How Does Bullying Happen in Elementary School?

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Abstract: Bullying is an activity that is quite disturbing and has the potential to interfere with the achievement of educational goals in elementary schools. The purpose of this study is to identify how bullying occurs at the elementary school level. This research is a qualitative study with a focus on the implementation of education in elementary schools. This study uses a phenomenological design to reveal the facts behind the phenomenon of bullying that occurs in children in elementary school. This research was conducted in an elementary school. Research informants are students, teachers, and parents. Interviews are the main data collection technique that has been carried out in this study. The data of this study were analyzed using qualitative analysis. The findings of this study indicate the five main causes of bullying in elementary schools based on the results of this study. The first thing is bullying is done by children who feel more powerful in school. Second, bullying occurs because the victim is very weak, so there is a high potential for bullying from other children. Third, bullying occurs because of feelings of inferiority in children who are victims of bullying. Fourth, bullying occurs because of physical differences. Lastly, bullying occurs because the victim has a disadvantaged economic condition.

Keywords: bullying, elementary school

Introduction

Education in elementary schools is the education of children aged between 7 to 13 years as education at the basic level which is developed in line with the education unit, regional potential or regional characteristics, and socio-culture of the local community for students. This is where elementary school students are forged in various fields of study, all of which must be mastered by students. It is not wrong if the elementary school is called the center of education. Not only in the classroom but the learning process that occurs outside the classroom is also included in learning activities. Education in primary schools must lead to the good character of children (Herwin & Nurhayati, 2021; Muhtar & Dallyono, 2020; Susanto, 2013).

National Education in Indonesia explains that education is a conscious and planned effort that is contained in the goals of national education and education in elementary schools, namely, to create a learning atmosphere and process of learning activities with the aim that students actively develop their potential to have religious-spiritual strength, control self, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the necessary skills for himself and society, in the nation and state. Education in elementary schools is focused on elementary grade students between grades 1 to grade 6 whose material provisions and subject matter are regulated in the elementary education curriculum. So, education in elementary schools with its scope includes elementary school material which is held throughout life as further education. This shows that education in primary schools is a very important aspect (Wuryandani & Herwin, 2021).

The purpose of national education is to direct the development of students' potential to become human beings who have a noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens, while the purpose of primary school education is to lay the foundation for intelligence, knowledge, personality, noble character, as well as the skills to live independently and attend further education. Thus, students can have and instill an attitude of character towards others.

Apart from the purpose of education which expects students to have good behavior, the current trend still often finds bullying in elementary schools. Bullying is an act of violence experienced by someone. Many acts of violence occur in schools both in schools, including in elementary schools (Anugraheni, 2018). Bullying in schools can be viewed from a multi-paradigm in sociology, namely a review of structural determinism (macro-objective dimension), a view of agent determinism (micro-subjective dimension), and integration/continuum between the two previous reviews (Efianingrum, 2020; Efianingrum et al., 2021). Bullying is defined as physical intimidation, a verbal, or psychological attack carried out intending to cause fear, distress, or harm to certain victims, with a stronger individual bullying a weaker person (Malm et al., 2017). This stressful activity usually occurs in school-age children (Varjas et al., 2009).

Bullying is experienced by thousands of children around the world and this is an urgent problem that is still a disturbance in social life (Carney & Merrel, 2001; Kustanti, 2020). Bullying occurs at all levels of education in Indonesia (Chodijah, 2019). Including at the elementary school level. This shows an increasing trend every year. The results of observations in the field show that bullying in children in elementary schools is still often found. This is supported by the number of victims who feel disturbed by this activity. This is certainly not good for the implementation of education and the achievement of educational goals. Based on this issue, researchers are encouraged to conduct a study on bullying in elementary schools. The purpose of this study is to identify how bullying occurs at the elementary school level.

Methods

This research is a qualitative study with a focus on the implementation of education in elementary schools. This study uses a phenomenological design to reveal the facts behind the phenomenon of bullying that occurs in children in elementary school. This research was conducted in an elementary school in Kulon Progo Regency, Yogyakarta Province, Indonesia. Research informants are students, teachers, and parents. In addition, data from the surrounding community is also collected to support data and information from main sources. The selection of informants was carried out using a purposive technique.

Interviews are the main data collection technique that has been carried out in this study. The data of this study were analyzed using qualitative analysis. Data analysis was carried out interactively through data collection, data condensation, data presentation, and data verification. To find the credibility of the data, triangulation of sources is carried out by utilizing various information to connect themes between study findings.

