



EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE OF BULLYING EFFECT ON GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN SOUTH SULAWESI, INDONESIA

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Abstract

Bullying in school In Indonesia has commenced to receive serious attention. Explanation about gender and bullying effect have been offered by many scholars. This recent research has focused on gender differences in bullying effect such as depression and anxiety. It is drawing on quantitative methodological study of bullying effect at 536 students at high school in South Sulawesi Indonesia. It is identified that statistically, bullying effect such as anxiety and depression in Indonesia are significantly different between male and female. Anxiety and depression are the potential effect of bullying. The result documented that there is a significant difference between depression effects of bullying towards gender. Similarly, It is identified to anxiety effect that there is also a significant difference between anxiety effects towards gender. Bullying effects are significantly different in term of gender in South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia.

Keywords: Anxiety, Depression, Gender, Bullying Effect

Abstrak

Bullying di sekolah di Indonesia sudah mulai mendapat perhatian serius. Penjelasan tentang gender dan efek bullying telah banyak ditawarkan oleh para sarjana. Penelitian terbaru ini berfokus pada perbedaan gender dalam efek bullying seperti depresi dan kecemasan. Ini diambil dari studi metodologi kuantitatif tentang efek bullying pada 536 siswa SMA di Sulawesi Selatan Indonesia. Diketahui bahwa secara statistik, efek bullying seperti kecemasan dan depresi di Indonesia berbeda secara signifikan antara laki-laki dan perempuan. Kecemasan dan depresi adalah efek potensial dari bullying. Hasilnya mendokumentasikan bahwa ada perbedaan yang signifikan antara efek depresi bullying terhadap jenis kelamin. Demikian pula, untuk efek kecemasan diidentifikasi bahwa ada juga perbedaan yang signifikan antara efek kecemasan terhadap jenis kelamin. Efek bullying berbeda secara signifikan dalam hal gender di Provinsi Sulawesi Selatan, Indonesia.

Kata kunci: Kecemasan, Depresi, Jenis Kelamin, Bullying Effect

INTRODUCTION

The fact that bullying has deleterious effects is widely known. Craig & Pepler (2007) stated that bullying is real problem for everybody, for bullies, for bullied and for the society where the bullying case happens. The intense media coverage reporting the fatalities resulting from bullying

at school is an alarming sign that should encourage the stakeholders in education to take swift actions to reduce or even to stop it before takes more victims.¹

South Sulawesi is one of the provinces situated in Sulawesi Island. As in other school yards in other parts of the world bullying cases takes place in South Sulawesi schools as well. Probably, the difference is that the cases taking place in South Sulawesi school setting go unreported. The reason for this is that the educational authorities are not aware of bullying. This is because they take bullying as normal behavior. They do not consider it as a serious violence that should be curbed. For them bullying is normal behavior developing in childhood. For example, one of secondary school principal in South Sulawesi commented that in his school there are many students who harass other students. In South Sulawesi context, the effect of bullying behaviors is also prevalent. The major obstacle in safely determine the effects either on students, school or community is the lack of investigation on the issue. Even though care must be exerted in pinpointing a case as the effect of bullying, it safes to assume that among the cases such as, absenteeism, truancy, depression, crime, and low academic achievement which are often found in South Sulawesi School, there must be some caused by bullying.

2. Bullying Effect

Bullying has been explained in slightly different ways. For example, Smith & Brain, (2000) described bullying as an aggressive behavior characterized by prolonged exploitation in opposition to powerless victims². Similarly, Ballard et al. (1999) argued that bullying is repeated violent behavior either verbally or physically toward targets or victims who are always vulnerable to the attacks. On the other hand termed bullying as peer victimization which they defined as “the experience among children of being a target of aggressive behavior of other children who are not sibling or age-mates”³.

McCann (2000) stated that it is crucial to look at the victim deeper when dealing with violence rather than focus on the bully.⁴ The bully thinks violence as the way to get power and control; but the target may argue that violence as the only solution of bullying by others. Therefore, the victim or target should be respected how they are being influenced. Study about victim has differentiated two types of bullying victim, namely passive victim and provocative victim. Passive

¹ Craig, Wendy M., & Pepler, Debra J. (2007). Understanding bullying: from research to practice. *Canadian Psychology*, 48(2). 86-94.

