



How school climate influences bullying behavior tendencies in junior high school

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received Jan 08, 2025

Revised Jan 15, 2025

Accepted Jan 26, 2025

Keywords:

Adolescent;
Bullying Behavior Tendencies;
Junior Highschool;
Student;
School Climate.

ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to ascertain the relationship between school climate and the tendency of bullying behavior among junior high school students in Surabaya. A correlational quantitative method was employed, utilizing a cluster random sampling technique. The population of this study comprised all public junior high school students in Surabaya, with a total of 447 students participating. The hypothesis test analysis was conducted using Pearson product moment correlation. The findings of this study indicated a negative correlation coefficient (r_{xy}) of -0.516 with a p-value of less than 0.001, suggesting a substantial relationship between school climate and bullying tendencies among junior high school students in Surabaya. Specifically, the study found that as school climate improves, bullying tendencies decrease, and conversely, as school climate worsens, bullying tendencies increase.

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INTRODUCTION

Education has been identified as a critical component for maintaining societal order which has the aim to educate and develop the potential in individuals optimally. A good education can change an individual's mindset. The school environment has an important role in shaping student behavior and interactions (Thursina et al., 2023). During adolescence, individuals will experience changes in psychological, physiological, cognitive, and social-emotional aspects. This causes individuals to tend to be unstable and sensitive in making decisions without thinking about the risks that will occur, while during this development period individuals will be faced with the emergence of problems that occur during adolescence, especially in the school environment. One of the problems that often occurs during adolescence at school is bullying. Bullying is a repetitive bullying behavior both psychologically and physically carried out by stronger individuals on weaker individuals (Rigby, 2007). The phenomenon of bullying is rampant in individuals, so it often becomes news on social media, especially the phenomenon of bullying that occurs in the world of education which looks alarming.

The Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) has made the following statement that throughout 2023 bullying cases in Indonesia were around 3,800 and those that occurred in

educational institutions were almost half. Bullying behavior manifests in educational settings at the elementary, junior high, and high school levels. The Central Statistics Agency (BPS) (Asyifah et al., 2024) revealed in 2021, 26.8% of bullying behavior occurred at the elementary school level, 26.32% at the junior high school level, and 15.54% at the high school level. According to data from the Indonesian Teachers Union Federation (FGSI) (Asyifah et al., 2024) in 2023 out of 30 bullying cases that occurred, 30% of bullying behavior occurred at the elementary level, 50% at the junior high school level, 10% at the high school level, and 10% at the vocational level. Bullying behavior at the junior high school level is increasing in 2023, this indicates that the occurrence of bullying at the junior high school level is a contemporary phenomenon. The forms of bullying frequently experienced by junior high school students include verbal, physical, and cyberbullying (Nurlia & Suardiman, 2020). Bullying mostly occurs in adolescents aged 11 to 18 years. Research conducted by (Yusuf et al., 2022) 9969 adolescents in Indonesia with a school range of grades 7 to 12 showed as many as 19.9% reported having been victims of bullying. The phenomenon of bullying does not only occur in Indonesia, in Jordan as many as 7% reported having experienced bullying, 7.6% as bullying perpetrators, and 1.7% as both (Shahrour et al., 2020). In China as many as 2.9% became perpetrators of bullying, 30.4% became victims of bullying, and 21.7% as both (Xu et al., 2022). In Australia about 50% of students experienced verbal and physical bullying, 11.8% experienced cyberbullying (Islam et al., 2020).

The following research was conducted by (Chen et al., 2024) Prevalence studies on bullying victimization in educational institutions revealed that the proportion of affected individuals ranged from 12.9% to 47.5% across a total of 16 countries. Bullying behavior is rampant in schools with a prevalence that tends to be high every year, and this behavior occurs in many developing countries and schools. According to Wiyani (Nisa, 2020) the phenomenon of bullying that occurred in Surabaya in junior high school students amounted to 59.8% of bullying that occurred such as physical bullying, verbal bullying, psychological bullying, and cyberbullying. Based on research conducted by (Nisa, 2020) in one of the junior high schools in Surabaya, there is a phenomenon of bullying that occurs in grades 7, 8, and 9, the results show that 40% of students carry out verbal bullying, 20% of students carry out physical bullying, and 40% of students carry out psychological bullying. The negative impact of bullying has both a physical and psychological impact on the individual who is the victim, which is detrimental to the victim. Psychologically, individuals who are victims of bullying include trauma, loss of self-confidence, anxiety, depression, and the risk of suicidal thoughts (Setiani & Hidayah, 2024). Bullying behavior also has an impact on the teaching and learning process at school which results in the teaching and learning process not running with optimal results, due to the impact of bullying behavior. Bullying among adolescents has an impact on lack of academic interest, increased dropout behavior, causes absenteeism, creates fear among weak adolescents, and depression and anxiety which results in decreased academic achievement (Okeke et al., 2024). Bullying is influenced by several factors including individual factors, group factors, parental factors, community factors, community factors, and school factors (Ahmed et al., 2022). Researchers suspect that the tendency of bullying behavior can be influenced by a low school climate. This is in line with research conducted by (Antoni et al., 2020) found that the most influential factor as a cause of bullying behavior is school climate. The study primarily focuses on the correlation between school climate and bullying tendencies. While the influence of family, social media, and peer pressure are acknowledged in the introduction as factors, they were not included as variables in this research. Future research could incorporate these elements to provide a broader understanding.