Results and Discussion

Bullying is any form of oppression or violence that is intentionally carried out by one person or group of people who are more powerful against another person, to disturb the hurt and carried out continuously. This study aims to reveal how bullying occurs in elementary schools. This study focuses on the triggers of bullying in elementary schools. The research findings indicate that there are five sub-themes to the main themes that are the subject of this study. In the following, the results of this study are described based on the theme that is the focus of the research.

Table 1. Bullying in elementary school

No	Sub-theme	Correlation between sub-themes
1	Bullying happens because the victim is weak	Bullying occurs because children who are victims have weaknesses and cannot balance the strengths of children who are bullies
2	Bullying occurs because of low self-esteem	
3	Bullying occurs because the victim is physically different	
4	Bullying is done by a friend who is more powerful	
5	Bullying occurs because the victim is different economically	

Table 1 shows the findings of this study on how bullying occurs in elementary schools. The findings emphasize five sub-themes based on the conditions found in the field. Based on the several sub-themes, it can be concluded that the relationship is bullying in elementary schools because of the power of the bully who cannot be matched by the victim of bullying. This confirms that bullies always come

from those who have more power than other children. On the other hand, children who cannot balance the power of the perpetrators of bullying are always victims of bullying and this is something that is not good that must be handled in the provision of education in elementary schools.

The results of this study indicate the five main causes of bullying in elementary schools based on the results of this study. Bullying is carried out by children who feel more powerful at school. It is undeniable that children in schools have quite a variety of variations. In this variation, groups or individuals are found to be more powerful than other children. This is what causes the potential for bullying in schools. In addition, bullying occurs because the victim is very weak, so there is a high potential for bullying from other children. Children who have very weak conditions are freer to get bullied by other children. Because there is no power to defend themselves, the victim easily gets bullied by the perpetrator.

Another thing that was found was that bullying occurred because of the low self-esteem of the child who was the victim of bullying. It's more about character. Even though the victim has the potential to give resistance, his low self-esteem tends to allow him to be bullied one of the factors that trigger bullying activities at school. Furthermore, bullying occurs because of physical differences. This is clear. Children who are physically stronger and luckier tend to be the focus of bullies and vice versa. Lastly, bullying occurs because the victim has a disadvantaged economic condition. Some of these findings are very meaningful input for educators in schools. Both teachers, principals, and other school staff must pay attention to this phenomenon so that cases can be minimized in schools.

The findings of this study also found that bullying in elementary school seemed to affect children's social interactions at school. This is in line with the findings of various relevant findings which say that bullying activity is very concerning because it has an impact on children's behavior and social interactions that are less than expected (Agustina Setiowati, 2017; Arifinda & Hastuti, 2016; Widyaningsih et al., 2019). In addition, the findings show that children who are victims of bullying often show conditions with uncomfortable feelings. This certainly has the potential to disrupt educational activities in schools.

Currently, there is a lot of bullying behavior in children, especially at school. Schools are ideal places to provide education and develop children's potential. At school, children can not only develop their cognitive potential, but children will also learn to develop their psychosocial, moral, and emotional abilities. However, a school can also be a place for stressors to arise that can interfere with a child's development (Haruningjati & Sulistyorini, 2017).

Negative behavior that causes a person to feel uncomfortable or injured and usually occurs repeatedly, mild or severe actions is called bullying (Siswati, 2009). Unidentified forms of bullying and actions of people or environments that are permissive to bullying actions make children feel that bad actions are considered good and even develop into other, more complex forms of bullying. This condition shows that bullying cannot be taken lightly because indifference to bullying can result in unexpected student character formation (Azizah et al., 2014).

Bullying among students still occurs with the intensity that tends to increase in various forms. The repeated incidents of bullying in schools show that these cases are not easy to get rid of (Efianingrum et al., 2021). Often bullying behavior escapes the attention of parents and the school. Generally, parents and schools assume that mocking, fighting, or disturbing other children is a common thing for school children and is not a serious problem. Usually, the problem is taken seriously and is said to be bullying behavior when the behavior has resulted in injury or physical problems to the child who is the victim of bullying. Whereas the definition of bullying is not limited to acts of violence that cause physical injury only. Ardi (2012) suggests that the term bullying refers to the use of violence or force to hurt a person or group so that the victim feels depressed, traumatized, and helpless. The effect of bullying on children aged 5-12 years. The negative impact of bullying can also occur on the perpetrator. Children who like to bully are more likely to engage in violent acts or risky behavior (Dewi et al., 2016).

