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# Determinants of Bullying Behavior Among High School Students: A Cross-Sectional Study in Bandung, Indonesia



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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: May 01, 2025 Revised: May 30, 2025 Accepted: June 20, 2025 Published: June 30, 2025  IJHE is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Public License (CC-BY 4.0)  <b>Website:</b> <a href="https://journal.img.co.id/index.php/ijhe">https://journal.img.co.id/index.php/ijhe</a>  <b>Keywords:</b> Bullying Behavior, High School Students,	<b>Background:</b> Bullying is a desire to hurt someone physically, psychologically, or verbally, causing someone to suffer. This research is motivated by several previous studies showing a relationship between bullying with peers and self-control. <b>Objective:</b> This study aims to determine the factors associated with bullying behavior in high school adolescents. <b>Methods:</b> The type of research used is descriptive quantitative with a cross-sectional approach. As many as 305 students in Bandung Regency Senior High School as respondents were taken using total sampling and analyzed using Pearson Product Moment, Kruskal Wallis, Independent t-test, Spearman, and Linear Regression. <b>Results:</b> The results showed that the average age was 16 years, with most of the respondents being female (62.7%), the most respondents being in class X (71.6%), and the majority being Muslim (94.8%), and ethnic Sundanese (82%). The bivariate analysis results show a relationship between bullying and gender, with a p-value of 0.010 and a t-value of 2.588. There is a relationship between bullying and self-control with a p-value of 0.000 with a correlation value of (r) 0.200. There is a relationship between bullying with peers with a p-value 0.000 and correlation value (r) -0.653. <b>Conclusion:</b> Future researchers are expected to be able to detail the description of the factors related to bullying behavior.

## INTRODUCTION

Bullying is defined as a deliberate intention to harm others physically, psychologically, or verbally, resulting in distress for the victim (A'ini, 2020). It is not an accidental act but a purposeful behavior carried out by perpetrators with the intent to inflict suffering (Noviana et al., 2020). Bullying is a widespread issue in educational environments and is most commonly observed among adolescents. Globally, it is estimated that 20-25% of adolescents engage in bullying, either as perpetrators, victims, or both. Large-scale studies in Western countries report that 4-9%

of adolescents frequently experience bullying, and 9–25% of school-aged children are affected by this behavior (Sutriyawan & Sari, 2020).

Adolescence is a transitional developmental stage between childhood and adulthood, marked by profound physical, cognitive, and psychosocial changes (Araya et al., 2018). During this period, adolescents are especially vulnerable to emotional instability, identity confusion, and peer pressure, making them more susceptible to engaging in or being affected by deviant behaviors, including bullying (Ningrum et al., 2019). Emotional disorders, stress, anxiety, and feelings of loneliness are commonly observed among adolescents and can both contribute to and result from bullying behavior.

Multiple factors are known to influence bullying, including family socioeconomic status, parenting style, and educational environment (Manalu et al., 2019). Parenting plays a particularly crucial role; early childhood development primarily occurs within the family setting, and the parenting approach can shape a child's behavioral tendencies. According to Ningrum et al. (2019), adolescents exposed to inadequate or inconsistent parenting are more likely to engage in bullying.

Another key determinant is self-control. Adolescents with low self-control tend to display impulsive, aggressive, and antisocial behaviors. The rapid emotional and physiological changes that occur during puberty can exacerbate these tendencies, particularly in those lacking emotional regulation skills (Sudiarti et al., 2021). Research by Salmi (2018) highlights that adolescents with higher levels of self-control are less likely to engage in bullying, and parenting styles are strongly associated with a child's capacity for self-regulation.

Peer influence also plays a significant role in shaping adolescent behavior. Zakiyah et al. (2017) suggest that adolescents may mimic negative behaviors within their peer group as a means of social adaptation or acceptance. Arista (2015) found significant associations between peer dynamics, self-confidence, and bullying types, underscoring the importance of social environments in fostering or deterring bullying.

