who have a broken home family background. Bullying is a serious problem that requires comprehensive intervention and prevention efforts. When compared with the results of this study, there were significant differences: students at SD Negeri 115 Palembang were more likely to experience physical bullying so that it had an impact on their social and emotional behavior. However, whatever form of bullying that occurs in the school environment actually has a physical and psychological impact on the victims and perpetrators, so that to prevent bullying from occurring, the involvement of various parties is needed.

The results of our interviews with the five teachers who were informants for this study regarding the negative social impacts of bullying on students at SD Negeri 115 Palembang were that: 1) Withdrawing from the social environment, victims tend to stay away from friends and avoid interaction because they feel afraid, embarrassed, or insecure. They can choose to be alone during breaks, not participate in group activities, or be reluctant to attend school; 2) It is difficult to build trust because they have been hurt; victims of bullying often have difficulty trusting others. They become suspicious of other people's intentions and are afraid of being betrayed again; 3) Social isolation occurs intentionally, such as being ostracized by their peers or the victims themselves who distance themselves from the bullies. So that this causes a deep sense of loneliness experienced by the perpetrators and triggers the emergence of other emotional problems such as stress or depression that interfere with the psychological state of the victims of bullying; 4) Being the target of negative stereotypes or labels.

The Impact of Bullying on Students' Emotions at SD Negeri 115 Palembang

Based on the results of our interview with the teacher who was the informant for this study, the emotional impact of bullying on students is 1) Having a sense of guilt and regret for bullying the perpetrator. If he begins to realize that his actions hurt others, he can experience guilt or inner conflict. However, this feeling is often covered by shame or prestige, so it is not shown openly; 2) Difficulty controlling his emotions so that he is easily angry, frustrated, and feels uncomfortable. This condition will interfere with his physical and mental health so that it is possible that he will have a rude nature towards others; 3) Having difficulty in establishing social relationships. Often, bullies experience social rejection from peers after their behavior is known. They can lose the trust of friends, be punished by the school, or even be shunned; 4) Formation of negative characters such as lack of empathy, considering violence as normal, difficulty in establishing good relationships with peers, being ostracized from social interactions, and potential to commit greater criminal acts.

To support the results of our interview with 5 teachers who were informants for this study, the perpetrators also conducted interviews with 5 students who were informants for this study. The conclusion of the results of the interviews with the five informants for this study stated that the negative emotional impacts they felt due to experiencing bullying were very diverse. We can summarize as follows: 1) Having excessive anxiety and high depression. They may be afraid to go to school or be in a social environment. This anxiety can develop into depression, which interferes with their social and emotional quality of life; 2) Experiencing decreased self-esteem, victims feel worthless or not good enough. The harsh words and harassment they receive can damage their self-confidence, causing them to feel inferior or ashamed of themselves; 3) difficulty in establishing social relationships, so they isolate themselves or feel uncomfortable interacting with peers, making it difficult to form healthy social relationships; 4) feeling uncomfortable because they do not have a safe place in the school environment or even at home, which worsens their emotional condition; 5) Thinking about suicide because they feel so hopeless and isolated that they have thoughts of harming themselves or even committing suicide. This is one of the most serious emotional consequences that can arise from bullying. 6) Experiencing a decline in academic performance can affect students' concentration and motivation to learn. As a result, their academic performance can decline because they have difficulty focusing on lessons or schoolwork; 7) feeling ashamed and humiliated, especially if they are embarrassed in front of their friends. This can affect their view of themselves and their relationships with others.

The results of a study conducted by Mustika (2024) showed that the dominant types of bullying that occurred at SD Negeri 013 Ujungbatu were verbal bullying, such as mocking actions that had an impact on children's self-confidence, trust, and sympathy; slanderous actions that had an impact on children's self-confidence, trust, and sympathy; and non-verbal bullying, such as showing odd attitudes and threatening actions, which had an impact on the social-emotional behavior of students at SD Negeri 013 Ujungbatu, namely reduced victim self-confidence, reduced victim trust in the perpetrator, reduced victim sympathy for the perpetrator, anger, sadness, and shame. The results of a study conducted by Mustika (2024), when compared with the results of this study regarding the impact of bullying on emotional student behavior, showed significant differences. Students who were victims of emotional bullying at SD Negeri 115 Palembang experienced several problems, such as having excessive fear and anxiety, losing enthusiasm, feeling worthless, feeling inferior and unappreciated, not daring to express opinions, or feeling like failures before trying. Easily angered or offended and having unstable emotions, they have thoughts of ending their lives because they feel that no one cares or are unable to cope with the emotional suffering they experience. This is the most severe and serious impact and requires

Solutions to the Negative Impact of Bullying on the Social and Emotional Behavior of Students at SD Negeri 115 Palembang

The results of our interview with the principal regarding solutions to overcome the negative impacts on the social and emotional aspects of bullying perpetrators are 1) increasing student awareness and providing education about bullying by holding training and seminars for students, teachers, and parents about the impacts of bullying, how to identify it, and how to prevent it, and increasing understanding of bullying is expected to minimize the occurrence of bullying behavior. Implementing a social-emotional education program on emotional management and healthy communication in the school curriculum. This helps students to understand and appreciate the feelings of others; 2) Creating a safe and supportive environment by building an inclusive culture in a friendly atmosphere, where every individual is valued and accepted regardless of differences. Programs that support diversity and inclusion can help reduce feelings of isolation in students. Providing counseling services for victims of bullying and perpetrators to help them overcome emotional and social problems that may cause or be influenced by bullying; 3) a restorative approach by involving victims and perpetrators in mediation sessions facilitated by counselors or teachers, where they can talk about the impact of the behavior. The goal of this approach is to repair relationships and give perpetrators the opportunity to understand their mistakes and correct them and provide opportunities for bullies to take positive action, such as apologizing directly to the victim and taking steps to improve their behavior;