Bullies tend to abuse power or power through shaming, hitting, and isolating the victim (Englander et al., 2017; Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017; Olweus & Limber, 2010; Ulfah & Gustina, 2020). Bullying behavior has a negative impact, especially on victims (Aleem, 2016). Children who are victims of bullying will experience psychological and physical disorders. Victims of bullying said they were more often lonely, and had difficulty making friends, while children who were bullied tend to have low scores (Ningsih & Sari, 2018).

Bullying is something that has the potential to interfere with the achievement of educational goals. Many factors allow this to happen and solutions that can be an alternative to dealing with bullying in elementary schools. One of the factors that can prevent bullying in schools is the teacher factor. This is the main factor. We must realize that a teacher is a person who has a central role in the implementation of education in schools (Ambarwati et al., 2022; Herwin, 2019; Tjabolo & Herwin, 2020). In addition to the teacher factor, another major factor that has the potential to reduce bullying activities at school is the parent factor. The involvement of parents is very necessary for the implementation of their children's education (Pangestu et al., 2020; Sujarwo et al., 2021). This also applies to dealing with bullying in schools. Furthermore, school service programs that focus on fostering children are also very helpful in overcoming the problem of bullying in schools (Aryuni et al., 2021).

Bullying in various countries has become a social disease problem (Levine & Tamburrino, 2014). Likewise in Indonesia. This is because victims who are disturbed have the potential to experience health complaints and depression (Due et al., 2009; Fleming & Jacobsen, 2009; Levine & Tamburrino, 2014), and interpersonal relationship problems (Gilmartin, 1987). This results in the emergence of forms of violence that can be detrimental (Bauman et al., 2013; Fleming & Jacobsen, 2009). The prevalence of bullying in schools has the potential to vary and is highly dependent on educational level (Nansel et al., 2001; Sawyer et al., 2008).

Bullying occurs when a person or group interferes with or threatens the safety of another person (Bernard & Milne, 2008). Bullying generally occurs outside the classroom. This often does not get the attention and monitoring of schools including principal teachers or other school staff (Kustanti, 2015). Victims of bullying at school can be observed with a low sense of self-esteem, a tendency to fear, discomfort, and poor social adjustment. Even if this condition is left unchecked, the victim of bullying will withdraw from school and academic achievement competitions (Rigby, 2007; Salmon et al., 2015). If not addressed immediately then this situation will get even worse (Okoiye et al., 2015).

Bullying in children is a condition that should not be taken lightly. In addition to triggering problems in overall health, this can also affect the quality of life of children in the long term. Children who are victims of bullying may have low self-esteem and are pessimistic about life. If that's the case, the child may no longer have the passion to live life, which leads to a higher risk of self-harm. Therefore, all components, both teachers, parents, and the community, must pay more attention if children experience changes in behavior. This is because it can be a sign that your child is being bullied. This is the basis for the importance of bullying behavior that must be a serious concern starting from the level of education in elementary schools. All parties must play an active role in overcoming this problem. This is in line with one of the goals of education in Indonesia is to develop the potential of children to have positive behavior and personality.

Conclusion

This study concludes that bullying in elementary schools can arise from various causes. The findings of this study indicate the five main causes of bullying in elementary schools based on the results of this study. The first thing is bullying is done by children who feel more powerful in school. Second, bullying occurs because the victim is very weak, so there is a high potential for bullying from other children. Third, bullying occurs because of feelings of inferiority in children who are victims of bullying. Fourth, bullying occurs because of physical differences. Lastly, bullying occurs because the victim has a disadvantaged economic condition. The findings of this study confirm that bullying in elementary schools is triggered by an imbalance of power, the perpetrator being too strong and the victim's inability to compensate for the bully.

This finding recommends several things to schools, teachers, parents, and the community that it is necessary to pay attention to inappropriate and unacceptable child behavior and remind them of the anti-bullying rules and guidelines made at the school level. Children need to be helped by understanding the reasons behind bullying behavior (such as whether they have problems at home, lack of attention, previous experiences of bullying, etc.). Need to show empathy and compassion by sharing the feelings of the child being bullied. Appreciate and recognize any positive behavior change, including admitting mistakes. It is necessary to apply certain consequences to help children learn from bullying situations. The consequences given must be related to their mistakes, still respecting the child as the perpetrator, reasonable and logical, and acceptable to teach children to behave better.

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