According to (Permata & Nasution, 2022) School climate is the cause of bullying behavior in schools. School climate refers to the atmosphere of the school environment. School climate can be defined as the quality of a school that focuses on helping each individual feel valuable, dignified and important, so as to create a sense of connection to the school environment (Yuliana, 2017). A healthy school environment will create a good school climate. School climate has an important role

for schools, which can affect the feelings of teachers or students towards schools, such as feelings of pleasure or vice versa. A good school climate is characterized by a feeling of safety, inclusiveness, mutual respect, (Sari et al., 2019) and good relationships between teachers and students, so that students will be more obedient to the rules and show good behavior. According to Monrad (in Ramadhan & Yasmin, 2023), school cleanliness, management, and good behavior among school members can form a good school climate.

School can be said to be one of the important places for adolescent development besides home, this is because adolescents spend quite a lot of time at school. Schools should be a place to develop students potential optimally (Fauziah, 2022). As an educational institution, schools should be established with a pleasant climate and free from bullying (Amawidyati & Muhammad, 2017). It is imperative to acknowledge the significance of the school environment in establishing an optimal learning atmosphere. This environment must be designed to ensure the comfort and safety of the students who will be utilizing it (Kristinawati & Pranoto, 2023). A good school climate will affect students in showing academic achievement and on the other hand students are not interested in behaviors that can harm other individuals (Rahmawati, 2016). In light of the aforementioned rationale, the researcher's inquiry pertains to the existence of a potential correlation between the school climate and the propensity for bullying behavior exhibited by junior high school students in Surabaya. This study highlights the specific context of Surabaya and incorporates a larger sample size with a quantitative approach, contrasting with earlier studies that may have been more qualitative or limited in scope.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is a correlational quantitative research aimed at examining whether there is a The present study seeks to establish a correlation between the school climate and the prevalence of bullying behavior among middle school students in Surabaya. School climate serves as the independent variable, while the tendency for bullying behavior acts as the dependent variable. In this study, the sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan table (1970), which is a statistical method for determining the sample size required for a specific population. Based on a population of 54,232 students from 63 schools with a margin of error of 5%, the required sample size was calculated to be 381 middle school students in Surabaya. However, this study involved 447 middle school students in Surabaya, selected using a cluster random sampling technique by randomly selecting regions and schools in Surabaya to serve as representatives. The selected schools are SMP Negeri 8 as the representative of North Surabaya and SMP Negeri 37 as the representative of Central Surabaya. Cluster random sampling ensures representation by selecting schools from varied geographic and socioeconomic backgrounds in Surabaya. This method effectively includes diverse student characteristics, making the findings more generalizable across the population.

The present study utilizes a data collection method that incorporates psychological measurement scale consisting of two scales, namely the School climate scale and the bullying behavior tendency scale. The data collection method employed in this study is a questionnaire through google form. The measurement scale in this study was developed the data were collected using a Likert scale. The Likert scale consists of statements (stimuli) that align with behavioral indicators (favorable) and those that contradict the indicators (unfavorable), the following categories are used to express the strength of an opinion: Strongly Agree (ST), Agree (S), Neutral (N), Disagree (TS), and Strongly Disagree (STS) (Azwar, 2017). This scale is widely recognized for its ability to capture the intensity and diversity of opinions, as it allows respondents to express varying degrees of agreement or disagreement. The five-point structure offers simplicity and clarity, making it accessible to junior high school students while maintaining sensitivity to diverse

perspectives. Additionally, its balanced design ensures that both favorable and unfavorable opinions are adequately represented.