² Smith, P.K., & Brain, P. (2000). Bullying in schools: Lessons from two decades of research. *Aggressive Behavior*, 26, 1-9.

³ Ballard, M., Argus, T., & Remley, T. P.(1999). Bullying and school violence: A proposed prevention program. *National Association of Secondary School Principals. NSSP Bulletin*, 83 (607). 38 - 47.

⁴ McCann, J.T. (2000). A Descriptive Study of Child and Adolescent Obsessional Followers. *Journal of Forensic Sciences*, 45(1), 195-199.

victim tends to counteract to a bullying behavior by withdrawing, weeping, or preventing bullying behavior, meanwhile provocative victims displayed feel anxiety and aggressive behavior.

Victims are characteristically not capable to defend themselves given that they may be outnumbered, have inadequate physical strength, or be less psychologically flexible (Smith et al, 2004)⁵. Both male and female are at equivalent risk of being bullying victim. It is widely accepted that as negative and anti-social behavior bullying has great impacts either on bullies and victims, school and community. This part will cover the possible effect of bullying on those parties based on the current literature in bullying.

2.1 Effects on Victims and Bullies

Research indicated that bullying has negative effects not only on the victims but also the bullies themselves. In general, the negative effects of bullying, as literatures reveal, falls into physical, psychological, social skill, and criminal problems. For example, Nansel et al. (2001) found that the victims of bullying experience negative physical symptoms and psychological negative symptoms such as: anxiety, loneliness, physical and mental disorders, and low level of self esteem⁶. In addition, study by Farrington (1993) revealed that bullying victims might experience psychological disorder such as: anxiety, depression, or phobia, social skill disorder such as family dysfunction and physical problem such as obesity. Moreover, studies by Roberts and Morotti, (2000) revealed that in addition to psychological and physical effects bullying might also impede student academic achievement both bullies and the victims.⁷

Like the victimized children the bullies experience negative impact of bullying as well. Study revealed that bully will be more likely to be involved in alcohol consumption. According to Farrington (1993) even showed more deleterious effect of bullying peers which are “a greater likelihood of engaging in criminal behavior, domestic violence, and substance abuse as adult”. The criminal effect of bullying on bullies is also reported many studies.

However care must be taken in dealing with the fact that sometimes victims and bullies take turn in becoming victims and bullies. In other words, sometimes a child may become a victim of bullying, in other opportunity he or she becomes a bully by perpetrating the bullying acts.

⁵Smith, J.D., Schneider, Barry H., Smith, Peter K., & Ananiadou, K. (2004). The effectiveness of whole-school anti bullying programs: A synthesis of evaluation research. *School Psychology Review*, 33(4), 547-560.

⁶ Nansel, T., Overpeck, M., Pilla, R., Ruan, W., Simons-Morton, B., & Scheidt, P. (2001). Bullying behaviors among US youth: Prevalence and association with psychosocial adjustment. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 285(16), 2094–2100. doi:10.1001/jama.285.16.2094.

⁷ Roberts, W. B., & Morotti, A. A. (2000). The bully as victim: Understanding bully behaviors to increase the effectiveness of interventions in the bully-victim dyad. *Professional School Counseling*, 4, 148-155.

Similarly, a bully is sometime will be in the position of being bullied. However this fact obviously shows that bullying inflicts harmful effects on bullies and victims.

Research proves that students who are bullied have lower self esteem and higher levels of anxiety, stress, depression, and suicidal ideation. Similarly, Hawker and Boulton (2000) also concluded that bullying impact such as depression, anxiety, and lower self esteem are the direct impact which is correlated to victim experience. Moreover, bullying has a detrimental impact on social-emotional and educational lives of students. In addition, a study engaging around 300 students from nine to eleven year olds showed that victims suffer more troubles with social skills compared with non victims.

