



Bullying in Banyuwangi's Schools: A Social Studies-Based Comparison between Urban and Suburban Educational Settings

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to compare bullying cases at SMPN 1 Giri and SMPN 1 Licin in Banyuwangi Regency with a focus on the type, frequency, and impact experienced by students. The method used is a qualitative approach with a case study design, which involves in-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis. The results showed significant differences in the forms of bullying experienced by students in the two schools. SMPN 1 Giri tended to experience higher verbal and social bullying, while SMPN 1 Licin was more exposed to physical bullying. The psychological impact experienced by student victims was also more severe at SMPN 1 Giri, indicating the need for more comprehensive interventions. This study recommends the development of a bullying prevention program that involves all stakeholders in the school to create a safer and more supportive learning environment for students.

INTRODUCTION

Bullying has become one of the main issues in education around the world, including in Indonesia. Various studies have shown that bullying has a negative impact on students' social, emotional and academic development (Olweus, 2016). Although the government and schools have taken preventive measures, bullying cases still occur frequently, both in urban and suburban areas. The geographic context and social environment in which schools are located, such as differences between urban and suburban schools, can play a significant role in shaping the dynamics of bullying behavior (Craig et al., 2020).

School environments in urban and suburban areas have different social characteristics, which may affect student behavior. Urban schools tend to have more heterogeneous student populations with strong modern cultural influences, while suburban schools may be more homogeneous and closely tied to traditional norms (Smith, 2018). Factors such as group pressure, power dynamics among students, and local community influences may affect the extent and type of bullying in these schools (Hymel & Swearer, 2019).

Bullying in schools in urban areas such as SMPN 1 Giri in Banyuwangi Regency may differ from bullying in suburban schools such as SMPN 1 Licin. In urban schools, social pressure to achieve academically or meet certain social standards may be greater, thus encouraging bullying behavior as a form of expression of dominance (Steffgen et al., 2020). In contrast, in suburban schools, bullying may be more related to peer group dynamics and stronger social hierarchies within small groups (Hong & Espelage, 2018).

The social dynamics at school can influence the relationships between students and their behavior. Research shows that a supportive and inclusive school environment can reduce cases of bullying, while schools with a strong culture of competition or social hierarchy are more prone to bullying (Salmivalli, 2019). In suburban schools, such as SMPN 1 Licin, more traditional community norms may provide more protection against some forms of bullying, but may also encourage more subtle behaviors such as social exclusion or verbal bullying (Swearer et al., 2017).

Cultural and economic differences between urban and suburban schools also influence bullying behavior. Students in urban schools may be more exposed to social media and cyberbullying, while students in suburban schools tend to engage in physical or verbal bullying more often due to more intense face-to-face interactions (Modecki et al., 2021). These forms of bullying may reflect the socio-economic conditions and cultural values developed in each school's community.

Community involvement around the school also has a significant effect on bullying cases. Schools in urban areas may have lower community involvement as people tend to be busiest and individualistic (Hong et al., 2021). In contrast, suburban schools, where communities tend to be more communal, may exert greater social pressure to maintain harmony, but may also reinforce social norms that support bullying behavior as a form of social control (Thornberg et al., 2018).

In addition, the influence of technology also affects the dynamics of bullying in these schools. In urban schools, technology-based bullying, such as cyberbullying, has increased with greater access to the internet and social media (Kowalski et al., 2019). In suburban schools, while access to technology may be more limited, more personalized and face-to-face social interactions may reinforce traditional bullying patterns (Bauman et al., 2020).

The role of teachers in managing the classroom environment and addressing bullying is also an important factor. Teachers in urban schools often face different challenges compared to teachers in suburban schools, such as larger and more socially and economically diverse student populations (Migliaccio & Raskauskas, 2019). Addressing bullying requires different approaches based on the social dynamics and student characteristics in each school setting.

According to Wachs et al. (2019), the level of bullying in schools is not only influenced by students' behavior but also by their perception of the school's social environment. If students feel safe and valued at school, they are less likely to engage in bullying. This difference can be seen between urban and suburban schools, where stronger community ties in suburban schools may give rise to more hidden but still emotionally damaging bullying behaviors.

