



## The Relationship of Bullying Behavior to Emotional and Behavioral Disorders in Students

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Feny Pebriana\*<sup>1</sup>, Aulia Rahman<sup>1</sup>, Hernida Warni<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Health, Bachelor of Nursing Study Program, Mitra Indonesia University, Indonesia

### CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

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\*Corresponding author:  
Feny Pebriana

Faculty of Health, Bachelor of Nursing,  
Study Program, Mitra Indonesia  
University, Indonesia, Bandar  
Lampung, Lampung

Email: [fenifebriana389@gmail.com](mailto:fenifebriana389@gmail.com)



#### Abstract

**Background:** Bullying is a prevalent issue affecting adolescents' psychological well-being globally. It may contribute to emotional and behavioral disorders, especially during the critical developmental phase of adolescence. **Purpose:** This study aimed to investigate the relationship between bullying behavior and emotional and behavioral disorders among students at SMPN 18 West Tulang Bawang, Indonesia. **Methods:** A cross-sectional analytic survey was conducted involving 108 students selected through stratified random sampling. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed using the Chi-Square test to determine the association between bullying behavior (categorized as frequent or rare) and emotional-behavioral disorders (categorized as normal or abnormal). **Results:** Among 108 respondents, 58.3% reported frequent bullying behavior, and 25.9% exhibited emotional and behavioral disorders. The analysis showed no statistically significant association between bullying behavior and emotional-behavioral disorders ( $p = 0.235$ ; OR = 0.697; 95% CI). Most students who reported frequent bullying behavior still fell within the normal emotional-behavioral range. **Conclusion:** Although bullying remains a frequent occurrence among students, it was not significantly associated with emotional and behavioral disorders in this sample. However, comprehensive intervention strategies addressing not only bullying but also other psychosocial and environmental factors are recommended to promote mental health among adolescents. School-based mental health programs and parental engagement are essential for fostering emotional resilience and reducing harmful behaviors in school environments

**Keywords:** bullying behavior, emotional, behavioral disorders

#### Introduction

Mental health disorders in adolescents are still a common health problem in the world, one of which is anxiety. Anxiety is a problem experienced by everyone, and can appear at any time in adults, adolescents, or children in school. The adolescent developmental cycle undergoes many changes. The changes that occur during this adolescent development cycle can sometimes cause problems for oneself and the surrounding environment. This problem can affect the development of adolescents in the future, especially the

maturity of their character, which can lead to mental emotional disorders [11].

According to [19] the incidence of anxiety in adolescents reaches 20% of the world's population. One of the most common problems faced by children and adolescents around the world, including in Indonesia, is bullying. According to the World Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO, 2019), bullying is defined as aggressive behavior that involves unwanted negative actions, is carried out repeatedly, and there is an imbalance of power and power between the

perpetrator or perpetrators and the victim. In UNESCO reported that nearly one in three students, or about 32%, had experienced harassment at school at least once in the past month; more than one in three students (36%) had been involved in a physical fight with another student; and nearly one in three students (32.4%) had been assaulted at least once in the past year[18].

Based on data from [13] the prevalence in Indonesia has increased mental emotion disorder (GME) in the Indonesian population aged 15 years and over reached 9.8%, and depression in the Indonesian population aged 15 years and over reached 9.0%. According to data from Lampung Province, the prevalence of mental emotion disorder (GME) in the Indonesian population aged 15 years and over reached 5.6% and depression in the population aged 15 years and over reached 11.3%.

Based on the Indonesian Health Survey [17], the prevalence of mental health in Indonesia in the past month in the population aged 15 years and over was 2.0%, and depression in the past two weeks in the population aged 15 years and over in Indonesia reached 1.4%. In Lampung Province, the prevalence of mental health in the past month in the population aged 15 years and over was 0.7% and depression in the past two weeks in the population aged 15 years and over reached 0.5%.

Based on data (West Tulang Bawang Health Office, 2022) there were 474 cases of severe mental disorders and 78 cases of anxiety and depression. While in the Candra Mukti Health Center work area, the results obtained state that the number of patients with mental disorders from January to August 2023 amounted to 43 people spread across the village.

