



Parents' role in providing mental health for children of bullying victims

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to collaborate on the role of parents in supporting the mental health of children who experience bullying. This research used a descriptive qualitative approach based on data collection techniques obtained from interviews, observations, and literature studies as theories and supporting data. Data were analyzed systematically by searching, organizing, reducing, presenting, drawing conclusions, and verifying data obtained through observation, interviews, and data collection. According to research findings, most forms of bullying were verbal (hurtful words) and physical treatments, which can degrade a child. The impact of bullying on victims included a decrease in children's self-confidence and feeling less valuable to themselves. They also experience resentment, closure, sadness, pressure from the surrounding environment, depression, anger, and discomfort, which causes them to doubt the presence of those around them. The role of parents is very important in fortifying the mental health of these children. Parents must constantly approach their children, provide support advice, and help them develop strong mental resilience. In addition, parents must help children by giving a healthy perspective so children can accept well. One of the efforts of parents is to teach an attitude of never giving up, especially in pursuing higher education.

Keywords: The role of parents; bullying; mental health.

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Received: July 3, 2023; Accepted: September 17, 2023; Published: September 30, 2023

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DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22373/equality.v9i2.18955>

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengekolaborasikan peran orang tua dalam mendukung kesehatan mental anak-anak yang mengalami bullying. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif, berdasarkan teknik pengumpulan data, diperoleh dari hasil wawancara, observasi, dan studi literatur sebagai teori dan data-data pendukung. Data dianalisis secara sistematis dengan langkah-langkah seperti pencarian, pengorganisasian, reduksi, penyajian, penarikan kesimpulan, dan verifikasi data yang didapat melalui observasi, wawancara, dan pengumpulan data di lapangan. Menurut temuan penelitian, bentuk perlakuan bullying paling sering dilakukan secara verbal (kata-kata yang menyakitkan) dan perlakuan fisik, yang keduanya dapat merendahkan diri anak. Dampak bullying pada korban mencakup penurunan kepercayaan diri anak serta anak merasa kurang berharga kepada dirinya sendiri. Mereka pula mengalami perasaan kesal, menutup diri, merasakan kesedihan, tekanan dari lingkungan sekitar, depresi, marah, dan ketidaknyamanan, yang menyebabkan mereka meragukan kehadiran orang-orang di sekitar mereka. Peranan orang tua begitu penting dalam membentengi kesehatan mental anak-anak tersebut. Orang tua perlu terus mendekati anak-anak mereka, memberikan dukungan, nasihat dan membantu mereka mengembangkan ketahanan mental yang kuat. Selain itu, orang tua harus turut membantu anak-anak dalam memberi cara pandang yang sehat dan anak-anak dapat menerima dengan baik, salah satu upaya orang tua adalah mengajarkan sikap pantang menyerah, terutama dalam mengejar pendidikan yang lebih tinggi.

Kata Kunci: Peran orang tua; bullying; kesehatan mental.

1. INTRODUCTION

When it comes to the violence associated with school-age children, the situation has become a serious concern for educators, parents, and society. On the contrary, schools should be an environment that supports children's positive growth and development, but unfortunately, the situation triggers the development of bullying practices (Mudjijanti, 2011). Teenagers and children at the elementary school level also face bullying. Bullying refers to repeated acts of aggression or intimidation through physical or non-physical forms of violence that are worked on for someone with greater psychological and physical strength towards a weaker child (Damayanti et al., 2019). Children who are victims of bullying often face difficulties in keeping up with lessons at school. This condition occurs because they feel burdened in class and have to interact with the bully. They also feel afraid and anxious about being bullied again. As a result, these children have difficulty focusing on the subject matter and focus more on how to avoid or overcome bullying situations (Muliasari, 2019).

When a child begins to engage in interaction with the environment around him, several factors begin to play an important role in his life. It includes the school environment and the surrounding community. Each environment has the potential to influence children's activities and has different characteristics (Fikriyah et al., 2022). The school environment has a vital influence on children's mental development and learning achievement. The quality of the

school environment, good or bad, significantly impacts a child's development. If the school environment is inadequate, this can harm children's mental development, such as an increase in bullying cases that often take place among students in the school environment (Harahap & Saputri, 2019). Unwittingly, they engage in bullying behavior towards peers or classmates. The impact of this act of bullying is the emergence of emotional discomfort and disorders on mental health. Mental health refers to a healthy mental state and the drive to live with good quality, in line with religious and cultural values, for personal, family, and professional life (Yusuf, 2018).

