Emotional Intelligence and Bullying Behavior: A Correlational Study on Elementary School Students

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and bullying behavior in elementary schools. The population in this study is grade VI students at Al Furqon Islamic Elementary School, Rembang District, Rembang Regency, Central Java, with a sample of 30 students. Sampling in this study was determined using the purposive sampling technique because it met certain criteria, namely the homogeneity of the sample in the age range of 11-12 years, the number of samples sufficient to achieve the desired depth of analysis, and the ease of access by population members. This research is quantitative research with data collection techniques using questionnaire instruments that have gone through the statistical test stage, namely the validity test and reliability test. This study uses two analysis techniques, namely univariate analysis and bivariate analysis. The results of the correlation test showed that the Sig. value was 0.019 < 0.05 with an *r* calculation of 0.426 > *r* table 0.361 so there was a positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and bullying behavior. The higher the level of emotional intelligence of a student, the lower the tendency to engage in bullying behavior.

Keywords

Bullying, emotional intelligence, elementary school

INTRODUCTION

Referring to Law No. 20 of 2003, education is an effort to create an atmosphere and learning process that encourages students to actively optimize their potential, so that they have a religious spiritual foundation, self-control, character, intellect, and competence that are beneficial to themselves, society, nation, and state. The purpose of education is to provide students with noble ethics and useful knowledge. However, the reality of education in Indonesia is facing serious challenges with the increasing incidents of violence and bullying involving students in educational institutions (Hafidurrahman et al., 2023).

Statistical data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) recorded 37,381 reports of violence against children during the period 2011-2019, including cases of bullying. Of the total reports, 2,473 cases occurred in the education and social media environment, with a trend that continues to show an increase. This situation is reinforced by a report by the Federation of Indonesian Teachers' Unions (FSGI) which indicates an increase in bullying cases in 2023, with the highest distribution at junior high school (50%) and elementary school (30%) levels. This condition is very worrying considering that bullying occurs in institutions that are supposed to be places for students' intellectual

and moral development, especially at the elementary school level which is the foundation for the formation of moral values and knowledge for their future.

Bullying is a form of aggressive behavior characterized by an imbalance of power, which causes the victim to experience discomfort, fear, and suffering (Dewi, 2020; Masyithoh, 2023; Wijayanti & Hidayat, 2022). There are three fundamental aspects of bullying: elements of aggression, repetitive patterns of behavior, and power inequality. Bullying often starts from differences, be it in terms of physical appearance, cultural background, racial group, religious beliefs, gender identity, or socioeconomic status (Masyithoh, 2023). Bullying behavior can at least be classified into several categories: (1) Verbal bullying, which includes mocking, spreading rumors, and throwing hurtful words; (2) Physical Bullying, which includes acts of violence such as beating, kicking, shoving, and destroying property belonging to the victim; (3) Social or Relational Bullying, which aims to damage the image and social relations of the victim; (4) Cyberbullying, which is an act of bullying carried out through digital platforms such as the internet and mobile devices (Masyithoh, 2023).

There are several factors that can trigger bullying behavior, one of which is parental parenting (Maramis, 2022; Rahmawati, 2021). In addition, violent online shows and games also play a role in giving rise to bullying behavior (Ramadhanti & Hidayat, 2022). In the school environment, bullying is often considered ordinary delinquency, even though the impact is very serious and can affect both the perpetrator and the victim in the long term (Rahayu & Permana, 2019; Octavia et al., 2020; Masyithoh, 2023).

The situation becomes even more worrying when bullying occurs at the elementary school level, where students are in the stage of emotional development. In this phase, students are very sensitive to the various feelings and experiences they experience. Involvement in bullying cases can have a significant impact on their emotional development. Especially in grades VI and V students aged 11-12 years, are facing a transition period from childhood to adolescence. During this transition period, students experience emotional instability that makes them vulnerable to becoming bullies (Marsari et al., 2021; Nadia et al., 2023). Meanwhile, involvement in bullying behavior during developmental periods can result in loss of confidence and reduced empathy, which can ultimately lead to mental health disorders (Malida et al., 2021; Marsela & Fitriyeni, 2024).

