Experience of Victims Bullying Among School Students with Dormitory Facilities

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Purpose Bullying among school children is a repetitive phenomenon resulting in both physical and emotional harms. Students living in dormitory facilities are also subjected to such bullying, which contravenes the basic aim and objective of studying in a dormitory, that of developing personality, intelligence, and skills through peer effects. Hence, it is essential to explore the experiences of victims of bullying in dealing with perpetrators so that the negative impact of student life in dormitories can be avoided. This study aimed to obtain in-depth information on victims of bullying in undergoing an educational process that requires students to live together in a dormitory. **Method.** Qualitative research with a phenomenological approach was carried out to explore information using in-depth interviews and observation techniques. Using a purposive sampling technique and with the approval of dormitory managers and teachers of five boarding schools in Indonesia, a sample of 13 students was identified who had been victims of bullying. In-depth interviews were conducted with the sampled informants and interview transcripts were prepared to carry out a content analysis to identify themes and categories.

Findings. The results of the interviews were analyzed using Colaizzi analysis, starting from the formation of coding to formulating themes. The study's results produced five main themes, including Inner (mental)torment, Difficulty concentrating, Nightmares approaching, Loneliness being the best, and Self-surrender. It was concluded that student life in the dormitory significantly impacted creating a person who excels, who is intelligent in socializing, innovative, and has high fighting power. **Implications to Research and Practice.** This study recommends synchronizing cooperation between parents, dormitory managers, and teachers by utilizing technological advances, along with application of stricter rules in dormitories.

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Introduction

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines bullying as "any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of youths, who are not siblings or current dating partners, that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated. Bullying may inflict harm or distress on the targeted youth including physical, psychological, social or educational harm" (DeSisto & Smith, 2015). Bullying among school aged children is a kind of aggression seen in the behavior of same aged children who are not siblings, which persistently threatens and harasses weaker and less powerful children in a group (Chan & Wong, 2015; DeLara, 2012). Traditional bullying can be both physical, verbal, and psychological. The physical bullying includes hitting, pushing, kicking, pinching, spitting, tripping, pushing, taking or breaking someone's things (Carlyle & Steinman, 2007; Liang, Flisher, & Lombard, 2007; Lund & Ross, 2017; McKenzie, 2009). The verbal bullying includes threats, saying or writing mean things, abusing or name calling; the psychological bullying includes spreading rumors (live or online), harassing sexually, or intimidating. When such incidents of bullying increases, they interfere with children's academic performance, and they are most likely to drop out.

Bullying among school children is carried out repeatedly in order to gain a superiority (Nansel et al., 2004). The habitual perpetrators look for newer means of bullying beyond the traditional types, such as by making use of electronic technologies and the Internet. This is known as cyberbullying which is executed through social media platforms rather than through physical or face to face means (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008; Wachs et al., 2020). There are physiological, social, and academic damages to school children bullied by their peers. Bullied school children have varied experiences such as poor grades and lack of interest in studies, which eventually make developmental harm and prevent their full growth. Other extreme results, include physical injuries like bruises and cuts; headaches, mood swings, aggressive or unreasonable behavior, changes in sleep and eating patterns loss of appetite or overeating. The bullied children grow insecure, lose their self-esteem, and frequently fall victim to stress and depression. In extreme cases, they start consuming alcohol and drugs, and a few even commit suicide after being bullied, which is referred to as "bullycide." Such negative physical and emotional experiences make a larger impact socially and economically on both the victims and perpetrators (AlMulhim et al., 2018; Gruber & Fineran, 2008; Schenk & Fremouw, 2012). Students of both genders are found indulged in bullying; however, males are found more engaged in physical aggressions than females (Bjärehed et al., 2020; Hinduja & Patchin, 2008; Lee, 2017; Olweus & Limber, 2010).

Recent researches (Bjärehed et al., 2020; Wachs et al., 2020) have found that school student bullying, which occurs in school premises, creates fear and stress not only in students but also in their parents. Indonesia has chiefly Islamic boarding schools, which offer traditional Islamic education, where students live together in a dormitory. Such dormitories are in an enclosed complex surrounded by walls, supervised by *kiais*, who are also responsible for mentoring students. Very little is known about bullying in these Islamic boarding schools and the dormitories attached to them (Cawson, 2009; Poynting & Donaldson, 2005; Zhao, 2022). This could be due to non-reporting and non-documenting of bullying cases, lack of student misconduct policies and disciplinary procedures in school dormitories, and laxity, lenience, and tolerance of school administration towards such

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incidents. Therefore, the current study attempted to fill this research gap by examining the experiences of school student bullying from the sample selected for this study and suggest appropriate interventions.

