

Emotional Repercussions of Bullying in Islamic Early Childhood Education: Anxiety Patterns at RA Riyadusholihin

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Abstract: The findings indicate that anxiety is closely related to the psychological impact of bullying. Children reported feelings of fear, anxiety, and low self-esteem that disrupted their daily lives. In addition, social support from peers and family proved to be important in reducing their anxiety levels. This study also identified factors that influence anxiety levels, such as the frequency and type of bullying experienced. Children who experience physical bullying tend to show higher levels of anxiety than those who experience verbal bullying. This emphasises the need for appropriate intervention to address this issue. Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that schools and parents raise awareness about the importance of a safe and supportive environment for children and implement bullying prevention programmes to support children's mental health. Thus, it is hoped that children can grow up better and reduce the negative impact of bullying. Overall, this study provides a clear picture of the anxiety experienced by children who are victims of bullying and the importance of appropriate handling to minimise the negative impacts caused. These findings are expected to serve as a reference for those involved in child protection and the development of effective policies.

Keywords: Description of anxiety, child, victim of bullying

Abstrak: Temuan penelitian mengindikasikan bahwa kecemasan berhubungan erat dengan dampak psikologis yang ditimbulkan oleh tindakan perundungan. Anak-anak melaporkan perasaan takut, cemas, dan redah diri yang berkelanjutan yang mengganggu kehidupan sehari-hari mereka. Selain itu dukungan sosial dari teman sebaya dan keluarga terbukti penting dalam mengurangi tingkat kecemasan mereka. Penelitian ini juga mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi tingkat kecemasan, seperti frekuensi dan jenis perundungan yang dialami. Anak-anak yang mengalami perundungan secara fisik cenderung menunjukkan tingkat kecemasan yang lebih tinggi dibandingkan dengan mereka yang mengalami perundungan verbal. Hal ini menekankan perlunya intervensi yang tepat untuk mengatasi masalah ini. Dari hasil penelitian, disarankan agar pihak sekolah dan orang tua meningkatkan kesadaran tentang pentingnya lingkungan yang aman dan suportif bagi anak-anak juga diadakannya program-program pencegahan perundungan yang diimplementasikan untuk mendukung kesehatan mental anak. Dengan demikian, diharapkan anak-anak dapat tumbuh dengan lebih baik dan mengurangi dampak negatif perundungan. Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini memberikan gambaran yang jelas tentang gambaran kecemasan yang dialami oleh anak-anak korban perundungan dan pentingnya penanganan yang tepat untuk meminimalkan dampak negatif yang ditimbulkan. Temuan ini diharapkan dapat menjadi acuan bagi pihak-pihak yang terlibat dalam perlindungan anak dan pengembangan kebijakan yang efektif

Kata Kunci: gambaran kecemasan, anak, korban perundungan

Introduction

School bullying, characterized by repeated, intentional harm with a power imbalance, affects 20-30% of students (Yen, 2010). It manifests in various forms, including verbal, physical, and cyberbullying (Han et al., 2025). Bullying is associated with significant mental health issues in adolescents, such as depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and suicidal ideation (Coggan et al., 2003; Nickerson & Torchia, 2014). Bully-victims, who both bully others and are bullied, experience the most severe mental and behavioral problems (Yen, 2010). Factors influencing bullying include individual characteristics, family dynamics, school environment, and societal factors (Han et al., 2025). The negative impacts extend beyond victims to bullies and bystanders, with potential long-term consequences (Han et al., 2025). Resilience factors, such as strong family relationships and positive social skills, may mitigate bullying effects (Nickerson & Torchia, 2014). Addressing school bullying is crucial for improving adolescent mental health and requires multi-level interventions (Han et al., 2025).

Bullying victimization in early adolescence has significant negative impacts on psychological and academic outcomes, including increased depression, anxiety, peer rejection, and poorer school performance, with effects lasting up to 8 years (Halliday et al., 2021). Victims of bullying often experience depression, anxiety, sociophobia, loss of self-esteem, and psychosomatic symptoms (Bjorkqvist, 2001). A study of sixth-grade students found that bully-victims were more likely to experience depression than other groups, while both bully-victims and victims showed higher levels of anxiety (Swearer et al., 2001). Research on monozygotic twins provides evidence for the environmental impact of bullying on mental health, particularly childhood social anxiety, separation anxiety, and young adult suicidal ideation (Silberg et al., 2016). These findings highlight the serious and long-lasting consequences of bullying victimization on mental health and academic development, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions and prevention strategies.