The presence of anti-bullying programs designed to suit the specific needs of schools also plays an important role in reducing bullying rates. These programs are more effective if they are tailored to the characteristics of students and the social dynamics in a particular school (Espelage et al., 2020). Therefore, it is important to conduct comparative studies in urban and suburban schools so that these programs can be effectively implemented based on the social context of each school.

This study aims to fill the gap in bullying studies in Indonesia, particularly in Banyuwangi, which includes a comparison between urban and suburban schools. So far, most research on bullying in Indonesia has focused on urban schools, while the characteristics of bullying in suburban schools remain largely unexplored (Setiadi & Rohman, 2021). Through this study, it is expected to find different patterns and factors that influence the occurrence of bullying in these two school contexts.

In addition, this research also highlights the importance of a social studies approach in understanding the phenomenon of bullying in schools. This approach not only views bullying as an individual behavior, but also as a result of broader social, cultural, and economic interactions (Juvonen & Graham, 2021). By understanding these factors, schools can develop more effective and targeted prevention strategies.

Most research on bullying in Indonesia focuses on schools in urban areas, which tend to have more complex and heterogeneous social and cultural characteristics. However, very few studies have examined bullying in suburban school settings, especially by comparing them directly with urban schools. This study seeks to fill the gap by exploring the differences in bullying dynamics between urban and suburban schools in Banyuwangi Regency. In addition, previous studies have often focused on one type of bullying, such as physical

bullying or cyberbullying, without paying attention to the interaction between types of bullying in different contexts. Therefore, this study will also look at how different forms of bullying play out in different social environments.

The novelty of this study lies in the comparative approach that links differences in geography and social environment, namely between urban and suburban schools, in the context of bullying. This is one of the first studies to directly compare two schools in Banyuwangi with different social characteristics, namely SMPN 1 Giri as a representation of an urban school and SMPN 1 Licin as an example of a suburban school. In addition, this study not only focuses on the prevalence of bullying, but also examines the social and cultural factors that influence the dynamics of bullying in each school environment, as well as how a social studies approach can be applied to understand and tackle bullying more contextually.

This study aims to explore and compare the forms of bullying that occur in SMPN 1 Giri (an urban school) and SMPN 1 Licin (a suburban school) in Banyuwangi Regency. In addition, this study aims to identify the social, cultural and economic factors that influence bullying behavior in both schools. Specifically, this study aims to provide a deeper understanding of how bullying dynamics are influenced by social characteristics in two different school contexts and to provide recommendations for more effective policies and interventions in tackling bullying in both urban and suburban schools.

Thus, this study is expected to make a significant contribution to the literature related to bullying in schools, especially in the context of differences between urban and suburban environments. This research can also assist education policy makers at the local and national levels in formulating more adaptive and contextualized policies to address bullying in schools across Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Interaction and Bullying

Social interaction theory is an approach in sociology that emphasizes the importance of relationships and communication between individuals in understanding human behavior. In the context of bullying, this theory underlines that aggressive behavior does not occur randomly, but rather results from dynamic interactions between the perpetrator, the victim, and the social environment in which they interact (Blakemore & Frith, 2020). Bullying is seen as a phenomenon that develops through social interactions involving power roles, status, and group norms that operate in social environments, such as schools. Interactions between students, teachers and the wider community can facilitate or inhibit bullying behavior, depending on how these relationships are organized and understood.

One important aspect of social interaction theory related to bullying is the concept of power. Bullying often arises from an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim, where the perpetrator utilizes their position to dominate or control others (Olweus, 2016). In social interactions at school, students who have a higher social status, whether physically, economically, or due to other factors, are more likely to be the perpetrators of bullying. This

power can be gained through peer relationships, academic achievement, or even physical appearance, and is used to control or demean students who are perceived as weaker or different (Espelage & Swearer, 2019). This shows how unequal social interactions can create conditions that favor bullying.

