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## Research Article

# Relationship Between Stress Level and Hopelessness among Adolescents Victim of Bullying

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### Abstract

**Aims:** Bullying is a serious problem faced by teenagers nowadays. The impact of bullying could make victims feel insecure and away from their social life.

**Objective:** This study aims to determine the relationship between stress level and feelings of hopelessness among adolescents victim of bullying.

**Methods:** This research was a descriptive correlative study with a cross sectional study approach. Simple random sampling was applied to choose the class, the inclusion criteria was student who had experienced as a victim of bullying. A total of 489 senior high school students participated as respondents. Sample were taken by using a simple random sampling technique. The instruments used the Beck Hopelessness Scale and the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10). Spearman Rank Correlation was used as data analysis in this study.

**Results:** Most of the respondents were female (84%), with an average age of 16 years. More than half of the total respondents had severe of hopelessness (57.9%). The mean score of the stress level experienced by the respondents was 23.21 ( $\pm$ SD 4.427). The results of the bivariate analysis showed that stress levels had a relationship with hopelessness among adolescents victim of bullying (p-value=0.00).

**Conclusion:** The level of stress was a factor that contributes to the hopelessness of adolescent victims of bullying. Suggestion: School should develop an intervention program that can prevent stress and overcome hopelessness in adolescents victims of bullying.

### Keywords:

Adolescents, Bullying, Hopelessness, Stress

## INTRODUCTION

Bullying is a phenomenon that has been happening among teenagers for a long time (1). Data from the Global school-based health survey (GSHS) in Indonesia in 2015 found that 1.04% of junior and senior high school students had experienced bullying in the last 30 days, 24.1% for boys and 17.4% for girls. According to Marela, Wahab, and Marchira (2) stated that 47% of teenagers in Jakarta, Indonesia experienced verbal bullying, 30% physical bullying, 20% social

bullying, and 3% cyber bullying. The long-term effects that victims of bullying may experience are feelings of fear, social isolation, low self-esteem and feelings of hopelessness (3). Feelings of depression and fear of a person can be one of the causes of hopelessness in adolescent victims of bullying. According to (4), stress is a maladaptive reaction caused by something that makes you feel uncomfortable (stressor). Improper coping management can lead to deviations from maladaptive behavior from self-harm to

suicide. According to a study by (5), which explains that there is a relationship between perpetrators of violence (such as bullying) and psychological pressure, it makes a person feel that his life is not worth it, that he feels unwanted and lonely, that eventually the desire to commit suicide arises. Psychological factors such as anxiety, stress, are the most influential factors in teenage suicide ideation (6). The higher the level of hopelessness, the higher the risk of suicide.

The survey was conducted in four (4) senior high schools in Bandung City and West Bandung Regency, showing that the incidence of bullying in the three schools stated that there were still frequent incidents of bullying among students. Students who experience bullying feel changes such as being afraid to go to school, feeling insecure, feeling alienated, not having close friends, and even continuing to think negatively, feeling hopeless and wanting to commit suicide. According to interviews with the counseling teacher, many students were often bullied by their friends, including being thrown into the trash, pushed into bushes, and ridiculed. The school has reprimanded the perpetrator but when given a warning the students only said that it was just a joke. There are almost no victims of bullying who report to the school or the police. The victim of bullying feels alone without any assistance, so that in the end a feeling of helplessness and desire to end their life can appear.

## METHODS

This research was descriptive correlation study with a cross-sectional study design. The research was conducted at 4 (four) senior high school in Bandung, Indonesia. This research was conducted on April 22 to May 12, 2022. The inclusion criteria were: 1) students who were experienced as a victim of bullying (screened using the APRI questionnaire). 2) students who were registered as active in the 2021/2022 academic year. Samples were calculated

using G-power software version 3.1.9.4 using the f-test and statistical tests. Spearman Rank Correlation was applied as a data analysis.

## Research Instruments

The Adolescent Peer Relations Instrument Prada (7) was used to measure bullying behavior, especially to determine adolescent victims of bullying. This questionnaire consists of 28 items, using a Likert scale from 1 (never) to 6 (every day). the amount of bullying, while a score close to 6 represents the frequent amount of bullying. Total has ranging from 36 to 216. The reliability shows the Cronbach  $\alpha$  was 0.93 for bullies and 0.95 for victims of bullying while the validity value for each item was ( $r = > 0.82$ ).

BHS (Beck Hopelessness Scale) was used to measure hopelessness, developed by Wiessman (8) which consists of 20 statements given a score of 1 (true) and 0 (false). The total score is obtained by adding up all the correct answers which range from 0-20. A score of 0-3 is within the normal range or no symptoms, a score of 4-8 were categories as mild, a score of 9-14 as moderate, and more than 14 as severe hopelessness. The results of the reliability test were 0.973.

Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10), was used to measure the global perception of stress. The Perceived Stress Scale consists of 10 questions, there are six negative questions and four positive questions. Each question was given a score from 0 to 4. Score 0 for the answer never, score 1 for the answer almost never, score 2 for the answer sometimes, score 3 for the answer often and score 4 for the answer very often. Positive questions in this questionnaire are found in question numbers 4,5,7 and 8. The lower the score indicates the lower the stress level experienced by the respondent and the higher the score indicates the higher the stress level experienced by adolescents.

## Data analysis

Descriptive analysis included mean score, standard deviation, frequency distribution, and bivariate analysis using Spearman Rank Correlation

## Research Ethics

This research has passed the ethical test at KEPK STIKep PPNI Jabar (NO.III/057/ KEPK-SLE/STIKep/PPNI/JABAR/VIII/ 2022). The ethical principles applied in this research are informed consent privacy, justice, beneficence and non-maleficence.