Preliminary field data in Bandung Regency provide further context. At MA Alif, a senior high school with 125 students, interviews revealed three bullying cases in the 2020–2021 semester. These included a student being ostracized for perceived social inadequacy, another mocked for physical appearance, and a third shunned without clear reason. At SMAN 1 Margahayu, which has 180 students, interviews with school counselors indicated that approximately 40% of students were involved in bullying incidents, ranging from verbal abuse to physical violence. Some victims reported severe psychological distress, including school avoidance and emotional withdrawal.

Given the high prevalence and serious consequences of bullying among adolescents, particularly in school settings, it is critical to investigate the contributing factors. This study aims to identify and analyze the factors associated with bullying behavior among high school students in Bandung Regency, with a focus on gender, self-control, parenting style, and peer relationships.

## METHOD

### Study Design

This study utilized a descriptive quantitative research design with a cross-sectional approach to examine the factors associated with bullying behavior among high school students.

## Sample

The research was conducted in several public senior high schools located in Bandung Regency, West Java Province, Indonesia, during March and April 2022. The study population included all students enrolled in grades X and XI during the 2021-2022 academic year. A total sampling technique was employed, in which all eligible students were invited to participate, resulting in a total of 305 respondents who met the inclusion criteria and consented to take part in the study.

## Instrument

Data were collected using a structured self-administered questionnaire consisting of four instruments. Bullying behavior was measured using the Adolescents Peer Relation Instrument (APRI), which assesses experiences of bullying as both perpetrator and victim. Parenting style was assessed using the Parenting Style and Dimension Questionnaire (PSDQ), which categorizes parenting into authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive types. Peer group relationships were measured using a standardized peer interaction scale adapted for adolescents. Self-control was assessed using a validated self-control scale that evaluates the ability to regulate emotions and behaviors. All instruments had previously demonstrated acceptable levels of reliability and validity in similar adolescent populations.

## Procedure

Data collection was carried out directly in the classroom setting with prior coordination from the school authorities. Participants were given clear instructions and sufficient time to complete the questionnaires independently. The researchers provided assistance when clarification was needed to ensure accuracy in responses.

## Data Analysis

The collected data were processed and analyzed using SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize demographic characteristics, including means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages. Bivariate analysis was conducted using Pearson Product Moment correlation for continuous variables, the Independent t-test for binary variables, the Kruskal-Wallis test for ordinal or non-normally distributed data, and Spearman's rho for ranked data. Variables that showed significant associations in the bivariate analysis were further examined using linear regression analysis to determine the most influential predictors of bullying behavior. A significance level of  $p < 0.05$  was applied for all statistical tests.

## Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee. Participants were informed about the purpose, procedure, risks, and benefits of the study. Written informed consent was obtained prior to participation. Confidentiality was ensured through anonymized data collection, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty.

## RESULT

Table 1 shows that more than half of the respondents are female (62.7%). For class, most of the respondents came from class X (71.6%). The average age of the respondents was 16 years, with the lowest age being 15 years and the highest age being 19 years. The religion adopted by the respondents is almost entirely Muslim (94.8%) and ethnic Sundanese (82.0%).

Table 1 Demographic Frequency Distribution of High School Adolescents (n=305)

Variable	Total (%)
Age(Mean $\pm$ SD)	16.10 $\pm$ 739
Min	15
Max	19
Sex	
Male	113 (36.9)
Female	192 (62.7)
Class	
Class X	219 (71.6)
Class XI	86 (28.1)
Religion	
Islam	290 (94.8)
Kristen	15 (24.9)
Tribes	
Sunda	251 (82.0)
Jawa	43 (14.1)
Batak	5 (1.6)
Minang	6 (2.0)

Based on table 2, the average overall bullying score is 48.30 (SD = 11.048). The higher the score, the more often students are seen in bullying events. The parenting category that parents most widely used is the permissive parenting pattern of 13.91 (SD = 3,609). For relationships with peers, the average score is 55.53 (SD = 5.791). The higher the score, the better the relationship with peers. Self-control showed an average value of 50.91 (SD = 10.272). The higher the score, the higher the level of self-control; on the contrary, the lower the score, the lower the level of self-control.