Bullying patterns repeat adverse responses by a group of students or more, intending to break through and create an imbalance of dominance between the perpetrator and the victim. Some examples of bullying include insults, gossip spreading, social manipulation, ostracism, threats, bullying, blackmail, and physical violence such as pushing, slapping, and punching. Bullying behavior refers to repetitive emotional, verbal, and physical actions toward other students who are more vulnerable and cannot protect themselves due to differences in scale and strength. Bullying includes imbalances in physical and verbal violence. It can include threats, dissemination of rumors, theft, obstruction, damage to other people's property, sexual harassment, and bullying based on sexual, racial, or ethnic references (Nurhayanti & Novotasari, 2013).

Such negative behavior shows striking characteristics or traits that have a detrimental physical and mental impact on the victim. The visible conditions of this behavior have adverse consequences for the victim's welfare, both physically and mentally (Aini, 2018). Victims of bullying will experience anxiety and the risk of developing depression, which can lead to suicidal thoughts. Victims of bullying will reflect on their experiences, and in some extreme cases, they may feel like taking revenge on the bully in a more extreme way (Setiawati et al., 2021).

The great potential for adolescent students to replicate these negative behaviors is seen in their involvement in bullying. Teens often engage in bullying after becoming victims of individuals with greater power, such as parents, siblings, upper-level students, or prominent peers. Adapting well among classmates will help students feel comfortable in the learning process. Conversely, behavior that goes against the norm among peers in the classroom can make students feel disturbed or uncomfortable when interacting socially with them (Fataruba, 2016).

There are demands for teachers and parents to play a role in preventing bullying. It is due to a common phenomenon where bullying often occurs in children's social environments, including family, community, and school (Angeli, 2021). The role of parents in the family environment has an essential meaning in the growth and development of children. This role has a strong influence on the child's behavior. Parents are responsible for developing children's potential in psychomotor, cognitive, and affective aspects, as well as maintaining children's physical health. Every parent must feel happy and proud to have a healthy and smart child. In addition, the family and school environment also play a significant role. When

children interact with the surrounding environment, they will adjust their behavior to the behavior of those around them (Mu'awwanah & Supena, 2020).

The pattern of parent-child relationships can be observed from various aspects, such as the parents' approach to teaching children discipline and good communication skills (Ningrum & Suharto, 2015). In a family environment, especially parents, children first interact after birth. Creating an optimal environment in this early stage is important to support positive personality development. The family has a great influence on the beginning of a child's development and plays a role in shaping his traits and associations. Environmental background, parental education model, and surrounding scope can influence bullying.

Furthermore, there is a gap relationship between the inappropriate education model of parents with the emergence of aggressive actions in children. Corporal punishment, unstable punishment, and excessive provision of facilities are significantly related to children's onset of aggressive behavior. In other words, children who often experience corporal punishment from parents and are given excessive facilities tend to show aggressive behavior that can trigger bullying (Syofiyanti, 2016).

The task of the family is to identify several factors related to the child's interaction with his friends in the school environment, be it good or bad. Some factors that may come from the family environment and are related to children who are victims of bullying include a lack of relationship between parents and children, excessive restrictions on children's social interactions with peers, and having too high a desire for children. Therefore, parents need to realize that acts of violence in schools can occur in children who do not get enough attention from parents.

The role of parents in the family includes being a good example for their children, where they guide children in facing problems. In this context, parents' role is important in supporting children who have undergone bullying treatment. The task of parents is to reshape the confidence and courage of children who have been victims of bullying (Utomo, 2018). In addition, bullying can be avoided through the direction and guidance given by the teacher. The role of teachers is not only limited to providing lessons to students but also involves fostering student morals and behavior (Firmansyah, 2022).

Therefore, it is important to improve the cognitive and psychomotor of parents in encountering children who are victims of bullying because this will have a significant impact on the child. Parents' readiness and vigilance are the main factors in handling this problem, supported by support from family. In this context, it can be explained how bullying behavior impacts children's mental health and the efforts made by parents to overcome children's mental health problems.