Research consistently shows that childhood bullying victimization has long-lasting negative impacts on mental health, social relationships, and overall well-being into adulthood. Victims of frequent bullying face increased risks of depression, anxiety disorders, and suicidality (Takizawa et al., 2014). These effects can persist for decades, leading to psychological distress, economic hardship, and poor quality of life in midlife (Takizawa et al., 2014). Sexual and gender minority groups are particularly vulnerable to bullying, experiencing long-term damage to academic achievement and social integration (Zhu, 2025). Emerging adults who were bullied as children report feelings of insecurity, social avoidance, and negative self-image (Lidberg et al., 2022). Effective interventions are crucial and should include comprehensive approaches involving schools, families, and communities. Strategies such as restorative justice practices, social-emotional learning programs, and anonymous reporting platforms have shown promise in preventing bullying and mitigating its long-term effects (Handayani & Falah, 2023).

Bullying in early childhood (ages 0-8) is a significant concern that can negatively impact children's development, including anxiety disorders (Priyandita & Agustin, 2021). Anxiety in young children can be influenced by internal factors like genetics and external factors such as traumatic experiences and parenting styles (Hakim et al., 2025). These anxiety disorders can disrupt emotional, social, and academic development (Ikhsan, 2025). Research has identified two

independent pathways to peer victimization: anxiety directly predicting victimization, and poor social skills leading to lower friendship quality, which increases victimization risk (Crawford & Manassis, 2011). To address these issues, various therapeutic approaches have been suggested, including play therapy, counseling guidance, and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) (Hakim et al., 2025). Additionally, creating a safe environment, providing emotional education, and encouraging open communication are recommended strategies to help children overcome anxiety and improve their overall well-being (Ikhsan, 2025).

Research consistently shows that bullying experiences are associated with increased anxiety in children and adults. Victims of bullying report higher levels of social anxiety in various learning situations, including seminars, discussions with teachers, and exams (Pörhölä et al., 2019). Adults who experienced childhood bullying exhibit higher rates of anxiety disorders, particularly social phobia and agoraphobia (Gladstone et al., 2006). Children who stutter are more vulnerable to bullying and demonstrate higher anxiety levels compared to their non-stuttering peers (Blood & Blood, 2007). Bullying involvement predicts both concurrent and future psychiatric symptoms, with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, depression, and anxiety being prevalent among affected children. In young adulthood, male victims are at risk for anxiety, while male bullies and bully-victims are prone to personality disorders (Kumpulainen, 2008). These findings emphasize the importance of early intervention and psychiatric assessment for individuals involved in bullying to mitigate long-term mental health consequences.

School bullying, a longstanding issue, gained systematic research attention in the 1970s, pioneered by Dan Olweus in Scandinavia (Olweus, 2003; Newey & Magson, 2010). This phenomenon expanded globally in the 1980s and 1990s, attracting wider interest from researchers and society (Olweus, 2002). Bullying encompasses various forms, including traditional schoolyard behaviors and more recent cyber bullying through digital technologies (Newey & Magson, 2010). Research has highlighted the harmful long-term effects on students and school communities, emphasizing the need for intervention (Carney & Merrell, 2001; Newey & Magson, 2010). Large-scale trials of comprehensive, school-wide programs have shown significant reductions in bullying behavior when implemented as long-term solutions (Carney & Merrell, 2001). These interventions require collective responsibility and ongoing commitment to effectively address the issue, moving beyond quick-fix approaches to create lasting change in school environments (Carney & Merrell, 2001).

Currently, bullying is a widespread phenomenon in communities and educational institutions. Moreover, bullying does not discriminate based on age; it affects not only teenagers and adults but also young children, who may experience verbal or non-verbal violence. One phenomenon that has recently attracted attention in the world of education is bullying in schools, which is often perpetrated by students against their peers.

The increasing prevalence of bullying in schools necessitates a critical examination of this phenomenon within the educational context. Bullying is now recognized as a significant social problem that schools must address (Rigby, 2004). However, current anti-bullying programs have shown limited success, highlighting the need for a more comprehensive approach (Rigby, 2004). Researchers argue that bullying should be contextualized within broader frameworks of educational administration and social oppression, rather than viewed solely through psychological or behavioral lenses (Walton, 2005). The rise in bullying incidents demonstrates the need for changes in relationships between students, teachers, and the entire school community (da Silva, 2020). To combat bullying effectively, schools should promote positive social values, peace, and

tolerance while fostering healthy, dignified, and respectful relationships (da Silva, 2020; Pinto & Branco, 2012). This approach aligns with the concept of integral education, which emphasizes human values and social responsibility (Pinto & Branco, 2012).