The problems related with victimization have an impact on school failure. According to Weinholds (1999) in the National School Safety Center report, an approximately 160,000 students let pass the school every day due to feel worry and fear of harassment or intimidation by other students and 10% of students who drop out of school due to repetitive bullying.

Many studies have showed that bullying experiences have detrimental effect on students such as truancy, poor academic achievement, depression, low self esteem, anxiety, and suicide. As impact of victimization, their academic and emotional status becomes unstable (Poteat, 2008). Many studies exposed the connection between bullying and negative academic and psychological outcomes (Beran, 2009).

Over time, students who become victims are more likely to leave school or drop out from the school and result low productivity in employment setting (Carney and Merrell, 2001). In addition, Limber (2002) formulated that bullying as a complex and abusive conduct with potentially injured severe social and mental health both children and adult. The United States Surgeon General also stated that bullying is public health troubles that need serious attention and interference in order to be eliminated (Sprague & Walker, 2005). Thus, the overall impact on the school, there are short term and long term consequences for the students who bully and the victims of bullying.

A student who bullies is someone who frequently hurts another person on purpose. Bullying threatens the social emotional maturity of students because it allows children to accomplish immediate purpose without learning socially suitable behavior to deal with others, resulting in constant maladaptive patterns (Haynie et. al, 2001).

More recently, the Indiana White Paper on Bullying formulated that children who bully are more likely to develop into violent adults while victims of bullying frequently experience from anxiety, low self-esteem, and depression up to adult (Indiana Department of Education, 2003). Similarly, Victims of bullying can experience withdrawal, aggression, and feelings of rejection resulting in both social and academic consequences (Siris & Osterman, 2004). Further, these

students may become detached from adults and peers, have negative attitudes about themselves and others, have difficulty developing positive relationships, and commence to refuse classroom ethics.

2.2 Effects on School

In school level, bullying poses a great danger as well. Unfortunately study focused on negative effect of bullying on school is very few. This results in the limited references that can be used to explore how bullying impacts on school community. However there are some studies, among the very few, that can be used as references. For example, research by Hawker and Boulton (2000) revealed that in the long term bullying can cause school problems such as truancy and school dropping out such as playing truancy and dropping out from school is the result of fearing the school. In addition, a survey conducted by National Institute of Child Health and Human Development on USA (Nansel et. al, 2001) showed that bullying may hamper good relationship among classmates. At more alarming level, pervasive bullying behavior at school can trigger a school wide fear of being the next victim which leads to the reduction of feeling of safety among the students.⁶ Correspondingly, Heydenberk et. al., (2006) gave an interesting neurological analysis on how a reduced sense of safety at school which results from being bullied impacts on students learning activity as follows: “A neurological response to fear, often termed hijacking, may prevent many students from learning in a threatening school environment. Active fear and stress reduce activity in the cerebral cortex-the area of the brain needed to complete complex cognitive tasks”.⁸

2.3 Effects on Community

Research singling out on negative effects of bullying on wider community, like those conducted on school community, are rare. Therefore it is quite difficult to find enough references on the negative effects of bullying on wider community. However, findings in some studies, mostly about the criminal effect of bullying behaviors, shed light on this issue. For example, Craig et. al. (2007) argued that when entering their adulthood phase, bullies will be more likely to be involved in substance use, domestic violence and other domestic crime. In addition, Smith et. al, (2005) found that the most frightening effect of bullying is the likelihood of violence and delinquency such as being aggressive toward boyfriends or girlfriends which is a community crime. Some studies reported that bullying problem may lead to social problems such as: fighting, vandalism, stealing

⁶ Nansel, T., Overpeck, M., Pilla, R., Ruan, W., Simons-Morton, B., & Scheidt, P. (2001). Bullying behaviors among US youth: Prevalence and association with psychosocial adjustment. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 285(16), 2094–2100. doi:10.1001/jama.285.16.2094.