Adolescence is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood characterized by physical, mental, and psychosocial

changes. Emotional increase caused by physical changes, especially due to changes in body hormones that occur in adolescence, is one form of change that occurs in adolescence. Many modern adolescents cannot cope with the physical and mental changes that impact their emotional turmoil, which makes them easy to deviate from social rules and norms. In addition, egocentrism and a strong desire to be noticed by others emerge during adolescence. To get the attention and recognition of others, adolescents engage in behaviors such as bullying A. Sofia in[16].

The phenomenon of bullying cannot be considered a trivial case because it can have a major impact on the psychological condition of students which leads to negative impacts. This case also occurs at all levels of education, age, and gender, so the victims are students who have weak backgrounds or have physical or social deficiencies such as being shy, quiet, disabled, closed, foreign, or even too smart. Bullying behavior is very bad for its victims. Victims of bullying usually experience fear and anxiety, impaired concentration at school, do not actively socialize with their friends, and feel alienated to reduce their academic performance [6].

Victims of bullying will lose self-esteem and not want to go to school because children usually experience harassment in the school environment. Victims of bullying will unconsciously experience a negative impact on their academic performance at school. Long-term effects, such as psychological distress, anxiety, low self-esteem, a sense of worthlessness, and the risk of violent behavior to suicidal ideation, are the most dangerous [21].

Researchers conducted a pre-survey conducted on November 02, 2024 in three schools (SMPN 16 West Tulang Bawang there were cases of bullying around 10.71%, SMPN 27 West Tulang Bawang

there were cases of bullying around 13.42. Based on the description above, the researcher is interested in examining whether there is a relationship between bullying behavior and emotional and behavioral disorders in students at SMPN 18 West Tulang Bawang in 2024.

**Methods**

This study uses quantitative with a cross-sectional approach. The research design used in this study is analytical survey research with a cross sectional approach, namely research that aims to find the relationship between risk factors and the effects of observation or observation between variables carried out simultaneously to determine the relationship of bullying behavior to emotional and behavioral disorders in students at SMPN 18 West Tulang Bawang. The sample in this study amounted to 96 subjects with inclusion and exclusion criteria.

**Result**

**Table 1.** Distribution Characteristics Respondent

Characteristics	n	%
Age 12 - 16	108 108	<b>100%</b>
Total	108	<b>100.0</b>
Gender Female Male	70 38	<b>64.8</b> <b>35.2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Based on Table 1, it is known that of the 108 respondents in students at SMPN 18 West Tulang Bawang at the age of 12 to 16 years, there were 108 students (100%). In gender characteristics dominated by

women totaling 70 students or 64.8% and men totaling 38 students, or 35.2%.

**Table 2.** Distribution Frequency of Bullying Behavior

Bullying Behaviour	n	%
Rarely	45	<b>41.7</b>
Often	63	<b>58.3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Based on Table 4.2, the frequency distribution based on bullying behavior at SMPN 18 West Tulang Bawang, the majority were in the rare category, as many as 45 respondents (41.7%), and for the frequent category, as many as 63 respondents (58.3%).

**Table 3.** Distribution Frequency of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders

Emotional And Behavioural Disorders	n	%
Normal	80	74.1
Abnormal	28	25.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Based on Table 3, it is known that the frequency distribution of emotional and behavioral disorders in students at SMPN 18 West Tulang Bawang, with the normal category, is 80 respondents (74.1%), and in the abnormal category, as many as 28 respondents (25.9%). Based on Table 3 above, it is known that the frequency distribution of emotional and behavioral disorders in students at SMPN 18 West Tulang Bawang, with the normal category, is 80 respondents (74.1%), and in the abnormal category, as many as 28 respondents (25.9%).