Literature Review and Theoretical framework

Bullying cases are often hidden and not visible on the surface, even though there have been many victims. Data from the 2018 Program for International Students Assessment (PISA) research shows that 41.1% of students admitted to having experienced bullying in Indonesia. The number of bullied students is far above the average for OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) member countries which is only 22.7%. In addition, Indonesia is in the fifth highest position out of 78 countries as the country with the most students experiencing bullying. This condition cannot be ignored nor can be considered simple, including that which occurs in a school environment with dormitories (Chui & Chan, 2013, 2015; Schaverien, 2011; Xue et al., 2022).

Under certain conditions, schools provide dormitory facilities to maximize the learning process (Hanafi et al., 2021; Martin et al., 2014; Pfeiffer, Pinquart, & Krick, 2016; Tang et al., 2020). Usually, dormitory residents are students from outside the area, far from school, so they live in dormitories (Hodges, Sheffield, & Ralph, 2013; Mwangi & Mbogo, 2018). Besides that, there are types of schools that require students to stay in the dormitory to facilitate student character formation. Students' character can be formed based on their interactions at school and when interacting with fellow residents of the dormitory (Hodges et al., 2013; Li & Hesketh, 2021). However, living in a dormitory is not easy, so cases of bullying often occur (Cilliers, 2017; O'Brien, Munn-Giddings, & Moules, 2018; Pfeiffer & Pinquart, 2014; Schaverien, 2011). Forms of violence in Islamic boarding schools include humiliating friends in public, hitting, mocking, and punching (McKenzie, 2009). Even seniors often punish their juniors for breaking the rules (Cawson, 2009; Poynting & Donaldson, 2005; Zhao, 2022). There are 934 Sekolah Menengah Atas (SMAs) or high schools in Indonesia that have dormitory facilities. Of these, 695 schools, or 74.4% are private schools, and the government manages only 25.6%. In the city of Palembang, the number of secondary schools with dormitory facilities is 11 (Zhao, 2022).

This study attempted the application of the Imbalance Power theory related to bullying behavior (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017), assuming that bullying is not a competition between siblings, nor is a fight involving two equal parties. However, bullying is carried out by people who are older, younger, more robust, more significant, more verbally proficient, of higher social status, or from a different race (Mucherah et al., 2018; Nakamoto & Schwartz, 2010; Nansel et al., 2001; Ncube, 2013). Bullying often occurs because of a power imbalance of factors or aspects of the lives of the perpetrators and victims of bullying. The power imbalance will be the most potent weapon to bully potential victims (Li & Hesketh, 2021; Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017; Muetzel et al., 2019; Paez, 2018). According to the American Psychiatric Association (APA) bullying is aggressive behavior with three conditions, namely (a) negative behavior that aims to damage or harm (b) repetitive behavior over a certain period (c) occurs due to an imbalance of power or power on the parties involved (Idsoe et al., 2021; Mucherah et al., 2018; Nansel et al., 2001). Bullying is an act of intimidation carried out repeatedly by a stronger party against a weaker party, intentionally and to hurt the victim physically or emotionally (Chan & Wong, 2015; DeLara, 2012; Nakamoto & Schwartz, 2010; Olweus, 1994; Olweus & Limber, 2010).

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Victims of bullying are passive, anxious, weak, less confident, less popular, and have low self-esteem than most of their peers (DeLara, 2012; Zhao, 2022). The victims of bullying have low self-esteem, poor self-assessment, high levels of depression, anxiety, disability, hypersensitivity, feeling insecure, panicking and nervous at school, impaired concentration, and rejection by peers or friends, avoid social interactions, are more introverted, have few friends, are isolated, and feel lonely (Li et al., 2019; Mucherah et al., 2018; Ndetei et al., 2007; Olweus, 1994, 2012).