Based on the explanation above related to previous research, among the research conducted by Sigalingging & Gultom (2023) entitled "The Role of Parents in Overcoming Bullying in Children," then research conducted by Yulianti & Syukur (2023) entitled "The Role of Parents on the Formation of Children's Character in Responding to Bullying," and research from Harmilasari et al., (2021) entitled "Building the Character of Elementary

School Students through Parenting to Fight Bullying." Therefore, the researcher is interested in taking the research title "Handling Parents of Mental Health in Children Victims of Bullying." With that in mind, the purpose of this study was to describe how parents deal with the mental health of children who experience bullying.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Mental Health

A key element of what constitutes health is mental health. People in good mental health are better equipped to reach their potential, handle the demands of everyday life, work efficiently, and give back to their communities (Ayuningtyas et al., 2018). To achieve total health, mental wellness or mental health is crucial. Along with physical health, mental health must also be taken into account.

Because of the still-alarmingly high number of instances, it is important to recognize that mental health illnesses exist. There is a vast disparity between the demand for care and its availability since it is believed that global health systems cannot adequately address the burden of mental diseases. Each individual's healthy mental state is unique and cannot be generalized. Because of this issue, it is becoming more urgent to talk about mental health and discover ways to empower people to find, maintain, and improve their mental health to deal with daily life (Syarifin, 2018).

2.2. Bullying

Bullying is a set of violent behaviors that can continuously inflict harm or destruction and a loss of power. Bullying is a persistent issue in the news since it is a troubling trend that the government and society find to be of great concern. Bullying and deviant behavior are issues that persist year after year, seemingly without end (Sulfemi & Yasita, 2020). Bullying is an act of terror in the form of ostracism, intimidation, physical and mental violence, and hazing.

Bullying has a severe negative effect on both the bully and the victim. The bullied person will feel worried, may progress to depression, and may even commit suicide. The bully may also have a violent temperament and a sense of power. Bullying victims will consider the treatment they have experienced, and in more extreme cases, they will exact retribution on the bully, which is more violent. Bullying survivors will eventually become bullies (Rahayu & Permana, 2019).

Bullying is influenced by internal and external causes, including those of youngsters. Self-identity issues, poor self-control, and a sense of prior trauma are examples of internal variables (Ramadia & Putri, 2019). In the meantime, poor parenting, strained families, unrest in the school environment, and watching violent television are external causes of bullying behavior. Family, which includes parental involvement and family conflicts that might result in poor conduct in teenagers, is one of the external elements contributing to bullying behavior. The most significant determinant of a person's engagement in bullying conduct is their family.

3. METHOD

This qualitative research with a descriptive approach aims to provide a systematic picture or explanation following the natural situation regarding facts, data, and related research objects (Anggito & Setiawan, 2018) to achieve the research objectives related to an in-depth and comprehensive exploration of the impact of bullying behavior on children's mental health and the efforts made by parents to address mental health problems in children. This study was conducted in West Pontianak District, Pontianak. The research participants involved the parents and one child as the research subjects. The data source used consists of primary data and secondary data. Primary data are obtained through observations and field interviews, while secondary data refer to literature such as books, journal articles, and other sources.

In this study, several data collection methods were used, including interviews, literature studies, and observation (direct observation). Interviews were conducted to obtain information about the role of parents and children's experiences related to the problem being studied. Literature studies are used to find supporting data sources relevant to the research. Meanwhile, observation was carried out by directly observing children who were victims of bullying to understand their mental health. To ensure the validity of the findings, triangulation of different data sources and methods is carried out. In contrast, data analysis is carried out by reducing and presenting the data that has been collected.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. *Impact of Bullying Behavior on Mental Health*

Based on observations made by researchers, UR is a girl's initial, and UR is a girl studying in college. UR carries out activities from childhood to the present, rarely leaving the house, which is only pegged to her being a student to go to campus to study and go home. This attitude was experienced during her childhood, as she was a victim of physical bullying from elementary to high school. During the research, observing victims of bullying, researchers looked at the impact experienced by UR. It is corroborated by excerpts from an interview with UR. "I was silent because I was too lazy to trust people. Nor do I tell anyone about the life I experienced" (P. P1, personal communication, 2022).

Based on the interview results, it can be concluded that victims of bullying tend to be quiet and reluctant to share their stories with others because they feel afraid due to their experiences that they are always victims of bullying. It causes the victim discomfort when interacting in a crowded social environment. If this condition is left unchecked, the impact can be very detrimental to the mental health of victims of bullying. Observing victims of bullying, researchers looked at the impact experienced by UR, where this attitude turned out to have been experienced during childhood who was a victim of physical bullying from elementary school to high school during the researcher observed victims of bullying After observing the impact of bullying behavior on the mental health of UR students, researchers found the following effects on victims of bullying: become more introverted, have a closed attitude, have difficulty trusting others, experience a decrease in self-confidence, and feel sadder, even as they approach adulthood.