Next, 4) Strengthening social and emotional skills through programs that teach social skills such as communication skills, empathy, and constructive conflict resolution can help students avoid bullying behavior and develop healthier relationships. Increasing self-confidence: Providing support to victims to rebuild their self-confidence, either through counseling or extracurricular activities that can help them feel more accepted; 5) implementing policies and taking firm action against bullies, with appropriate sanctions for perpetrators and protection for victims. With clear rules, all parties know the consequences of bullying, training for teachers and staff: Training teachers and school staff to be able to identify and handle bullying early on. They must be sensitive to the signs of students who may be victims or perpetrators of bullying; 6) Building support from parents and the community by being involved in anti-bullying programs at school and being given information on how to support their children in dealing with bullying. Collaboration between schools and parents can strengthen bullying prevention and build partnerships with organizations outside the school, such as social services or psychologists, to provide additional support for students affected by bullying; and 7) Increase access to mental health services for both victims and perpetrators of bullying. This will help students cope with the negative feelings that arise from bullying and reduce the likelihood of long-term impacts such as depression or anxiety, ensuring that each school has trained counselors ready to provide emotional support for students who need it.

The results of research conducted by Harmiasih et al. (2023) found negative impacts of bullying on children's emotional and social development, such as lack of self-confidence, depression, withdrawal, and even ending their lives. Subjects or bullies experience emotions of anger, impatience, and hatred before carrying out bullying. After carrying out bullying, they feel happy and satisfied because they can fight against the pressure they receive. On the other hand, they experience emotions of sadness and depression after carrying out bullying. After carrying out bullying, the perpetrators feel guilty or regretful. The results of this study indicate that the perpetrators' lack of ability to control their emotions is the cause of the perpetrators carrying out bullying. The need for counseling with the right techniques to overcome the emotions of bullies, such as relaxation techniques.

The results of our interviews with the five teachers who were informants regarding solutions to overcome the negative impacts of bullying on the social and emotional behavior of students are as follows: 1) Providing emotional support through counseling and directing victims to consult with BK teachers or school psychologists. Counseling helps students manage trauma, rebuild self-confidence, and overcome fear. This process should be ongoing and confidential so that students feel safe. 2) Building a sense of safety and support in the school environment. Teachers and school staff need to create a warm, open, and non-judgmental atmosphere. Students need to be reassured that they are not alone and that the school is on the victim's side; 3) encouraging positive social interactions and inviting victims of bullying to participate in group activities, such as extracurricular activities or class projects. This helps them regain social skills, find new friends, and feel accepted again. 4) Involving peers as supporters, forming peer groups or anti-bullying ambassadors who are trained to help victims feel accepted and supported. This approach can be very effective because students tend to be more open with peers of the same age. 5) Providing character education and empathy. All students need to be educated about empathy, tolerance, and mutual respect, both through formal learning and school activities. Teachers can conduct class discussions, case studies, or role plays to foster an understanding of the impact of bullying. 6) Involving parents in the recovery process. Teachers and parents need to work together to rebuild children's trust, provide emotional support, and monitor their development at home and school. 7) Regular monitoring and evaluation of guidance and counseling Teachers need to monitor the condition of students after bullying so that they can act quickly if there is a decline in emotional or social conditions. This evaluation also helps to see whether the recovery program that has been carried out has been effective.

The results of previous research conducted by Harmiasih et al. (2023) found that the negative impact of bullying on the emotional and social development of children and how to overcome it is done by the need for counseling with the right techniques to overcome the emotional and social perpetrators of bullying, such as relaxation techniques and integrated guidance with psychiatrists or guidance and counseling teachers. The results of the study conducted by us at SD Negeri 115 Palembang

regarding solutions to the negative impact of bullying on social and emotional behavior were carried out through emotional guidance through counseling, involving BK teachers or psychologists at school; creating a warm, open, and non-judgmental atmosphere; providing education about empathy, tolerance, and mutual respect, both through formal learning and school activities; and supervising and monitoring the development of students at school.

D. Conclusion

The study highlights the profound impact of bullying on the social and emotional behavior of students at SD Negeri 115 Palembang, revealing significant consequences such as social withdrawal, difficulty forming relationships, aggression, low self-esteem, isolation, disrupted class dynamics, and increased dropout risk. Emotionally, victims experience excessive fear, anxiety, depression, prolonged sadness, low self-confidence, emotional instability, stress, and sleep disturbances. To mitigate these effects, the study proposes several solutions, including providing confidential emotional support through counseling, fostering a safe and supportive school environment, encouraging positive social interactions through extracurricular activities, involving peers as anti-bullying ambassadors, integrating character and empathy education, engaging parents in recovery, and conducting periodic monitoring and evaluation. However, further research is needed to explore the long-term effectiveness of these interventions, particularly in different cultural and educational contexts. Future studies should also investigate the role of digital bullying and its unique psychological impacts, as well as the influence of school policies and teacher training in preventing bullying. Additionally, longitudinal research could assess how early interventions affect victims' mental health and academic performance over time. Exploring the perspectives of bullies themselves could also provide insights into prevention strategies. By addressing these gaps, future research can contribute to more comprehensive and sustainable anti-bullying programs, ensuring safer and more supportive learning environments for all students.

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