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reported that around 41 percent of Indonesian students reported experiencing bullying several times a month. The rate of bullying among Indonesian students is higher than the OECD average of 23 percent (CNN Indonesia, 2019). In many countries, bullying is the reason students do not attend school.

Meanwhile, the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) recorded 37,381 complaints of violence against children over a nine-year period from 2011 to 2019. In terms of academic and social bullying, the number reached 2,473 (Abdussalam, 2020). KPAI recorded data for the first four months of 2019, with eight children falling under this policy.

There were also three cases of assault, eight cases of physical violence, three cases of social abuse, 12 cases of psychological violence, and bullying of children by teachers. However, when broken down by educational level, most cases occur at the primary school level, with 25 cases or 67 percent, followed by junior high school with 5 cases, senior high school with 6 cases, and higher education with 1 case.

In essence, negotiation or oppression is a highly reprehensible act. This is justified and supported by the Qur'an and Hadith. The Quran abolishes all forms of oppression among people, except for differences based on virtue and piety. Therefore, as human beings, we must uphold justice and refrain from oppressing one another.

Hadith narrated by Bukhari from Abdullah bin Umar r.a. The Prophet SAW said, "A Muslim is one who saves all Muslims from his tongue and his hands, and a muhajir is one who abandons all the prohibitions of Allah" (MPA 303, 2011). This hadith explains one of the characteristics of a Muslim. As one of the meanings of Islam is "safety," derived from the root word *salima*, a Muslim is someone who safeguards others. They do not harm others, especially fellow Muslims.

Bullying in schools can have a significant negative impact on the teaching and learning process and the development of students. Victims of bullying often experience a decline in academic performance due to concentration problems, low motivation, and fear of going to school. Bullying not only affects the victims but can also disrupt the overall learning process in the classroom and create an unfavourable learning environment.

Education is a major factor in shaping a person's character. Education plays a significant role in shaping a person's character according to normative standards. Throughout their lives, people are always influenced by their family, school, and the wider community. These three environments are often referred to as the three centres of education.

Children have the right to receive love, protection, and education. Education that provides training to free children from violence and respects their rights. This can be achieved when education is provided from an early age; however, many children do not receive these rights, such as violence. Violence can occur in the school environment, whether verbal or non-verbal, known as bullying.

In early childhood, everything that is seen and heard will influence a child's development, including behaviour that reflects bullying attitudes. This can set an example for victims of bullying to do the same. In early childhood education settings today, many children experience bullying, such as teasing or hitting each other under the guise of play. However, they are unaware that such actions constitute bullying behaviour.

Children who engage in verbal or non-verbal violence from an early age are at risk of

becoming bullies themselves as they grow older. The phenomenon of bullying that occurs at RA Riyadusholihin 3 can take the form of verbal actions (such as teasing, humiliating), physical actions (such as pushing, hitting), or relational actions (such as isolating, spreading rumours) that are carried out repeatedly by one or more children against another child who is considered weaker.

Method

Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan model kualitatif deskriptif. Teknik pengumpulan data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini ialah observasi, wawancara dan dokumentasi dalam hal ini peneliti melakukan wawancara kepada kepala sekolah, guru kelompok B dan orang tua siswa kelompok B di RA Riyadusholihin 3 Kecamatan Baleendah, Kabupaten Bandung. Dalam menganalisis data hasil penelitian yaitu mereduksi data sesuai dengan tujuan penelitian yang berupa temuan.

Results and Discussion

The researcher described the findings in the field on the focus of the study on "An overview of anxiety in children who are victims of bullying at RA Riyadusholihin 3". Information was obtained through observation, interviews with teachers of Group B (ages 5–6) and some parents, as well as documentation. It is hoped that this process will provide an overview of the anxiety experienced by children who are victims of bullying at school.

In addition to observation, the researcher conducted casual conversations with the three children who were victims of bullying. The researcher interviewed them when they were alone in the school environment. When interviewing the three children who were victims of bullying, the researcher also observed each child's personality. The first informant was Vano, who is tall and overweight. During the interview with the researcher, his gaze occasionally drifted away from the researcher. He responded by telling stories.

The second participant was Mira. Mira appeared polite and calm in her demeanour. When talking to the researcher, Mira wore a slightly messy headscarf and was thin. During the conversation with the researcher, Mira focused her gaze on the researcher, occasionally looking away. She answered the researcher's questions calmly and was somewhat open.