This study used a data collection method based on psychological measurement scales, consisting of two scales: the School Climate Scale and the Bullying Behavior Tendency Scale. The School Climate Scale, developed independently based on the aspects of (Monrad et al., 2008), consists of 19 items with an internal consistency value of $\alpha = 0.887$. The Bullying Behavior Tendency Scale, developed independently based on the aspects of (Coloroso, 2007), consists of 55 items with an internal consistency value of $\alpha = 0.959$. Data analysis in this study was conducted using Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was conducted with the assistance of SPSS 25.0 for Windows software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this study, preliminary assessments were conducted, including the normality test and the linearity test. These evaluations were deemed essential, given the study's design, which is a correlational quantitative study utilizing two distinct variables.

Normality Test

The objective of the normality test is to ascertain the distribution of data in a study sample. The normality test analysis utilizes the IBM SPSS Statistics 25.0 for Windows program. A normality test with a significance level greater than 0.05 indicates a normally distributed data distribution.

Table 1.
Normality Test Results

Variable	Kolmogorov-Smirnov		Description
	N	Sig.	
School Climate - Bullying Behavior Tendencies	447	0,200	Normal

As demonstrated in Table 1, the results of the normality test of the data distribution using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method yielded a significance value of $p = 0.200$ ($p > 0.05$). This finding indicates that the data distribution is consistent with a normal distribution.

Linearity Test

The objective of the linearity test is to ascertain whether the independent variable and the dependent variable exhibit a linear relationship. The analysis of the linearity test was conducted using the IBM SPSS Statistics 25.0 for Windows program. The linearity test was conducted with the provision that the significance of the deviation from linearity was greater than 0.05; in the event that this condition was met, the relationship was deemed to be linear.

Table 2.
Linearity Test Results

Variable	F	Sig.	Description
School Climate - Bullying Behavior Tendencies	447	0,200	Linear

As demonstrated in Table 2, the findings of the linearity assessment of the association between the school climate variable and the bullying behavior tendency variable yielded a statistical significance of $p = 0.100$ ($p > 0.05$). This indicates the presence of a linear relationship between the school climate variable and the tendency for bullying behavior.

Hypothesis test

The objective of a hypothesis test is to assess the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. The statistical significance of this relationship is determined by a p-value, with a p-value less than 0.05 indicating a statistically significant relationship.

Table 3.
Hypothesis Test Results

Variable	r_{xy}	Sig.	Description
School Climate – Bullying Behavior Tendencies	-0,516	0,000	significant

As illustrated in Table 3, the findings of the hypothesis test employing Pearson Product Moment Correlation, processed with the assistance of the IBM SPSS 25 for Windows program, yielded a score of $r_{xy} = -0.516$ with sig. 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). This indicates the presence of a substantial negative association between school climate and the propensity for bullying behavior. This indicates that as the school climate worsens, the likelihood of bullying behavior escalates, and conversely, as the school climate improves, the probability of bullying behavior diminishes.

Categorization

Table 4.
Categorization of Bullying Behavior Tendency Scale

Category	Interval	Σ	Percent
Very High	>177	27	6%
High	141 – 177	93	20,8%
Medium	104 – 140	200	44,7%
Low	68 – 103	121	27,1%
Very Low	< 68	6	1,3%
TOTAL		447	100%

As indicated in Table 4, the researcher classified the total score of each participant into the designated category. Six percent (27 students) exhibited a very high level of bullying behavior tendency, 20.8% (93 students) demonstrated a high level of bullying behavior tendency, 44.7% (200 students) displayed a moderate level of bullying behavior tendency, 27.1% (121 students) manifested a low level of bullying behavior tendency, and 1.3% (6 students) showed a very low level of bullying behavior tendency.

Table 5.
Categorization of School Climate Scale

Category	Interval	Σ	Percent
Very High	>101	29	6,5%
High	88 – 101	79	17,7%
Medium	75 – 87	213	47,7%
Low	62 – 74	121	27,1%
Very Low	< 62	5	1,1%
TOTAL		447	100%

As indicated in Table 5, the researcher classified the total score of each participant into the designated category. The score distribution indicated that 6.5% (29 students) showed a very high school climate level, 17.7% (79 students) exhibited a high level, 47.7% (213 students) reflected a moderate level, 27.1% (121 students) demonstrated a low level, and 1.1% (5 students) displayed a very low school climate level.