It is consistent with Visty's (2021) findings in her study, which concluded that the effects of bullying on victims' behavior include fear and social isolation, where they tend to withdraw from social interactions. Research conducted by Samsudi & Muhid (2020) also shows that bullying has negative effects that can be felt in the short and long term. In the short term, these negative effects include discomfort, social isolation, low self-worth, and a desire to stay away from the surrounding environment. Meanwhile, in the long run, the negative impact of bullying on victims can include prolonged emotional and behavioral suffering and potentially cause serious psychological disorders such as stress and depression. It can even lead to the risk of suicide. In addition, such impacts can also affect the learning achievement of victims, as they have difficulty focusing attention and are often absent from school, which is an important factor in achieving learning success.

According to Muspita, several factors can cause bullying: 1) Family environment factors: Bullies often come from families that experience problems, such as excessive use of punishment against children or high levels of stress, aggression, and conflict in the home environment. 2) School environment factors: One factor that plays a role in the occurrence of bullying is the inattention of the school to the existence of bullying acts. (Muspita et al., 2017). It can make bullies feel supported and encouraged to continue bullying behavior towards other children in the school environment. 3) Peer group factors: Children tend to be encouraged to bully when interacting with peers at school and in the neighborhood. Interaction with peer groups can influence a child's behavior and encourage them to engage in bullying.

The adolescent peer group is one factor that has a major influence in turning someone into a bully. This factor appears and changes with the growth and development of individuals into adolescents. When a teenager does not get proper direction in choosing a group of playmates, they risk belonging to a group that engages in juvenile delinquency behavior. Adolescence is a phase of psychological development in which individuals crave recognition of their existence. In playgroups, teens who have problems may seek recognition of self-existence by bullying individuals perceived as weaker. By doing this, they hope to gain recognition and appreciation from the surrounding environment as brave and powerful people (Zakiah et al., 2017).

Another result of UR is that the school environment treats bullying at UR like physical ridicule. In the interview, it was revealed that UR experiences bullying almost every day. This treatment causes a decrease in self-confidence and low self-esteem and causes feelings of resentment, sadness, pressure, and discomfort. UR shared her feelings, "I feel sad about the treatment of my friends. As a result, my passion for going to school was lost for fear of getting insulted and ridiculed again by them." (P. P1, personal communication, 2022).

The effects of bullying on students' mental health include changes in behavior to becoming more introverted, introverted individuals, having difficulty trusting others, experiencing decreased self-confidence, and feeling moody even though they are approaching

adulthood. This impact continues, decreasing self-esteem and confidence (Hatta, 2015). Low self-esteem will reduce the courage to express feelings that are felt.

It is consistent with the findings of research by Zakiyah et al. (2019), which concluded that being a victim of bullying, especially in the context of physical conditions, can cause adolescents to feel feelings of sadness, anger, inferiority, and feelings of dislike themselves. As a result, victims often do not accept their physical condition with pleasure, complain about their appearance, and always worry that their appearance does not meet existing expectations. Findings supporting this statement are also contained in research by Ramadhani & Retnowati (2013), which concluded that bullying can create a sense of insecurity in adolescents, resulting in reduced social support and difficulty being accepted in peer circles. Furthermore, according to Carney and Merrell, as explained in Febriana's (2017) study, the impact of bullying tends to have a greater influence on depression and anxiety levels. This long-term impact also impacts psychosocial development in later stages.

4.2. The Role of Parents in Dealing with Mental Health in Children

The role of parents has great significance in addressing children's mental health problems in the context of bullying, and they also function as providers of values that help shape and develop children's outlook on life so that they can face community life well (Saskara & Ulio, 2020). A role can be defined as a set of actions, characteristics, and activities related to individuals in a particular position or status.

According to the grammatical definition, parents refer to fathers, biological mothers, people considered old, or individuals respected and valued (Rani & Jauhari, 2018). Based on the results of interviews, it was found that UR parents felt the irregularities faced by their children. UR's parents tried to that what happened to their children did not damage their mental health, as stated by UR's mother: "His friends had physically bullied UR at school, and we were shocked to see the different behavior of our child" (P. P2 Personal Communication, 2022).