The third informant was Ipin, who was quite tall and overweight. During the conversation, Ipin appeared very gloomy, and he often played with his fingers while talking to the researcher, so that his gaze was unfocused and he looked down more than he looked at the researcher.

Informan 1 (Vano – Nama Disamarkan)

Data on Vano was obtained from a brief interview with Vano's parents conducted at RA Riyadusholihin 3 when Vano's parents picked him up from school. When the researcher asked about Vano's behaviour at home or when playing in the neighbourhood, Vano's parents replied as follows:

"Vano is a child who loves to tell stories. He will tell you anything he does or finds. Even when he is with his friends, Vano always tells stories and plays cheerfully. However, because Vano is big and fat, his friends often tease him and even hit him deliberately for no reason. Sometimes Vano would retaliate by hitting his friends back, but after doing so, he would run home in fear, seeking shelter." (Interview with Vano's mother, June 2024)

The researchers also asked Vano's parents if there had been any impact from what Vano had experienced on bullying. Vano's parents responded as follows:

"Yes, there is an impact because Vano was beaten by his friends outside the house. Vano often behaves violently at home and sometimes hits himself when he is upset" (Interview with

Vino's mother, June 2024).

Vano is a 6-year-old boy who is currently in Group B. Vano is a child who experiences bullying, often being suddenly hit by his friends. To make matters worse, because of his large physique, his friends often order Vano to be their horse or shield when they play. Vano has been experiencing bullying since he was 5 years old by his neighbours. Vano's reaction when he is bullied is to retaliate by hitting back at the children who bully him. Afterwards, Vano feels afraid because he has hit his friends, so he often cries after doing so.

According to his class teacher, Mrs. Uni, Vano was bullied because he sometimes liked to show off and act excessively. This made his bullies dislike him even more.

"Vano often shows off his belongings or toys. He will go around showing them to his friends, but when his friends want to borrow his toys, Vano won't let them. When he is scared, he will hide. He will run and hide, and afterwards he will look sad." (Interview with Vano's homeroom teacher, June 2024)

When communicating with his peers, Vano is a cheerful individual who often tells stories. This is evident in Vano's willingness to reveal excessive personal information, as seen in the following question:

"I like telling my friends what I have" (Casual conversation with Vano, June 2024)

In addition, Vano likes to hang out with many friends during break time. He likes to invite his friends to play and chat. However, sometimes Vano experiences unpleasant behaviour from his friends. When telling a story, his friends suddenly push him while he is playing, and they take advantage of him to do whatever they want. Therefore, Vano is sometimes cautious because he feels afraid of his friends' behaviour.

Informant 2 Mira (Mira – Name withheld)

Data about Mira was obtained from a brief interview with Mira's parents at RA Riyadusholihin 3 when they dropped Mira off at school. When the researcher interviewed Mira's parents about Mira's behaviour at home, they responded as follows:

Mira is very reserved and quiet, even at home. She rarely talks when I try to ask her about her experiences at school, and she also rarely plays with her neighbours. She tends to play at home alone. She often cries when playing with her friends because they tease her about her appearance. Therefore, Mira prefers to play alone because when she plays with her friends, she often cries and is afraid of being teased." (Interview with Mira's mother, June 2024)

After learning that Mira was being bullied at school and at home, the researchers asked Mira's parents if they had noticed any changes in her behaviour. Mira's parents responded as follows:

"Mira has been gloomy and increasingly quiet since she experienced bullying. She often doesn't dare to do what she wants when she is alone. She seems to lack self-confidence." (Interview with Mira's mother, June 2024)

Mira is a 6-year-old girl who is currently in Group B. Mira has been experiencing bullying for a year now. The bullying she experiences includes frequent insults. According to Mrs. Uni, Mira's class teacher, her classmates often avoid her because she is perceived as less well-dressed and economically disadvantaged compared to her peers. Mira's reaction when bullied is to cry and feel afraid.

"Mira is a good girl, she is also obedient, but unfortunately, she is bullied by her friends because she looks poor and sometimes brings different lunch than her friends. Because of this, her friends often tease her and refuse to play with her. Mira cries and looks scared after her friends do this." (Interview with Mira's class teacher, June 2024)

According to Mira's teacher, Mira was bullied because her classmates looked down on her. She did not move up a grade and was considered to have low academic ability and come from a poor family. As a result, she was excluded by her classmates, including her close friends.