⁸ Heydenberk, R., Heydenberk, W., & Tzenova, V. (2006) Conflict Resolution and Bully Prevention: Skills for School Success, *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, 24(1). 55-69.

and weapon carrying and getting into trouble with police (Rigby & Cox, 1996).⁹ In another study, sexual and workplace and harassment are also reported as the results of bullying behaviors (Craig et. al, 2007).¹⁰

If analyzed deeply, bullying effects either on individuals, school, and community, are intertwined. For example, schoolchildren who are aggressive in nature will be more likely to frighten his/her schoolmates at school which will lead to their classmates' feeling unsafe in studying. In community setting those violent children will cause trouble by conducting crime. Likewise, in the community where the bullying behaviors prevail, other children will see more aggressive and violent behavior. This will probably turn their behavior to be aggressive and violent which will then be new spawn of bullies.

3. Bullying Effect and Gender

There are many studies have identified the difference of bullying type in gender perspective. However, Studies of bullying effect in gender perspective are limited in terms of well being effect. This recent study investigates how gender may differ in effect of bullying such as depression and anxiety. In psychological issue, some scholars argue that gender is still emerging consistently in aggression behavior (Pellegrini, 2002).¹¹

In some respect, anxiety and depression are inseparable effect of bullying. In terms of gender, it is identified that depression is the more common effect of bullying among boys and girls victims. However, more specifically the female experience higher level of depression compare to male. Anxiety is also considered as effect of bullying and it is acknowledged that research about anxiety and bullying is also limited and there is inconsistency among studies about anxiety and gender in victims' perspective (Espelage et. al, 2004).¹²

RESEARCH METHOD

Research is an important way to get new facts or additional information. In this study, methodology is necessarily needed to make the research easy to conduct or to be effective. Creswell (2014) states that quantitative research identifies a research problem based on trends in the fields or on the need to explain why something occurs. The statement above shows that quantitative research

⁹ Rigby, K., and Cox, I. K. (1996). The contributions of bullying and low self-esteem to acts of delinquency among Australian teenagers. *Personality and Individual Differences* 21, 4, pp 609-612.

¹⁰ Craig, Wendy M., & Pepler, Debra J. (2007). Understanding bullying: from research to practice. *Canadian Psychology*, 48(2). 86-94.

¹¹ Pellegrini, A. D. (2002). Bullying, Victimization and Sexual harassment during the transition to middle school. *Educational Psychologist*, 37(3), 151-163.

¹² Espelage, D.L., Mebane, S.E., Swearer. S.M. (2004). Gender differences in Bullying: Moving beyond mean level differences. *Bullying in American school ;A Social Ecological Perspective on prevention and intervention*. United States.

is the systematic empirical investigation of observable phenomena via statistical, mathematical, or computational techniques.

The study employed quantitative research method by using questionnaire to collect data from the respondents. The research study for the research is quantitative design. This quantitative study will use questionnaire as survey design to describe the bullying behavior phenomena on students in South Sulawesi Province. The quantitative goal is getting the relationship among variable. Azizi (2007) revealed that descriptive statistics is used to summarize and to concise the huge quantity data in order to easy to understand. The researchers applied t-test to measure the difference between male and female of bullying effect.¹³

5. Sample and Population

The population is the students of high school at South Sulawesi province in Indonesia. It is identified from the table below that the number of population is 4.773 students. There are six regencies involved in the study where the numbers of respondents are 536. The following table presents the number of sample in six regencies in South Sulawesi. Table Number of Sample in each regency and grade

No	Regencies	Population	Grade			Sample	Grade		
			X	XI	XII		X	XI	XII
1	Maros	970	259	401	310	109	29	45	35
2	Pangkep	908	199	310	399	102	22	35	45
3	Tana Toraja	613	115	212	286	68	13	23	32
4	Luwu Timur	732	82	352	298	82	9	40	33
5	Palopo	655	175	242	238	74	20	27	27
6	Gowa	895	288	321	286	101	33	36	32
	Total	4773	1118	1838	1817	536	126	206	204

Source: Primary data (2013)

Therefore, researcher has determined a total of 536 respondents of this study as this figure is close to the population and it is capable of visualizing the population situation.

¹³ Azizi, Yahaya. (2007). *Menguasai Penyelidikan dalam Pendidikan: Teori, analisis dan Interpretas data*. UTM Malaysia.