Social interaction theory also highlights the importance of social norms and peer group influence in bullying behavior. In many cases, bullying occurs because peer group norms support aggressive behavior as a way to gain status or recognition (Thornberg & Jungert, 2017). Bullies are often influenced by group pressure to conform to certain social expectations, such as demonstrating power or superiority. These peer group interactions shape and reinforce norms that support bullying behavior. Research shows that in environments where bullying is accepted or ignored, these behaviors tend to occur more frequently (Salmivalli, 2018). Conversely, when social norms reject violence and support inclusiveness, bullying rates decrease significantly.

One of the important contributions of social interaction theory to the study of bullying is the recognition of the role of bystanders in bullying dynamics. Bystanders are students who witness bullying behavior but are not necessarily directly involved as perpetrators or victims (Salmivalli et al., 2021). In social interactions at school, bystanders often play a crucial role in reinforcing or diminishing bullying behavior. If onlookers are supportive or silent, they reinforce the perpetrator's position by validating the behavior. Conversely, if onlookers reject the bullying behavior and support the victim, they can stop the bullying and prevent further escalation. This interaction shows how different actors in the social environment contribute to the dynamics of bullying and how small changes in social responses can change the outcome of the interaction.

The social environment created by schools also plays an important role in preventing or encouraging bullying. Teachers, as part of students' social interactions at school, have a great influence in shaping norms and accepted behaviors (Wachs et al., 2019). When teachers take an active role in preventing and addressing bullying through teaching empathy, social skills, and good classroom management, they can create a more inclusive and safe environment for students. Conversely, when interactions between teachers and students are based on rigid authority or an absence of attention to social dynamics in the classroom, bullying is more likely to occur. Therefore, social interaction theory emphasizes that to address bullying, there needs to be a concerted effort that involves all parties in the school social environment, including students, teachers, and school staff, in shaping more positive interactions.

School Environment Theory in the Context of Bullying

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involves all parties in the school social environment, including students, teachers, and school staff, in shaping more positive interactions.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to deeply understand the phenomenon of bullying in the school environment. Case studies were chosen because they allow researchers to explore the specific context of two schools, namely SMPN 1 Giri and SMPN 1 Licin in Banyuwangi Regency, in dealing with bullying. Through a qualitative approach, the researcher seeks to explore the experiences, understandings and perspectives of various actors who are directly or indirectly involved in the bullying phenomenon, including students, teachers, school staff and other related parties. This approach focuses on the meanings generated from social interactions and individual behaviors within a certain scope, which in this case are two different schools. The research was conducted in two schools, namely SMPN 1 Giri and SMPN 1 Licin, which are located in Banyuwangi Regency. The selection of these two schools was based on different characteristics and backgrounds, both in terms of students' socio-economic conditions, the number of bullying cases reported, and the policies implemented by each school. This location was chosen because it is expected to provide a comprehensive comparison and understanding of how bullying occurs and is addressed in schools with different characteristics.

The data in this study was collected through several techniques, firstly, in-depth interviews, i.e. semi-structured interviews were conducted with students, teachers and school staff to gain an in-depth understanding of their experiences related to bullying. Interview questions focused on personal experiences, school actions in dealing with bullying, and their perceptions of the school climate. Second, participatory observation is where researchers conduct observations at school to directly observe social interactions among students, as well as how power dynamics and bullying behavior occur in a real context. Observations were made in environments that were considered prone to bullying, such as during breaks or in places with minimal supervision. Third, documentation, researchers also collected related documents, such as bullying reports, school policies, and discipline records to analyze school policies in handling bullying cases. These documents will help provide written evidence of the handling of bullying in each school.

The data that had been collected was analyzed using a thematic analysis approach, where the researcher identified the main themes that emerged from the interviews, observations, and documentation. The analysis process involved several stages: first, initial coding, where data obtained from interviews and observations were open-coded to identify common topics related to bullying, such as causal factors, the role of the school environment, and social interactions among students. Second, theme building, i.e. after coding, researchers grouped similar codes into broader themes, for example, the role of school policies in bullying prevention or the influence of peer groups on bullying behavior. The next step was theme review, where the themes that had been identified were reviewed to ensure their relevance and appropriateness to

the data. This process was iterative to ensure that the findings accurately reflected the bullying phenomenon in both schools.