In her communication with her peers, Mira is a little reserved with her friends. She chats a little with her friends during school breaks. Among her friends, she has a classmate with whom she has a good relationship, Alena. Mira has known Alena for over a year. They often play together in their neighbourhood because they live close to each other. Mira's choice of Alena as her trusted friend is not without reason. Mira feels more comfortable talking to Alena because she feels that Alena is a good friend who is willing to play with her, unlike other friends who do not want to play with Mira. Mira admits that she is afraid to play with other friends. As Mira expressed when asked why she plays and talks to Alena:

"I feel happy when I talk to Alena, because she is the only one who wants to play with me. My other friends don't want to be friends with me. I am afraid of them. They make me cry." (Casual conversation with Mira, June 2024).

During Mira and Alena's friendship, she shared many things, and they also had many similar interests, as expressed by Alena when the researcher asked her why she was friends with Mira, as follows:

"Poor Mira doesn't have any friends. Many people bully her even though she is kind. Her friends often tease her until she cries and becomes frightened." (Casual conversation with Mira's friends, June 2024)

Mira felt scared and cried when her friends teased her, so she became afraid to play with her other friends because they bullied her and insulted her.

Informant 3 Ipin (Ipin – Name withheld)

Data on Ipin was obtained from brief interviews conducted at RA Riyadusholihin 3 when parents picked up their children from school. Ipin is currently in group B. When the researcher asked about Ipin's behaviour at home or when playing in the neighbourhood, Ipin's parents responded as follows:

"In his neighbourhood, Ipin rarely plays, even with his friends. Ipin is a quiet child who is very fearful, perhaps because his family does not interact much with other people, so Ipin is the same. He does not like crowds and becomes frightened when he meets many people." (Interview with Ipin's parents, June 2024)

When the researchers learned that Ipin had experienced not only physical bullying, but they also asked Ipin's parents whether there were any impacts or effects on Ipin as a result of being bullied. Ipin's parents responded as follows:

"The effect is that he is afraid of crowds, when there are crowds, Ipin looks uncomfortable and is more cautious in his behaviour. His confidence has decreased after the bullying, he has lost focus and often does not understand instructions" (Interview with Ipin's parents, June 2024)

In his daily life at school, Ipin experiences bullying, namely frequent insults, exclusion, and ridicule for no reason by his bullies. Ipin is also often subjected to physical abuse, such as being pushed repeatedly on the head. Ipin's reaction to bullying is to remain silent.

Ipin is a very quiet child. He tends to do everything on his own, even when playing, he prefers to play alone in a corner. When his friends approach him or invite him to play, Ipin sometimes ignores them. This might be one of the reasons why Ipin is bullied by his peers. When Ipin is bullied, he becomes withdrawn, stays silent, and does not retaliate against his peers." (Interview with Ipin's class teacher, June 2024)

According to his homeroom teacher, Ms. Uni, Ipin experienced bullying because he was very difficult to play with, and many of his friends disliked his attitude. Initially, Ipin was unaware of this, but after receiving guidance from his teacher, he gradually began to change for the better.

In his communication with his classmates, Ipin interacts very little with his friends. Ipin chooses to play alone in the corner of the playground rather than joining his other classmates. Ipin feels very afraid when he joins his friends. Ipin experiences quite a lot of bullying from his friends. As Ipin explained when the researcher asked him why he chose to play alone, he said the following:

"I'm afraid of my friends, they often hit and tease me, I prefer to play alone, my friends are scary" (Casual conversation with Ipin, June 2024)

Conclusion

Based on the results of data processing and analysis of the research described above regarding the anxiety of children who are victims of bullying at RA Riyadusholihin 3, the researcher concluded from the problem statement that there were three children who experienced anxiety because of bullying. This is evident from the behaviour of the three victims, such as Vano, who often feels afraid of being hit and experiences sadness; Mira, who frequently feels sad, gloomy, afraid, and ashamed; and Ipin, who often feels anxious and afraid in crowded places, feels threatened, and experiences stress.

The category of anxiety found in this RA is classified as mild anxiety, because the child is still able to participate in learning activities despite feeling fearful and worried. The factors causing anxiety in victims of bullying are negative experiences with the school environment that lead to a feeling of helplessness in acting. Bullying that persists over a long period of time can influence a child's personality, leading them to become antisocial or withdraw from their environment (Olweus, 1993). Therefore, anxiety in children who are victims of bullying is a condition that requires serious attention in terms of treatment and prevention.

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