Table 2 Univariate Analysis on Dependent and Independent Variables in High School Adolescents (n = 305)

Variable	Min-Max	Mean (SD)
<i>Bullying</i> (APRI)	35-112	48.30 (11.048)
Part A (Perpetrator)	18-50	23.18 (5.659)
Part B (Victim)	17-65	25.12 (7.435)
Pola Asuh (PSDQ)	46-158	86.24 (17.677)
Authoritative	15-82	39.68 (9.018)
Authoritarian	12-60	32.65 (7.192)
Permissive	2-25	13.91 (3.609)
Peer Group	26-63	55.53 (5.791)
Self- Control	25-97	50.91 (10.274)

The majority of participants (98.4%) reported having engaged in bullying behaviors, while only a small proportion (1.6%) identified solely as victims. Notably, no respondents reported being both a perpetrator and a victim or being uninvolved in bullying altogether.

Table 3. Distribution of Bullying Components among High School Adolescents (n = 305)

Component	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Bullying Perpetrator	300	98.4%
Bullying Victim	5	1.6%
Perpetrator-Victim	0	0.0%
Neither Perpetrator nor Victim	0	0.0%

Bivariate analysis revealed that sex, self-control, and peer group were significantly associated with bullying behavior ( $p < 0.05$ ). A higher level of self-control was positively correlated with bullying involvement, whereas stronger peer group influence was negatively associated. Age, class level, religion, ethnicity, and parenting style were not statistically significant predictors.

Table 4. Bivariate Analysis of Factors Associated with Bullying Behavior (n = 305)

Variable	p-value	Statistic	Test Used
Age	0.272	–	Pearson Correlation
Sex	0.010	$t = 2.588$	Independent t-test
Class	0.231	–	Kruskal-Wallis
Religion	0.056	–	Kruskal-Wallis
Ethnicity	0.052	–	Kruskal-Wallis
Self-Control	0.000	$r = 0.200$	Pearson Correlation
Peer Group	0.000	$r = -0.653$	Spearman Correlation
Parenting Style	0.116	–	Pearson Correlation

Multivariate regression confirmed that gender, self-control, and peer group dynamics were significant predictors of bullying behavior. Male students were more likely to engage in bullying. Lower peer group support was strongly associated with higher bullying scores. The model explained 37.5% of the variance in bullying behavior among respondents (Table 5).

Table 5. Multivariate Linear Regression of Factors Influencing Bullying Behavior (n = 305)

Variable	B	SE	95% CI		p-value
			Lower	Upper	
Sex (Male = 1)	-4.525	1.045	-6.582	-2.469	
Self-Control	0.113	0.050	0.015	0.211	
Peer Group	-1.086	0.089	-1.260	-0.912	
Model summary: Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> = 0.375 (37.5%)					

## DISCUSSION

The findings revealed that the overall average bullying score among respondents was 48.30 (SD = 11.048), with a minimum score of 35 and a maximum of 112. Although this mean score suggests that the level of bullying behavior was relatively low overall, further analysis indicated that a striking 98.4% of the students reported having engaged in bullying at some point. This suggests that while the frequency or intensity may be moderate, bullying remains widespread among adolescents. Given that most participants were in grade X, it is plausible that some bullying behaviors occurred during their junior high school years. This pattern supports Saniya's (2019) assertion that adolescents may engage in bullying to assert their identity, gain peer attention, or mask personal insecurities. Fatimatuzzahro et al. (2017) further emphasized that individuals who bully often exhibit high levels of aggression and low empathy, aligning with the notion that bullying is intentional and harmful behavior. Similarly, Hamidah (2020) described bullying as a deliberate act intended to cause suffering, underscoring its serious emotional and social consequences.

The results indicated that the most dominant parenting style experienced by respondents was permissive, with an average score of 13.91 (SD = 3.609), ranging from 2 to 25. Permissive parenting is characterized by a high degree of freedom given to children with limited enforcement of rules and expectations. Many students reported that their parents rarely showed emotional responses when they made mistakes (39.7%) and rarely imposed disciplinary measures (81.6%). This suggests that adolescents in the study had significant autonomy both at home and in school. According to Syukri (2020), permissive parenting is linked to a higher risk of bullying behavior, as it may result in a lack of boundaries and insufficient behavioral regulation. Araya et al. (2018) also noted that adolescents raised under permissive conditions often struggle with problem-solving, social integration, and respect for others, all of which may contribute to maladaptive behaviors such as bullying.