To ensure data validity, the researcher used source triangulation, by comparing data from various sources (interviews, observations, and documentation) to see the consistency of information (Patton, 2015). In addition, the researcher conducted member checking, which is confirming the results of interviews with participants to ensure that the interpretation of the data is in accordance with their understanding. Reliability was maintained through detailed recording and documentation of the research process, so that the research could be replicated in the future.

RESULT

In this section, you should explain each step taken to complete your research. From the results of observations and interviews, it was found that bullying cases in SMPN 1 Giri and SMPN 1 Licin have a relatively high frequency. Although there are some differences regarding the forms of bullying that occur, both schools show that bullying is still a serious problem. Bullying in both schools is not only physical, but also verbal and social. This finding indicates that although SMPN 1 Giri and SMPN 1 Licin have anti-bullying policies, their implementation has not been fully effective in preventing such behavior.

There were significant differences in the dominant forms of bullying in each school. At SMPN 1 Giri, verbal and social bullying were more frequently reported, while at SMPN 1 Licin, physical bullying was more common. Verbal bullying at SMPN 1 Giri often centered on the use of harsh words, ridicule, and disdain for students' academic abilities. Whereas at SMPN 1 Licin, students reported more physical bullying experiences, such as beatings and other physical abuse. These factors reflect the different social conditions in each school.

One of the main findings in this study is the important role of peer groups in facilitating and reinforcing bullying behavior in both schools. At SMPN 1 Giri, it was found that peer groups often provided encouragement or legitimacy for verbal bullying behavior. Bullying perpetrators get support from their peers, who see the act as a means to improve social status. At SMPN 1 Licin, the role of peer groups was also significant, especially in the context of physical bullying, where violent acts were often committed in groups.

The study also found that the lack of supervision from teachers and school staff was one of the contributing factors to the increase in bullying cases in both schools. Many students reported that bullying often occurs in areas with minimal supervision, such as toilets, canteens, or outside the classroom during breaks. Teachers involved in the interviews admitted that they often find it difficult to monitor all student activities, especially during break time or after school. This points to the need for increased supervision and better implementation of bullying prevention strategies.

The school environment plays an important role in determining how bullying occurs. The findings from both schools show that at SMPN 1 Giri, the

school environment that tends to be more competitive and focused on academic achievement triggers verbal bullying, while at SMPN 1 Licin, the environment that is more permissive of physical violence contributes to the prevalence of physical bullying. Factors such as school policies, classroom atmosphere, and relationships between students and teachers influence how much bullying occurs in schools.

This study found that both schools have a written anti-bullying policy, but its implementation is still weak. At SMPN 1 Giri, although the policy exists, many students and teachers feel that the rules are not strictly implemented. The same thing was also found at SMPN 1 Licin, where the anti-bullying policy was more often just a discourse without any real action. This suggests that there needs to be a stronger effort from the school to enforce the existing policy and ensure that any bullying-related offenses are taken seriously.

Bullying in both schools had a significant impact on students' mental health. Students who were victims of bullying, both physical and verbal, reported experiencing psychological distress such as anxiety, depression, and fear of attending school. At SMPN 1 Giri, some students reported that they became insecure and experienced a decline in academic performance as a result of the bullying they received. At SMPN 1 Licin, some students even reported ongoing trauma and fear after being victims of physical bullying. This confirms the important role of schools in providing psychological support for students who are victims of bullying.

Another interesting finding is students' low awareness of the long-term impact of bullying, both as perpetrators and as victims. At SMPN 1 Giri, students who were the perpetrators of bullying often did not realize that their actions could cause psychological trauma to the victims. The same was found at SMPN 1 Licin, where some students who perpetrated physical bullying considered their actions as "joking" and did not understand that it could have serious consequences. This lack of awareness indicates the need for a more in-depth education program on the impact of bullying for all students.

This study also found that family factors play a role in shaping bullying behavior in both schools. Some bullying students at SMPN 1 Licin came from a family environment that was permissive of physical violence or did not pay enough attention to children's behavior. Meanwhile, at SMPN 1 Giri, some student victims of bullying reported that they did not dare to report bullying cases to their parents for fear of not getting support or not being taken seriously. This shows that interventions involving families are very important in dealing with bullying cases.