The factors that cause student bullying at school are generally seniority, imitation, and past experiences, as well as students living in dormitories (Idsoe et al., 2021; Li & Hesketh, 2021). Senior students feel that they must be respected by their juniors, which will lead to the problem if it turns out that the junior cannot meet the expectations of his senior. Bullying behavior is carried out because the perpetrator wants to take revenge (Kusumawaty, Yunike, & Ketut, 2021).

Another factor is the intense meeting of students who live together in the dormitory; on many occasions, they have to interact positively or negatively (Lester & Mander, 2015). Research on victims of bullying in dormitories has not been done much, and this study will provide an in-depth description of the experiences of victims of bullying in dormitory locations. By knowing the experiences of victims of bullying, it will be able to immediately make recommendations so that victims of bullying in the dormitory environment do not become more rampant.

This study was conducted in five schools of Palembang, Indonesia equipped with dormitory facilities running with same rules and regulations of supervision and management. Besides observations of the boarding school sites and their dormitories, interviews were conducted with 13 student informants. This study begins with a background information about bullying, its definition, and the status of bullying in dormitories of boarding schools in Indonesia. It is followed by a theoretical framework with relevant literature on school dormitory and bullying activities. The next section presents the methodology adopted for this study, followed by results and discussion sections. In the end, there is a section of conclusion, suggestions, and recommendations.

Method

Research design

This cross-sectional study was conducted between Fall 2017 and Spring 2018.This study aimed to describe the actual conditions regarding the phenomenon of bullying among children who lived in dormitories and based on their experiences of being victims of bullying. The qualitative research involved 13 student participants from five schools equipped with dormitory facilities with the same rules and management The qualitative approach used is phenomenology so that researchers receive more in-depth information about the facts of bullying in dormitories. The research was carried out from January to April 2022, based on the approval given by the Health Research Ethics Committee of the Palembang Health Polytechnic No 1274/KEPK/Adm2/III/2021, Tanggal 8 Maret 2022.

Research Instruments

Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews and observations at mutually agreed locations to maintain the comfort of participants. An interview guide was prepared to facilitate participants with questions like: (1) How do you feel when dealing

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with people who bully you? (2) How do they treat you? (3) How do you feel when you are a victim of bullying? (4) How do you deal with their treatment? and like. Each interview continued for 30-45 minutes and it was felt that data saturation reached after every second or third interview. The interview data was collected using a voice recorder while observations were noted down in observation sheets.

Population and Sample

A random sampling technique was adopted to identify students from 5 dormitories in the boarding schools of Palembang. It was required that each sampled student should have lived in the dormitory for at least one year, should be aged 16 years and above, and should have been a victim of bullying. The boarding schools were selected based on the highest number of students living in their dormitory. Prior to the selection of informants, the approval of the hostel manager and teachers were obtained.

Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed with the help of content analysis methods. First, the interview recordings were transcribed through manual coding methods, then, themes and various categories were identified. Based on these thematic analysis, various conclusions were made, (Creswell & Tashakkori, 2007). Dormitory administrators and teachers were also involved in the data analysis process to obtain triangulation of information. The data collection results were recorded in the form of transcripts and then further analyzed to form categories and themes.

Results and discussion

Table 1 presents the demographics of the sample used for this study. The table reveals that there were 7 males and 6 female informants, aged 16 or 17 years: belonging to poor or middle class families. Six out of 13 informants came from divorced families, clearly indicating that they were abandoned by their parents to live in dormitories.

Table 1

Socio demography of participants

No.	Participant code	Gender	Age (years)	Parent's economic level	Family origin
1.	P1	Male	16	Poor family	Complete family
2.	P2	Female	17	Middle family	Divorced family
3.	P3	Male	17	Middle family	Complete family
4.	P4	Male	16	Middle family	Divorced family
5.	P5	Female	17	Poor family	Complete family
6.	P6	Female	17	Poor family	Divorced family
7.	P7	Male	16	Poor family	Divorced family
8.	P8	Female	17	Poor family	Complete family
9.	P9	Male	16	Middle family	Complete family
10.	P10	Male	17	Middle family	Divorced family
11.	P11	Female	16	Poor family	Divorced family
12.	P12	Male	17	Poor family	Complete family
13.	P13	Female	16	Poor family	Complete family

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Based on the results of data collection and analysis, a few themes and their categories were identified as presented in Table 2:

Table 2

Theme and categories identified for this study

Category	Themes
Inner (mental)torment	Inner hurt
	Deep sadness
	Withstand heavy loads
Difficulty concentrating	Unable to study
	Change of study time
	Rings when insulted
Nightmares approaching	Anxiety before bed
	Always comes across while sleeping
Loneliness being the best	Avoid it immediately
	Threats in the group
	Keep yourself busy
Self-surrender	It is better to surrender
	Surrender to God

The five themes that were formulated for this study included Inner (mental)torment, Difficulty concentrating, Nightmares approaching, Loneliness being the best, and Self-surrender. Children who have to live in dormitories, which make them far from home and parents, and the loss of their daily habits at home have the opportunity to have complex impacts, one of which is the emergence of bullying behavior.

All the informants of the study including their teachers and administrators of the boarding school agreed that bullying negatively impacts the victim's physical, psychological and social conditions as there were several incidents narrated by each of them, and consistent with the findings of the previous studies such as feeling difficult in concentrating (Lester & Mander, 2015; Pfeiffer et al., 2016), preferring not to attend school (Ncube, 2013), decreased academic performance (Idsoe et al., 2021), acts that harm the body (Li & Hesketh, 2021; Przybylski & Bowes, 2017), damages personal property (Keller & Miller, 2006), having trouble sleeping (Gatta et al., 2010), nightmares (Gatta et al., 2010), and having no friends (Hellström & Beckman, 2020; Li & Hesketh, 2021). It can even lead to mental disorders, ranging from sensitivity, extreme anger, depression, low self-esteem, anxiety, decreased sleep quality, and desire to hurt oneself to suicide (Fredrick et al., 2021; Guessoum et al., 2020; Ira Kusumawaty et al., 2021; Xue et al., 2022). There is a tendency that victims will become bullies as well to take revenge. Victims of bullying often feel insecure, especially when they are in an environment where bullying can occur. The impact above will most likely carry over into their adulthood. Viewed from the point of view of physical conditions, the adverse effects of bullying can also be seen in physical complaints, for example, headaches, stomach pains, tense muscles, palpitations or a racing heart, and chronic pain (Idsoe et al., 2021; Kusumawaty, Elviani, & Arifin, 2021).

The results of this study provide the same picture as previous studies. Victims of bullying revealed that the bullies were friends who were older than them (Mucherah et al.,

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2018; Nansel et al., 2001; Ndetei et al., 2007). A few informants shared that the perpetrator's actions were carried out secretly when in the school surrounding, but when in the dormitory. To regulate the conditions of learning in schools and living in dormitories, the school and hostel administrators agreed on joint rules, according to the information they conveyed. However, in practice it is often misused by older residents of the dormitory, so that the junior residents can carry out the orders of the senior residents. Furthermore, services must also be provided by residents of lower-class levels to residents of higher-class levels. This condition is in accordance with the explanation of the theory of imbalance power (Y Kusumawaty et al., 2021; Lawrence et al., 2019; Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017). However, it turns out that in this study, there was no difference between female and male residents in the practice of bullying, both as perpetrators and victims (Bibou-Nakou et al., 2012; McLoughlin & Over, 2018). Economic level and family status also shape the personality of bullying victims (Hu, Xue, & Han, 2021). Low self-esteem due to coming from a divorced family or poverty contributes to the formation of the character of victims of bullying, as was the case in studies (Bibou-Nakou et al., 2013; Ncube, 2013; Zhao, 2022).

Personality integrity or personality stability is the work of harmonious functions or psychological aspects which include physical, psychological, and socio-cultural life (Claridge, Davis, & Moncayo, 2003; Martino, 2015). Harmony is a hope that can be realized in life in the dormitory. Residents in dormitories can come from various regions and have various traits and characteristics (Chui & Chan, 2015). This is due to several things, including those who are far from parental supervision, and coming from various regions with different customs and cultures. In dormitories, residents are required to be independent such as maintaining environmental cleanliness, health, and belongings, but not all residents can comply with these provisions (Cawson, 2009; Ira Kusumawaty et al., 2021). However, the lack of supervision by the hostel manager and the many rules create conflict and competition among students and in the end the strong dominate the weak (Li & Hesketh, 2021; Ndetei et al., 2007). The purpose of establishing rules in dormitories is to increase the discipline of the residents, but this is sometimes considered a restraint for them (Fredrick et al., 2021; Lester & Mander, 2015; Ndetei et al., 2007). This is what causes bully violence such as hitting, mocking, taking things that are not their rights and it is done directly and continuously (Allroggen et al., 2017; Hu et al., 2021; Pfeiffer & Pinquart, 2014; Schaverien, 2011).