6. Finding and Discussion

Statistically, it shows that Levene's test is identified 8.539 with p value .004 which is smaller than alpha 0.05. This group is called not homogeneity. Further, t-test for depression is 4.748 with probability value .000 smaller than alpha 0.05. The conclusion of this, there is a significant difference between depression effects of bullying towards gender. Similarly to anxiety effect, t-test is gained 5.715 with probability value .000 smaller than alpha 0.05. Therefore, it can be said that there is a significant difference between anxiety effects towards gender.

In the effect of bullying, t-test is identified 8.340 and probability value is .000 which is smaller than alpha 0.05. This gives conclusion that there is a significant difference between effects of bullying towards gender. The hypothesis states that there is no significant difference between effects bullying with gender is retained.

Massive attention has been given to the detrimental effect of bullying. However, less research focus on the effect of bullying behavior between male and female differences. Several studies have looked at the how effect of bullying differentially between male and female. The current research statistically tests for gender differences among the students at high school in South Sulawesi. In the effect of bullying, t-test is identified 8.340 and probability value is .000 which is smaller than alpha 0.05. This gives conclusion that there is a significant difference between effects of bullying towards gender. The hypothesis states that there is no significant difference between effects bullying with gender is retained.

Ledwell and King (2011) have statistically tested for the gender difference bullying effect on adolescence by using survey found that there is a difference effect between female and male on psychosocial adjustment.¹⁴ Similarly, Yen et. al, (2013) in their massive study which involves 5537 respondents in Thailand concluded that anxiety and gender as the moderating effect are different significantly.

The present research finding is consistent with other research which shows that boys and girls are different in terms of risk profile. In general, boys are more affected on anxiety while among girls attempt to have suicidal try (Kumpulainen et. al, 2001).¹⁵ Additionally, the study of Natvig et. al, (2001) found that there is a different effect between male and female in terms of psychosomatic disorders.¹⁶ The male are strongest in headache and backache whereas female are associated with nervousness and sleeplessness. This study reiterates several evidences and about the anxiety effect both male and female. Another cross sectional survey conducted by Yang et. al (2006) at South

¹⁴ Ledwell and King (2011). Gender Differences in the Impact of Experiencing Bullying: Who's Worse Off? Pennsylvania State University.

¹⁵ Kumpulainen K, Ra'sa'nen E, Puura K (2001) Psychiatric disorders and the use of mental health services among children involved in bullying. *Aggressive Behavior* 27:102–110.

¹⁶ Natvig, G., Albrektsen, G., & Qvarnstrom, U. (2001). Psychosomatic symptoms among victims of school bullying. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 6, 365–378.

Korean primary schools also supported the evidence, they empirically found the difference between girls and boys when investigated victimization behaviors, depression and anxiety among 1,344 children.¹⁷

From the bully victim perspective, gender differences have been acknowledged in the effect of bullying (Bond et. al, 2001).¹⁸ This differs with the current research, due to the research acknowledged the different between genders more specific where males are reported having greater effect as delinquency, while females are noted experiences mental health such as depression, anxiety and feel isolated. Similarly, Klomek et. al, (2007) found that women are significantly depressed when they are associated with bullying engagement.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the differences between anxiety and depression on gender perspective in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. It is identified that statistically, bullying effect such as anxiety and depression in Indonesia are significantly different between male and female. Anxiety and depression are the potential effect of bullying in Indonesia. Therefore, to minimize effect of bullying, these two effects are considerable to manage and eliminate program for managing bullying effect. It is highly expected the result of this study will contribute to the knowledge as well as empirical evidence about bullying effect such as anxiety and depression with gender.

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¹⁷ Yang, Su-Jin, Kim, Jae-Min, Kim, Sung-Wan, Shin, Il-Seon, Yoon, Jin-Sang .(2006). Bullying and Victimization Behaviors in Boys and Girls at South Korean Primary Schools .*Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*. 45 (1) : 69-77

¹⁸ Bond, L., Carlin, J. B., Thomas, L., Rubin, K., & Patton, G. (2001). Does bullying cause emotional problems? A prospective study of young teenagers. *BMJ*, 323, 480-484.

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