Although bullying is still a problem, this study found a positive phenomenon where some students showed support for their friends who were victims of bullying. At SMPN 1 Giri, some students reported that they felt comfortable talking to close friends when experiencing bullying, although they were reluctant to report to teachers. At SMPN 1 Licin, some student victims of physical bullying admitted that support from peers helped them to persevere in the face of bullying. These findings highlight the important role of peer groups in helping victims of bullying.

This study found that both schools need a more inclusive and comprehensive bullying prevention program. The current programs tend to be reactive, only acting after a case of bullying has occurred. At SMPN 1 Giri, for example, some students reported that the sanctions given to bullying perpetrators were not enough to prevent similar incidents in the future. At SMPN 1 Licin, the existing prevention program does not directly involve students in prevention efforts. Therefore, there is a need for a proactive program that involves all school components, including students, teachers, and parents, in preventing bullying.

Based on these findings, the study recommends that SMPN 1 Giri and SMPN 1 Licin make some improvements in their anti-bullying policies and programs. One of the main recommendations is to increase student involvement in bullying prevention through more structured socialization and education activities. In addition, increased supervision in areas prone to bullying, such as canteens and toilets, also needs attention. Finally, this study emphasizes the importance of providing psychological support for bullying victims and integrating more comprehensive programs to create a safe and inclusive school environment.

DISCUSSIONS

This study revealed that bullying in both schools occurred with a relatively high frequency. Based on the literature, bullying in secondary schools does occur frequently because the adolescent phase is characterized by the search for identity and competition between individuals (Olweus, 2019). In this phase, adolescents tend to experience emotional changes that can trigger aggressive behavior. The high frequency of bullying in SMPN 1 Giri and SMPN 1 Licin shows that these schools need more structured handling to effectively address this problem.

The difference between the dominant physical bullying at SMPN 1 Licin and verbal bullying at SMPN 1 Giri can be explained through social interaction theory. According to Bandura (2018), aggressive behavior is often imitated from the surrounding environment. Students at SMPN 1 Licin may be more exposed to models of physical violence, whereas students at SMPN 1 Giri are more exposed to verbal violence as a result of their daily social interactions. Thus, different interventions are needed for each form of bullying in order to better target the treatment.

One important finding is the significant role of peer groups in reinforcing bullying behavior. According to Salmivalli's (2017) research, peer groups have a major role in supporting or preventing bullying behavior. Students who become perpetrators often gain support from their peers, and this creates a group dynamic that exacerbates bullying situations. Therefore, it is important for schools to strengthen intervention programs that target peer group dynamics to break the bullying cycle.

Lack of supervision from teachers is also one of the factors causing bullying in both schools. As concluded by Craig et al. (2020), areas that lack supervision, such as restrooms and canteens, are often prime locations for bullying. To

address this, teachers and school staff should be given further training on supervision and early intervention, as well as raising their awareness of the signs of bullying that may not be immediately apparent.

The finding that the school environment plays a major role in influencing bullying behavior confirms the results of previous research by Espelage & Swearer (2019), which showed that schools with a competitive culture are more prone to cases of verbal bullying. An environment that does not support healthy social interactions and tends to reinforce competition between students can increase cases of bullying, as seen at SMPN 1 Giri. Therefore, changes in a more inclusive and collaborative school climate should be a priority in addressing this issue.

Although both schools have anti-bullying policies in place, this study shows that the implementation is still weak. This is in line with research by Smith (2021), who found that anti-bullying policies are often just a formality and are not implemented consistently. Anti-bullying policies should be supported with concrete actions, such as teacher training, ongoing prevention programs, and reporting mechanisms that are easily accessible to students.

The findings regarding the impact of bullying on students' mental health corroborate many studies which state that bullying has long-term effects on children's psychology. According to research by Perren et al. (2017), victims of bullying are more prone to psychological disorders such as anxiety, depression, and decreased academic performance. This suggests that schools should provide adequate psychological support, both through counseling and rehabilitation programs for students who are victims of bullying.