The unfortunate link between bullying and mental health had a significant impact. Based on previous research, it has been confirmed that there is a link between bullying and mental health problems in individuals. Victims of bullying tend to face several mental health issues, including high levels of depression, significant psychological distress, anxiety disorders, difficulty in social interaction, and antisocial personality tendencies (Faizah & Amna, 2017). Individuals, especially children, are first introduced to the environment through both their parents. Therefore, the roles of father and mother are significant in shaping and developing one's personality. Parents are the first social group in human life, where children learn and express themselves as social beings through interaction with their peer group (Anggreni & Valentina, 2015).

Parents with a good education can form a positive personality in their children. Every parent needs to guide their children, especially when they enter adolescence so that they can use their free time effectively. They aim to fill their free time with activities that support their personal development. If they cannot utilize their free time with constructive activities, they

may get caught up in their thinking and oscillate in their delusion. The role of parents has great significance in directing the overabundance of energy in their children towards positive activities, such as participating in sports, joining youth scientific groups, and engaging in other activities that match their interests and hobbies. Parents can provide guidance, advice, and support to help children develop their interests so that they can avoid time vacancies and fill their free time with valuable and beneficial activities (Muliasari, 2019).

Furthermore, the results of the researcher's observation UR mothers continue to accompany their children to continue to be confident, carry out activities as usual, and coordinate with teachers to advise students who participate in ridiculing or bullying peers. In another interview, Ms. UR stated: "The experience of being a victim of bullying leads to a decrease in self-confidence and more introverted behavior. The victim feels sadness, emotional distress, and discomfort, even sometimes he looks indifferent and tends to be silent on his own" (P. P2, personal communication, 2022). This finding also received support from a previous study by Muliasari (2019), which used mental health theory.

This theory explains that individuals with impaired mental health will not achieve a calm state of life. They often experience mental disorders that cause stress and internal conflicts. As a result, the onset of various negative emotions, difficulty reaching psychological maturity, giving up easily, and perhaps even the desire to end life may arise. This mental health disorder is caused by a lack of understanding in dealing with emotional conflict, which in turn can hinder an individual's ability to interact socially in society.

The role of parents play an important role in such situations, as expressed by UR's mother: "I still build healthy and well-accepted thoughts in my child and do not lose mentally, and the effort as a parent here is to support and instill an attitude of continuing to fight, especially to continue to pursue higher education" (P. P2, personal communication, 2022). In a study conducted by Arisandy (2019), the results showed no correlation between parenting and bullying behavior. These findings suggest that authoritarian parenting use by parents has no direct influence on bullying behavior. Other factors in the family environment may impact the growth and development of individual children, so bullying behavior is not only determined by parenting. On the other hand, when parents adopt democratic parenting, they tend to show an inclusive attitude towards their children. In this parenting style, parents recognize the importance of children as individuals with the right to be heard, valued, and allowed to voice their opinions.

Therefore, parents' role is important in shaping feelings of empathy and helping children develop mental health that will give them a sense of security, tranquility, and emotional well-being. Efforts made to achieve happiness, security, inner calm, and mental health aim to create peace in the lives of children as they go through a period of growth and development.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that there are cases of victims of bullying. The most common form of bullying is hurtful words (verbal bullying) and degrading

physical actions by the perpetrator. The impact of this bullying includes decreased self-confidence and low self-esteem, feelings of resentment, becoming more introverted, feelings of sadness, emotional distress, and discomfort that make it difficult for children to trust those around them. Parents' handling of children's mental health is accompanied by the approach of parents and children who continue to accompany children to form a strong mentality, encourage, advise, and continue to monitor every development in children. The role of parents cannot only be separated from that, namely by building healthy thoughts and can be well accepted in children, and not to drop mentally. Parents' efforts here instill an attitude of continuing to struggle, especially to pursue higher education.

As a result of this bullying, victims experience decreased self-confidence and low self-esteem, feel angry, tend to withdraw, feel sad and depressed, and experience discomfort. It causes children to become less trusting of the presence of people around them. The role of parents in maintaining children's mental health is very important, through an approach that involves support, encouragement, advice, and monitoring of child development. Parents are tasked with helping to shape children's mental strength, provide encouragement, give good advice, and continue to monitor children's development. Not only that, but parents are also responsible for building healthy and acceptable thinking for children and preventing mental decline. One of the efforts of parents is to teach an attitude of never giving up, especially in pursuing higher education.

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