The average peer relationship score among participants was 55.53 (SD = 5.791), with scores ranging from 26 to 63. This indicates that most students had generally positive relationships with their peers. During adolescence, individuals tend to place greater trust in friends than in family members and often make decisions collectively with their peer group. Burk and Laursen (2005) stated that during this developmental stage, adolescents increasingly seek emotional support from peers and strive for independence from parental figures. Strong peer bonds can serve as a protective factor against bullying victimization. Conversely, Zsila et al. (2018) emphasized that adolescents without strong peer connections are more likely to become victims of bullying. These findings are supported by responses from students in this study, most of whom reported that they had never intentionally hurt or physically harmed others.

The mean self-control score was 50.91 (SD = 10.274), with a range from 25 to 97, indicating that overall self-control levels among respondents were moderate to low. Self-control refers to the ability to regulate impulses, delay gratification, and resist engaging in harmful behaviors. Adolescents with low self-control may be more prone to act impulsively or aggressively. The developmental surge of emotions during puberty can exacerbate this tendency, as adolescents face rapid changes in both physical and psychological domains (Sudiarti et al., 2021). Therefore, the presence of low self-control during this transitional period may contribute to increased risk of engaging in bullying behaviors.

Bivariate analysis showed a statistically significant relationship between gender and bullying behavior, with a p-value of 0.010 and a t-value of 2.588. Interestingly, the data revealed that more than half of the female respondents (62.7%) reported involvement in bullying. While bullying is often stereotyped as more prevalent among males, these findings suggest that females may also engage in aggressive behavior, particularly in verbal or relational forms. Putri (2015) and Ilham et al. (2021) found that female students tend to exhibit verbal bullying, such as name-calling or gossiping. Fatimatuzzahro et al. (2017) also indicated that while females may not engage in physical violence, they participate actively in social exclusion and verbal aggression, which are equally harmful forms of bullying.

A significant relationship was observed between self-control and bullying, with a p-value of 0.000 and a correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) of 0.200. Although the strength of the correlation was weak, the direction of the relationship was positive, indicating that lower self-control is associated with increased bullying behavior. This finding is consistent with Wicaksana (2017), who emphasized that adolescents with poor self-control may experience an identity crisis and are more likely to engage in antisocial behaviors such as bullying. When aggressive impulses peak, self-control can serve as a moderating factor that helps adolescents weigh social norms and resist harmful actions. Salmi (2018) similarly concluded that higher levels of self-control are associated with more adaptive coping strategies and lower engagement in deviant behavior.

The analysis also revealed a significant negative relationship between peer relationships and bullying, with a p-value of 0.000 and a correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) of -0.653. This indicates a strong inverse relationship, meaning that more positive peer relationships are associated with a lower likelihood of bullying behavior. This can be attributed to the social influence that peer groups exert during adolescence. Adolescents often prioritize peer approval and may conform to group behavior to avoid rejection. In this study, students may have engaged in bullying to fit in with their peers or avoid social isolation. Arista (2015) found that adolescents subjected to peer pressure often experience a diminished sense of belonging, which can foster aggression or bullying. This is further supported by Burk and Laursen (2005), who emphasized that while peers play a crucial role in adolescent development, negative peer influences can contribute to deviant behavior if not adequately moderated.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that bullying behavior among high school adolescents is significantly associated with gender, self-control, and peer relationships. Most students were 16 years old, female, in grade X, and of Sundanese ethnic background. While the average level of bullying behavior was moderate, the majority of students reported past involvement in bullying.



The study highlights that lower self-control and poor peer relationships are key contributors to bullying, while permissive parenting may also play an indirect role. These results underscore the importance of targeted school interventions focusing on emotional regulation, peer support systems, and parental involvement to reduce bullying behaviors in adolescent populations.

### Conflict of Interest

The authors have declared that no conflict of interest exists.

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