Students' low awareness of the long-term impact of bullying is also a major problem. According to Wright et al. (2016), a lack of understanding about the consequences of bullying can worsen the situation as perpetrators do not realize that their actions can cause deep psychological trauma. Educational programs that focus on empathy and understanding the impact of bullying need to be implemented for students to have a better awareness of the consequences of their actions.

This study also found that family factors play a role in shaping bullying behavior, both as perpetrators and victims. This is in accordance with the findings of Stevens et al. (2018) which showed that children from families who pay less attention or come from a family environment that is permissive of violence are more likely to become bullying perpetrators. In addition, victims of bullying are often reluctant to report to their parents because they feel unsupported. Interventions involving families should be an integral part of the bullying response strategy in schools.

The peer support found in both schools, particularly in helping victims of bullying, is a positive phenomenon. Research by Kokkinos et al. (2017) showed that support from peers can help victims deal with the social and emotional distress of bullying. Therefore, intervention programs that involve peer groups as agents of change may be helpful in reducing the impact of bullying.

One of the major shortcomings of the anti-bullying programs in both schools is the lack of a proactive approach. The existing programs tend to be

reactive, only addressing bullying after it happens. As stated by Rigby (2019), a proactive approach that involves the entire school community, including students, teachers, and parents, would be more effective in preventing bullying than focusing only on handling cases. These programs should be supported by ongoing education on bullying as well as reporting mechanisms that are easily accessible to all parties. To address the lack of supervision in bullying-prone areas, research suggests the need for increased surveillance and the implementation of technology-based surveillance systems. According to Puhl et al. (2020), surveillance cameras in strategic areas can be an effective tool to prevent physical bullying and facilitate early intervention measures. Increasing the number of teachers on duty outside the classroom will also help in monitoring student behavior.

Finally, this study confirms the importance of integrating anti-bullying policies with programs that create safe and inclusive learning environments. An environment that supports healthy social interactions can prevent bullying. Policy implementation should be based on a holistic approach that includes the involvement of all school elements, from school management, teachers, students, to parents (Swearer et al., 2021). These programs should also be continuously evaluated to ensure that prevention and intervention measures are appropriate to the needs of the school and local community.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A comparison of bullying cases at SMPN 1 Giri and SMPN 1 Licin in Banyuwangi Regency shows that bullying is a complex phenomenon that is influenced by various factors, including the characteristics of the school environment, social interactions between students, and bullying response policies implemented by each school. The study identified significant differences in the forms and frequency of bullying experienced by students in the two schools, with SMPN 1 Giri showing a higher prevalence of verbal and social forms of bullying compared to SMPN 1 Licin, which experienced more physical bullying. The psychological impact of bullying, such as anxiety and depression, was also more pronounced in SMPN 1 Giri, highlighting the urgent need for effective interventions. By understanding the social and policy contexts that play a role in bullying cases, this study recommends the need for a more comprehensive and participatory prevention program, involving students, teachers, and parents, to create a safer and more supportive school environment.

Recommendations for schools include the development of a bullying prevention program based on social intervention involving students, teachers, and parents. This program should focus on increasing awareness and empathy among students, as well as training for teachers in recognizing and handling bullying cases more effectively. It is also important to involve authorities and communities in creating a supportive and safe environment for students, so that they can learn and develop without fear of bullying from their peers. The implementation of these recommendations is expected to reduce bullying cases and improve the quality of the educational environment in both schools, which will ultimately support students' social and emotional development.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

For future research, it is recommended to conduct a longitudinal study exploring the factors influencing bullying in SMPN 1 Giri and SMPN 1 Licin, focusing on changes in bullying behavior over time as well as the influence of school policies and intervention programs. Research could also involve comparisons with other schools in different regions to understand the cultural and social contexts that influence bullying dynamics. In addition, it is important to investigate the long-term impact of bullying on students' social and emotional development, using both quantitative and qualitative approaches to obtain more comprehensive data. Finally, there is a need to analyze the effectiveness of prevention and intervention programs implemented in the school environment, taking into account feedback from students and teachers to optimize strategies that can create a safer and more supportive learning environment for all students.

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