Individuals who act as bullies tend to develop abusive and arrogant personalities because they feel dominated. Meanwhile, victims of bullying are at risk of experiencing psychological problems and personality disorders that, if not properly treated, can lead to depressive conditions and thoughts of committing dangerous acts such as suicide or revenge. Furthermore, victims who continuously receive bullying treatment can internalize these behaviors, which ultimately has the potential to transform them from victims to new bullies (Rahayu & Permana, 2019).

People who are victims or perpetrators of bullying generally have a low level of emotional intelligence, characterized by an inability to control personal emotions and a lack of empathy for the feelings of others (Jempru & Trihastuti, 2023; Rahayu & Permana, 2019). Emotional intelligence is a person's capacity to identify, understand, and manage their own and other people's emotions effectively (Goleman, 2000).

Previous research revealed a correlation between emotional intelligence and bullying behavior (Malida et al., 2021; Suryani et al., 2021). Meanwhile, a study conducted by

Nasihah (2021) found a positive correlation between the two variables. This phenomenon encourages researchers to study how the level of emotional intelligence can affect the tendency of bullying behavior, especially among grade VI elementary school students. This study is unique compared to previous studies, especially in terms of the relationship between variables and the focus of education levels which are still rarely explored.

Previous studies have examined the correlation of bullying behavior with several variables, including parenting patterns and interpersonal skills. The majority of previous studies have focused on analysis at the junior and senior secondary education levels. Based on the findings from the literature review, the researcher identified a new research gap that needs to be analyzed, namely the link between emotional intelligence and bullying behavior at the elementary school level, especially grade VI students. This study aims to analyze the relationship between the level of emotional intelligence and the tendency of bullying behavior in students. The correlation study of the two variables uses a multidimensional approach that includes various aspects of emotional intelligence, including self-awareness, emotional control, motivational drive, empathy, and social skills. The results of this research are expected to contribute to the development of information related to student development and become a reference for future research. In addition, this study also aims to increase understanding among educators and students about the negative impact of bullying.

METHOD

This study applies a quantitative methodology, which is a research method based on the philosophy of positivism and meets scientific criteria such as concrete, empirical, objective, measurable, rational, and systematic (Sugiyono, 2019). This research was carried out at Al Furqon Islamic Elementary School, Rembang District, Rembang Regency, Central Java by involving 30 grade VI students as a population. The purposive sampling method was chosen for sampling considering the homogeneous and specific characteristics of the sample, as well as time and cost efficiency considerations.

The research procedure begins with obtaining permission from the relevant educational institution. Researchers then collected and analyzed a number of studies related to the relationship between emotional intelligence and bullying behavior at the elementary school level to build a solid theoretical foundation. Based on the literature review, the researcher developed two questionnaire instruments: one to measure emotional intelligence which refers to Goleman's theory, and the other to measure bullying behavior based on Olweus' theory. The two questionnaires each consisted of 30 statement items using a 4-point Likert scale: strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD).

The research instrument in the form of a questionnaire was validated and tested for reliability using the SPSS program on the respondents. After the instrument is proven to be valid and reliable, the process of collecting data through the distribution of questionnaires to students with direct supervision from researchers in the classroom. The collected data is then processed by entering it into Microsoft Excel as a first step, before being transferred to SPSS for univariate analysis and product moment correlation tests. Based on the analysis results that show the distribution of data and the results of testing

the relationship hypothesis, the researcher interprets to answer the research objectives and discusses by referring to the theoretical foundation used.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Result

As explained, the research conducted at Al Furqon Islamic Elementary School took a sample of 30 grade VI students to fill out a questionnaire as research respondents. In analyzing the data collected from the questionnaire, two analysis methods were used: univariate analysis to map the frequency distribution of variables of emotional intelligence and bullying behavior in students, and bivariate analysis using the Pearson product moment correlation test which aims to identify the relationship between the two research variables. The results of data processing carried out with SPSS software will be explained below.