**Table 4.** The relationship of bullying behavior to emotional and behavioral disorders

Bullying Behaviour	Emotional And Behavioural Disorders				Total		OR (95,0%)	P-Value
	Normal		Abnormal		n	%		
	n	%	n	%				
Rarely	36	80.0	9	20.0	45	100	0.697	0.235
Often	44	69.8	19	30.2	63	100		
Total	80	74.1	28	25.9	108	100		

Based on Table 4, it is known that out of 108 respondents there were rare category bullying behavior with emotional disturbances and normal behavior as many as 36 respondents (80.0%), rare category bullying behavior with emotional disturbances and abnormal behavior 9 respondents (20.0%). Bullying behavior in the frequent category with emotional disturbance and normal behavior was 44 respondents (69.8%), bullying behavior in the frequent category with emotional disturbance and abnormal behavior was 19 respondents (30.2%). Based on the Chi Square Test results obtained p-value = 0.235, it can be concluded that there is no relationship between bullying behavior and emotional and behavioral disorders in students at SMPN 18 West Tulang Bawang in 2024.

### Discussions

Characteristics based on age in students at SMPN 18 West Tulang Bawang at the age of 12 - 16 years, totaling 108 students (100%). According to [20] adolescence is a life between childhood and adulthood, from the ages of 10 to 19 years who are undergoing physical, emotional and social changes and are easily exposed to mental health problems due to exposure to poverty, abuse and violent behavior. According to the results of research by [2]. Adolescent growth and development causes changes in biological, psychological and social aspects. Often, they face various

problems that can have an impact on their mental health. Emotional development during adolescence plays a role in shaping their character in facing life's challenges and influencing the behavior shown.

Research by [15]. Data shows that most adolescents have a tendency to commit violent behavior with a high category of 22 people (34%), moderate 30 people (45%), and low 14 people (21%). The majority of perpetrators are in the early adolescent age range (12-16 years). Adolescence itself is an important phase in life, where individuals experience various changes, challenges, and search for self-identity. This period is often considered a transitional period full of difficulties, uncertainties, and even fears, as well as the first step towards adulthood. Based on this opinion, it can be understood that adolescents often find clashes as a reflection of their desire to show their identity and expect support from others.

Characteristics based on gender are dominated by women totaling 70 students or 64.8% and men totaling 38 students or 35.2%. In line with [3], it is explained that female adolescents tend to commit verbal and psychological bullying. Emotional maturity plays an important role in this behavior; individuals with low emotional maturity are more likely to bully as a form of venting negative emotions such as anger. The findings in the field show that the majority of adolescent girls are more likely

to engage in bullying behavior, especially in the form of verbal bullying.

This study found that the frequency distribution based on bullying behavior at SMPN 18 Tulang Bawang Barat, the majority were in the frequent category as many as 63 respondents (58.3%). This is in accordance with the theory of [9] the results of research at SMA Negeri X showed that 225 students (78.94%) were in the high bullying behavior category, while 55 students (19.29%) were in the medium category, and only 5 students (1.75%) were in the low category. This shows that the high prevalence of bullying behavior among these students is mostly in the frequent category.

This study found that the frequency distribution based on bullying behavior at SMPN 18 Tulang Bawang Barat, the majority were in the frequent category as many as 63 respondents (58.3%). This is in accordance with the theory [9] the results of research at SMA Negeri X showed that 225 students (78.94%) were in the high bullying behavior category, while 55 students (19.29%) were in the medium category, and only 5 students (1.75%) were in the low category. This shows that the high prevalence of bullying behavior among these students is mostly in the frequent category.

The results of this study obtained the frequency distribution of emotional and behavioral disorders in students at SMPN 18 West Tulang Bawang majority of the normal category of 80 respondents (74.1%). Based on research by [8]. The findings show that 59.5% of adolescents have emotional and behavioral problems in the normal category. However, there are still adolescents who fall into the borderline and abnormal categories. Adolescence itself is a transitional phase from childhood to adulthood, which is characterized by various psychosocial and emotional changes. In this process, adolescents often

face challenges, both in the family and friendship environment, which can affect their emotional state. As a result, adolescents become more irritable, quick-tempered, and have difficulty controlling their emotions. It is also not uncommon for adolescents to have difficulty adjusting to the environment, resulting in anxiety, a sense of alienation and isolation.