A wise attitude is needed in dealing with bullies and victims of bullying (Hodges et al., 2013; Naveed et al., 2020; Olweus, 1994). Bullying does not only hurt the victim, so dealing with the perpetrators of bullying must be firm but wise. Dormitory can be a conducive learning place as a social laboratory, having educational, social, and moral functions (Abolfotouh et al., 2017; Chui & Chan, 2015; Poynting & Donaldson, 2005). The importance of increasing supervision by teachers and hostel guardians to residents in terms of parenting in dormitories as well as teaching in schools and seniority in dormitories must receive good supervision because it is one of the causes of bullying both at school and in the dormitory environment (Chui & Chan, 2015; Ebbert & Luthar, 2021; Fredrick et al., 2021; McCalman et al., 2020; Ramadhan, Keliat, & Wardani, 2019). Supervision can be carried out using technological sophistication and a religious approach through the appearance of student-friendly role models and consistent application of policies to all residents (Curfman et al., 2021; Fulmer et al., 2021; Heydari, Shahidi, & Mohammadpour, 2015;

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Krivokapic, 2018; Reichel, Arenson, & Scherger, 2009). Role models who can provide examples are the foundation for building student character in dormitories so that people who have a bright and virtuous future can be realized (Ackley, Lawdig, & Makic, 2017; Zhao, 2022). Continuous application of the rules will educate residents to respect the applicable provisions so as to produce a disciplined and respectful figure (Elviani & Kusumawaty, 2021; Krause & Boldt, 2018; Lee, Karsten, & Roberts, 2020; Opoku, Van Niekerk, & Khuabi, 2020; Subke, Downing, & Kearns, 2020).

Conclusion, recommendations, and implications

The current study found out that factors that cause bullying violence include dormitory environmental factors, school rules, and peer factors. Bullying occurs in physical and verbal forms. Victims of being beaten, pushed, ridiculed, humiliated in public and often experience mental bullying in the form of yelling and shaming the victim. The impact of bullying cases on residents is that they experience mental health disorders, such as trauma, stress, and fear, even to the point of quitting or leaving the dormitory, due to fear of experiencing bullying again. Parents' involvement in monitoring children's psychological condition is very much needed to support success during their education in the dormitory. In future research, it is suggested that research should be carried out on parents and teachers as well to understand the teaching and parenting patterns that can underlie the formation of children's behavior.

The study would like to make a few recommendations. The school administration should educate students what to do when they see or experience bullying. This could be achieved by developing students' communication abilities, social, assertiveness and confidence. Teachers' supervision may also be included of dormitories psychological counselling session may also be organized for the student who had experienced bullying experience. Strict disciplinary actions against perpetrators should also be carried out to prevent repetitive bullying.

At the home front, parents can also contribute to preventing bullying. Parents can teach their children how to treat others, share with them the significance of self-respect, take regular feedbacks of the school activities, attend parent-teacher meets regularly and discuss all matters related to their children in order to avoid your child getting bullied. Parents should establish consistent and open communication with their child and address any unwanted behavior that they come across. They should talk openly with children about social relationships and bullying, share age-appropriate information with them, and encourage them to stay in tune with their social landscape. They should ask specific questions to gain a better understanding about school and social situation for example, how they socialize during recess, who they spend time with their friends, whether anyone harasses them or call by derogatory names, and like. Parent may acknowledge of such difficult situation. If required, parents can equip their children with necessary skills to deal with bullies. Such initiatives at personal and parental levels can prevent unwanted behaviors and bullying to escalate and help child to establish a healthy environment.

The findings of this study would help broaden the understanding about bullying in boarding schools with dormitories and provide decision-makers, practitioners, and policy makers to design interventions and prevent or reduce bullying in educational

environments. This study would also make a significant contribution to the domain of bullying in Islamic boarding school, in the Indonesian context. This study will also provide useful insights to sustainably prevent and design intervention strategies that work with the whole university by involvement of parents, instructors as well as stakeholders.

Acknowledgement

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