Table 1. Univariate analysis of students' emotional intelligence

Category	Emotional Intelligence	
	Frequency	Percentage
High	23	75,7 %
Medium	7	24,3 %
Low	-	-

Based on table 1, it can be concluded that grade VI students of Al Furqon Islamic Elementary School have high emotional intelligence, which is 75.7% and followed by a moderate category level of 24.3%.

Table 2. Univariate analysis of bullying behavior in students

Category	Bullying Behavior	
	Frequency	Percentage
High	-	-
Medium	2	6,67 %
Low	28	93,33 %

The results of the study shown in table 2 indicate that the level of bullying behavior among grade VI students of Al Furqon Islamic Elementary School is classified as low with a percentage of 93.33%, indicating that almost all students show positive behavior.

To analyze the correlation between variables, this study uses the Pearson product moment method which requires the normality of data distribution as well as the fulfillment of other assumptions such as linearity and homogeneity. The results of the normality test showed the Asymp value. Sig (2-tailed) is 0.189, where this value exceeds 0.05, thus confirming the normal distribution of data. In the linearity test, a linear deviation value of Sig. of 0.834 was obtained, which also exceeded 0.05, confirming the linearity of the distribution of research data. Meanwhile, the homogeneity test produced a Sig. value based on the mean for the Y variable (bullying behavior) of 0.139 which was greater than 0.05, proving that the variance of the research data was homogeneous.

Table 3. Pearson product moment correlation test for emotional intelligence variables and bullying behavior variables

		Emotional Intelligence	Bullying Behavior
Emotional Intelligence	Pearson Correlation	1	.426*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.019
	N	30	30
Bullying Behavior	Pearson Correlation	.426*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.019	
	N	30	30

*.Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Referring to the results of the analysis shown in table 3, a significance value of 0.019 was found in the relationship between the variables of emotional intelligence and bullying behavior, where this value was lower than the significance level of 0.05 (0.019 < 0.05). This condition results in the rejection of the null hypothesis (h_0). The analysis also revealed that the value of the correlation coefficient (r) of the calculation was 0.426, which exceeded the r-value of the table (0.361) for a sample of 30 at a significance level of 0.05. Based on these two results, it can be concluded that there is a significant and positive relationship between emotional intelligence and bullying behavior.

Discussion

Research conducted at Al Furqon Islamic Elementary School shows that grade VI students have a high level of emotional intelligence. In the study, out of a total of 30 respondents from one class, there was a composition of 18 female students and 12 male students. The development of emotional intelligence between men and women has differences, which are influenced by several factors such as age, experience, gender, and position (Bariyyah & Latifah, 2019). There are differences in certain aspects of emotional intelligence between men and women (Suryani et al., 2018; Malida et al., 2021). Women show characteristics such as maternal instincts, high levels of empathy, and a tendency to act on feelings, which results in them being more sensitive to their surroundings. These factors are what cause women to have higher levels of emotional intelligence (Bariyyah & Latifah, 2019).

In terms of age, the respondents in the study were in the age range of 11-12 years, this age range is also called late childhood or the transition period from childhood to early adolescence (Anisah et al., 2021). In this age range, students are experiencing a phase of socio-emotional development (Khaulani et al., 2020). The socio-emotional development phase is characterized by an increase in the intensity of relationships between students and their peers, as well as a decrease in dependence on family. In this phase, students prefer to play and talk in their social environment so that peers have an important role in shaping student behavior.

Children aged 9-12 years have reached a stage of emotional development where they can recognize and manage their emotional expressions, both positive and negative, in a social context (Anisah et al., 2021). They are already able to understand the various emotions they feel and are able to respond to emotional turmoil, both those that occur to themselves and others. At this stage, they have also developed the ability to control and

channel their emotions in an effective way. Furthermore, if a child experiences obstacles in the emotional development phase and fails to fulfill his developmental tasks, then the child's emotional development can be disrupted. This condition can worsen and result in the formation of bad character or behavior, especially if it is not supported by the right parenting pattern (Anisah et al., 2021).