According to research by [7]. The results showed that 47.2% of adolescents experienced emotional and behavioral disorders in the normal category. Family, school, and community environments have an important role in shaping adolescent emotions. Therefore, positive support from the environment and exemplary behavior from parents and other adults are needed so that adolescents can obtain moral and social values that support their emotional development.

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Based on the results of research by [12], there is a negative relationship between emotional regulation and bullying in class XII students of SMA Negeri 2 Makassar. This means that the better the emotional regulation of class XII students of SMA

Negeri 2 Makassar, the lower their tendency to engage in bullying behavior, and vice versa, poor emotional regulation can increase bullying behavior. One of the main factors that cause bullying tendencies is poor emotional regulation or individual temperament. Students with high temperament tend to be more aggressive and have more difficulty controlling their emotions. In addition, adolescents often experience confusion in placing themselves in the school environment because they are in a developmental phase towards physical, mental, social, and emotional maturity.

Based on the results of Cowie and Jennifer's research in [12], one of the factors causing the tendency of bullying behavior is poor emotional regulation or individual temperament. The individual's ability to control low emotions causes behavioral disturbances, so they choose to engage in bullying behavior. In addition to the changes that occur within adolescents, other people's perceptions of them also affect their emotional development.

In contrast to the results of other studies by [14] The results of this study indicate that there is a relationship between bullying behavior and mental emotional development in children at the Putra Tello Junior High School Makassar with a  $p$  value = 0.001, 29.8% of children aged 7-12 years have been bullied since they first entered school. The forms of action that are often felt are verbal 23.8%, physical 29%, and loss as much as 8.1% of children are bullied every day or every week.

Based on the results of research by [10]. There is a significant positive relationship between the frequency of bullying and the level of mental disorders, as well as bullying behavior that increases the risk of mental disorders. In SMP 35 Medan, it was found that there are three types of bullying behavior that often occur, namely physical, verbal, and social bullying. The frequency of verbal bullying reached 40-50%, while

physical bullying was around 15-20%, and social bullying was around 20-30% of the total reported cases.

In this study, bullying behavior was measured based on the aspects proposed by [5], namely physical bullying, verbal bullying, and mental/psychological bullying. The results showed that the verbal bullying aspect had the highest category. This indicates that many students consider verbal bullying as something common and normal. Verbal bullying is easier to detect than other types of bullying because it can be directly heard by others. This finding is reinforced through interviews and observations, where students who often commit verbal bullying tend to see their friends' physical characteristics as something unique, mock each other's dialects, or give hurtful nicknames. They assume that these actions are just a joke and not something serious, so they continue to do it without realizing the negative impact.

Research conducted by Kallmen and Hallgren on school children at Stockholm School found that a high incidence of bullying at school was associated with a higher likelihood of mental health problems. Boys seem to be more vulnerable to the ill effects of bullying than girls [4].

### Limitation

This study was limited by its cross-sectional design, which does not allow for causal inferences. Additionally, data were self-reported, potentially introducing response bias. The sample was limited to one school, restricting generalizability.

### Conclusion

Based on the results of research conducted at SMPN 18 West Tulang Bawang, it is concluded that there is no relationship between bullying behavior and emotional and behavioral disorders in students at SMPN 18 West Tulang Bawang. The results of this study can be used as

additional information and preliminary data for the development of further research related to the relationship of bullying behavior to emotional and behavioral disorders in students. It is hoped that schools can pay more attention to bullying actions that occur in the school environment and increase students' understanding of the dangers of bullying with emotional disturbances so that they are able to cooperate with bullying behavior regulations on emotional and behavioral disorders for all students to improve communication with good mutual respect regardless of background, physical, or any differences to be good and harmonious peers and support each other, provide assistance.

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None.

#### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

#### **Data Availability**

The datasets generated and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

#### **Author Contributions**

Feny Pebriana: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Writing Original Draft, Aulia Rahman: Data Collection, Statistical Analysis, Writing Review & Editing, Hernida Warni: Supervision, Literature Review, Writing

Review & Editing. All authors have read and approved the final manuscript.

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