## RESULTS

**Table 1. Demographic Data of Respondents. (n=489)**

Variable	Mean Score Min-Max	F (%)
Age	3.48 ± (0.947) 14-19	
Stress level	23.21 (±4.427 10 – 40	
<b>Gender</b>		
Male		78(16.0)
Female		411(84.0)
<b>Religion</b>		
Islam		477(97.5)
Kristen		10(2.0)
Budha		0.2(0.4)

Based on table 1 shows that the average age of the respondents was 16 years old. Most of the respondents were female (84%). Majority of the respondents were at X grade (61.1%). Most of the respondent were Islam (97.5%). And the mean score for the stress level was 23.21 (±SD 4.427) with a range of 10 – 40.

**Table 2. Types of Bullying Victims (n=489)**

Types of Bullying Victims	F (%)
Victims of Relational Bullying	344(70.3%)
Victims of Physical Bullying	145(29.7%)

Based on table 2 showed that more than half of the respondents were experienced relational bullying (70.3%), and physical bullying (29.7%).

**Table 3. Hopelessness of among Adolescents Victim of Bullying (n=489)**

Hopelessness	F (%)
Mild	38 (7.7)
Moderate	168 (34.4)
Severe	283 (57.9)

Based on table 3, it shows that more than half of the respondents (57.9%) had severe of hopelessness, and 34.4% in the moderate category of the hopelessness.

**Table 4. Distribution of Gender, Grade, Religion, by Hopelessness. (n=489)**

Variable	Hopelessness		
	Mild F (%)	Moderate F (%)	Severe F (%)
Gender			
Male	8 (1.6)	30 (6.2)	40 (8.1)
Female	30 (6.2)	138 (28.2)	243 (49.7)
Religion			
Islam	37(7.5)	164(33.5)	276(56.4)
Kristen	1(0.2)	4(0.8)	5(1)
Budha	0(0)	0(0)	2(0.4)

**Table 5. Bivariate analysis (n=489)**

Variable	Hopelessness p-value
Age	0.615
Gender	0.062
Religion	0.931
Stress Level	0.000*

\*p-value:= 0.00

Based on bivariate analysis, it was found that the results on demographic data, Age, gender, and religion have no significant relationship with hopelessness (p-value > 0.05). Stress level had a significant correlation with hopelessness among adolescent victims of bullying.

## DISCUSSION

More than half of the respondents was had severe of hopelessness (57.9%). This result was accordance with study by (9) highlighted that bullying will have an impact to victim felt uncomfortable, afraid, having low self-esteem, worthless, poor social adjustment, and hopeless. The present study, was found that the most respondents who experienced hopelessness in severe category were women (49.7%). This finding was accordance with the research of (10) which revealed that victims of bullying will experience automatic negative thoughts. Impact of bullying creates negative associations and develops a scheme that the environment is not safe.

The emergence of the concept of powerlessness and then controlling most of a teenager's life makes an excessive worry appear (11). Furthermore, (12) showed that as many as 8.3% of the total youth who experienced acts of bullying had negative belief schemes and often experienced powerlessness in their daily lives. Powerlessness according to Carpenito-Moyet (13) is a direct experience of a lack of control over a situation, including the perception that one's actions do not significantly affect the outcome. Research conducted by (14) also found that most of the teenagers in their research experienced mild hopelessness. This is related to the inaccurate understanding of adolescents related to natural events. Based on the answers from the respondents that there are teenagers who experience difficult situations and think that this was a bad incident that can affect the future.

The results of the present study found that stress level had a significant relationship with hopelessness. The means score stress



level in the present study showed to higher score, which mean the higher score indicate higher stress level experienced by the respondents. This finding accordance with research conducted by Kusumayanti (15), showed their respondent also experienced anxiety at a severe level (61.8%). The high level of anxiety/stress experienced by respondents could influenced by various factors, one of which is related to the school and academic environment. Research from (16) also found that the three main focuses that influence students' anxiety in school are academics, pressure to succeed and post-graduation plans. Bullying experienced by respondents in present study can be a source of stressor for respondents. Experienced bullying can be an unpleasant experience for respondents which in turn can make respondents experience anxiety due to the stressor. According to (4), stress is one of the maladaptive reactions caused by stressors.

As for the results of this study, it was found that most of those who experienced hopelessness at the stress level of bullying victims were mostly women, and 70.3% experienced as victim of relational bullying. According to Samantha (17) women are more vulnerable to experiencing bullying victimization because there are societal standards regarding appearance, physical shape, and ideal body size to have. Anxiety that arises due to bullying treatment in women is also more prone to result in stress or depression levels (18). According to (2), this happens because hormones and women's self-image and body tend to be negative. In addition, (19) explained that women tend to be overcritical towards themselves, especially when faced with bad events, thus encouraging the creation of negative moods and increasing the possibility of experiencing stress and despair. Women are also more difficult to express their feelings and thoughts about the bullying they receive (20). This indirectly emphasizes negative emotions within oneself which magnifies the impact of bullying among female victims.

## CONCLUSION

Adolescents who are victims of bullying are very vulnerable to experiencing feelings of hopelessness caused by the stress they experience. Adolescent stress can originate from feelings of discomfort with the environment and academic stress may also have an effect. It is necessary for school to identify student who experienced with bullying, and also deal with the problem of bullying that occurs. There needs to be clear rules for bullying perpetrators and there needs to be a forum or place for consultation and protection for victims of bullying.

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