The results of this study align with the findings reported in the research conducted by (Waasdorp et al., 2022), which indicates that schools with strong engagement and safety measures exhibit a reduced tendency for bullying behavior. Conversely, schools with poor school climate

have been shown to have a high potential for bullying behavior. The findings of this study are consistent with those of (Saraswati, 2019), who found a significant negative relationship between school climate and the tendency for bullying behavior among students. The study explains that school climate can reduce the tendency for bullying behavior, suggesting that an environment that often disregards student behavior may potentially lead to bullying tendencies in schools. The findings of this study are consistent with those of (Ramadhan & Yasmin, 2023), who also observed a significant negative relationship between school climate and the tendency for bullying behavior, in the study explaining that a good school climate has a variety of rules and policies that are more than usual, as well as setting consequences in overcoming conflicts between individuals even though it has not run optimally due to lack of supervision from the school.

A good learning environment is one in which students feel supported by teachers in learning. Schools that support student participation and positive communication with teachers, the potential for *bullying* behavior is relatively low, because students feel valued and academically motivated. Students who lack support from their teachers make students feel unappreciated, which can lead to *bullying* behavior tendencies, as students may seek validation from other individuals in the wrong way or take out their frustrations on other individuals. A learning atmosphere that is too competitive, where students feel they have to dominate can trigger *bullying* behavior tendencies.

The social environment plays a role in creating an atmosphere that supports positive behavior between students. Relationships between students who respect and appreciate each other, as well as supportive friendship groups will prevent the tendency of *bullying* behavior. Students who are in an environment where discrimination still exists, causing disharmony between students. An overly competitive environment, where students feel they must dominate, can trigger a tendency towards *bullying* behavior. The physical environment relates to the physical condition of the school building. A school environment that has well-lit areas that are supervised and designed to remain easy to review can minimize the likelihood of students experiencing or becoming perpetrators of *bullying*. Schools that have hidden areas, lack of control and supervision can lead to a tendency of *bullying* behavior.

The home-school relationship relates to parental involvement with students' activities at school. Good communication between teachers and parents can help in detecting and dealing with *bullying* behavior early on. Schools that encourage parental involvement tend to have a positive social environment, if communication is not harmonious, so a lack of parental involvement, can trigger a tendency of *bullying* behavior.

Safety at school relates to how safe students feel when they are at school. Schools with clearly defined anti-bullying policies, consistent rule enforcement, and staff training in proactive conflict management have been shown to reduce bullying behavior. This is due to the fact that students feel safe, which can increase their confidence and comfort at school. The better the school climate perceived by students, the better student behavior. The results of this study indicate that school climate plays an important role in reducing the tendency of bullying behavior.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study's data analysis suggest a significant negative correlation between the school climate variable and the propensity for bullying behavior among junior high school students in Surabaya. The correlation indicates that as school climate levels rise, the likelihood of bullying behavior declines, and conversely, as school climate levels decrease, the likelihood of bullying behavior increases. These findings support the hypothesis proposed in this study, suggesting that school climate has a significant impact on bullying behavior tendencies.

On the basis of the results of the research that has been carried out and the discussion described by the researcher, there are several suggestions that the researcher would like to convey,

schools are advised to maintain and improve a good school climate to anticipate the tendency of pupils to engage in bullying behaviour that occurs at school by providing a room or hotline for students to report bullying actions anonymously and forming a special team to handle bullying cases quickly and efficiently. Schools can implement findings by fostering a sense of safety and inclusivity, setting clear anti-bullying policies, and promoting teacher-student engagement. Establishing peer support groups and maintaining a clean, monitored environment are also practical steps. For further researchers, researchers suggest conducting research on subjects with different levels to find out whether school climate can affect the tendency of bullying behavior such as at the elementary school level. In addition, future research should consider additional factors, including family dynamics, social media exposure, and peer group influence, to provide a holistic view of bullying behavior determinants. The government is advised to be able to issue policies that require schools to routinely evaluate school climate and involve students in this process by providing national guidelines or standards for creating a safe and supportive school climate, which includes aspects such as conflict management, handling bullying, and prevention programs.

Local cultural differences in different regions of Indonesia can affect how school climate improvement strategies are received and implemented. Each region has different values, norms and ways of communicating, which can affect the participation of students, teachers and parents in the program. In regions with a more collective culture, for example, approaches that emphasize togetherness and gotong royong may be more effective, while in more individualistic regions, approaches that allow room for individual self-development may be more acceptable. Therefore, the strategies implemented should be tailored to the characteristics of the local culture to ensure their success.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to the funders, resource persons, and all those who have provided tremendous assistance in realizing this research. They have been instrumental in the success of this research through their contributions, trust and commitment. We greatly appreciate all the help and efforts that have been made to achieve our common goal.

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