The emotional aspect plays a vital role in the success of a student's social relationships. Those who have positive emotions tend to be accepted by their environment and peers, while those who have negative emotions tend to experience rejection (Wijaya & Khusnal, 2019). The inability to develop emotions can produce negative emotions that have the potential to shape personality and bad behavior, including bullying behavior. Bullying is an act of violence that is carried out deliberately and repeatedly, accompanied by abuse of power that makes the victim unable to defend himself (Masyithoh, 2023). Bullying perpetrators are formed from experience, both as victims and witnesses to bullying. Victims who have a grudge against the perpetrator can turn into perpetrators when they get the opportunity to take revenge for the experience they have experienced (Wijaya & Khusnal, 2019).

Experts have identified a link between bullying and emotional intelligence. Individuals who commit bullying generally face problems related to emotions and behavior (Nasihah, 2021). Acts of bullying can occur due to the low emotional intelligence of the perpetrator (Malida et al., 2021). In this context, there are five dimensions of emotional intelligence that need to be considered: the ability to recognize one's own emotions, the ability to manage emotions, the ability to motivate oneself, the ability to empathize, and the ability to foster social relationships (Masyithoh, 2023). An adequate level of emotional intelligence allows a person to better understand the emotional state of oneself and others. This understanding plays an important role in self-control and constructive expression of emotions, which in turn develops a sense of empathy and prevents behaviors that can harm others (Masyithoh, 2023).

A person with low emotional intelligence tends to have negative characteristics. In the context of bullying, perpetrators who have low emotional intelligence show irritability and lack empathy (Malida et al., 2021). Bullies usually have difficulty responding to the pressure and discomfort of others because of their lack of empathy. This lack of empathy results in bullies finding it difficult to build relationships with others and not being able to relate their unfriendly behavior to the emotional responses of others (Rahayu & Permana, 2019). Based on this, the level of emotional intelligence has an influence on a person's tendency to bully. Thus, it can be understood that there is an inverse relationship between emotional intelligence and the tendency to bully. The higher a person's emotional intelligence, the lower the tendency to bully, and vice versa.

Based on the study's findings, students at Al Furqon Islamic Primary School showed minimal levels of tendency to commit acts of bullying, which correlated with their high levels of emotional intelligence. This study revealed a significant link between emotional intelligence and the tendency of bullying behavior in students. The age factor of the students in the range of 11-12 years also contributes to the relationship. This is in line with the view put forward by Hurlock that there is a positive relationship between increasing age and the level of maturity in a person's thinking. As we age, there is a

significant development in the aspects of individual understanding and mindset. This development in turn contributes to increased emotional intelligence (Malida et al., 2021).

High levels of emotional intelligence have a crucial role in helping students identify and manage their emotional state. When faced with situations that trigger intense emotions, students with good emotional intelligence have the ability to control themselves and channel their emotions constructively and effectively. This ability to regulate emotions is a key factor in suppressing the potential for bullying behavior in the school environment.

This phenomenon illustrates the importance of developing emotional intelligence as a preventive strategy in dealing with bullying cases in educational institutions, as seen in the case of Al Furqon Islamic Elementary School. These findings reinforce the argument that emotional maturity that develops with age has a positive impact on students' social behavior.

CONCLUSION

The emotional intelligence of grade VI students of Al Furqon Islamic Elementary School is in the high category with a percentage of 76.7%, followed by the medium category of 23.3%. As for bullying behavior, grade VI students of Al Furqon Islamic Elementary School are in the low category with a percentage of 93.33%. In addition, based on the data from the Pearson product moment correlation test, the Sig. variable of emotional intelligence with bullying behavior was $0.019 < 0.05$. The Sig. value of 0.019 is smaller than the significance level of 0.05, meaning that the null hypothesis (h0) is rejected. These results show a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and bullying behavior. The values of the correlation coefficient (r) of the calculation and r of the table are 0.426 and 0.361, meaning that the r calculation (0.426) > r of the table (0.361). These results show that the relationship between emotional intelligence and bullying behavior is significant and positive, so the conclusion that can be obtained from this study is that the higher the emotional intelligence possessed by students, the lower the tendency to commit bullying behavior.

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