Profiles of Bullying in Schools: Analysis of Perpetrator, Victim, and Bystander Based on Demographic Factors

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Abstract. This research aims to examine profiles of bullying among perpetrator, victim, and bystander in Bandung's junior and senior high schools. A quantitative descriptive method was used to analyze 1290 students aged 11-19 based on demographic factors, such as gender, educational level, and age. The data was collected using bullying instruments, including perpetrator, victim, and bystander scales developed by Maslihah et al. (2024). The analysis consisted of descriptive statistics, Spearman correlation, and independent t-test using SPSS 25. The results showed that bullying perpetrator constituted the smallest population group. Additionally, no significant demographic differences were reported by victim profiles. There were significant differences in perpetrator roles based on gender ($p < .001$), educational level ($p < .001$), and age ($p < .001$). Bystander roles varied, with several dimensions showing significant differences. An empirical basis was provided for targeted interventions and responsive school policies in addressing bullying.

Keywords: bullying, perpetrator, victim, bystander, demographic factors

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Introduction

Bullying is a global problem in education, threatening psychological and physical well-being of students. Globally, nearly one-third of students have experienced bullying victimization in the past 30 days, with the highest prevalence of 45.1% and 43.5% in the Eastern Mediterranean and African regions (Biswas et al., 2020). In the United States, more than one in five students experienced bullying during the school year. Meanwhile, approximately 19.2% of students aged 12–18 experienced bullying nationally during the 2021–2022 school year (Thomsen et al., 2024). Cross-national data reported that the prevalence of bullying among 167,286 students reached 32.03%, with the highest in African countries (Man et al., 2022).

Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) states that Indonesia is experiencing an emergency of violence against children in educational institutions. Junita et al. (2023) and Pradana (2024) defined bullying as a form of deliberate and repeated aggressive behavior against others due to an observed or perceived power imbalance. Bullying is divided into three types, namely 1) physical bullying, such as slapping, stomping, pushing, hitting, kicking, and throwing objects, 2) verbal bullying includes the use of hurtful and demeaning language, namely cursing, insulting, calling names, spreading slander, and accusing, and 3) psychological bullying comprises intimidation, ostracism, ignoring, and looking at others with disdain (Adnan et al., 2020).

In 2024, Indonesian Education Monitoring Network (JPPI) recorded 573 cases of violence in educational settings (Zahdomo, 2024). This number represents a significant increase from previous years. Comparatively, 91, 142, 194, and 285 cases of violence were reported in 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023, respectively. Data from KPAI recorded 2,355 cases of child protection violations between January and August 2023, with 861 of the cases occurring in educational institutions (Fahham, 2024). Indonesian Teachers' Union Federation reported that bullying cases were most prevalent at the junior high school level, accounting for 50% of the total cases, followed by elementary (23%), as well as high and vocational schools (13.5%). This high figure suggests the state of emergency regarding bullying in Indonesian educational institutions. A similar situation is also occurring in West Java, with high rates of bullying, particularly verbal bullying, by fellow students at school (Borualogo & Gumilang, 2019).

Bullying is a serious problem requiring special attention, even though statistical data on the prevalence

is still limited in Bandung and the surrounding area. Bandung City Department of Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, and Population Control (DP3A) stated that cases of violence against children, particularly bullying, were quite common at the junior high school (SMP) level, with the majority of victim being 15-16 years old and under (Soraya, 2023). Nurzaitun (2024) showed that bullying occurred at the senior high school (SMA) level due to a lack of empathy and teacher supervision.

The availability of bullying data is reflected in various incidents. In early 2023, the media reported on a case including a female student at SMAN 1 Ciwidey, who was assaulted by 8 perpetrator, resulting in a video of the incident going viral on social media (Alhamidi, 2023). Furthermore, the viral video of a verbal abuse case comprising 6 perpetrator against a junior high school student in Sindang Jaya area in February 2025 prompted Bandung City Education Office to activate the Task Force for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in Educational Units (PPKSP) (Fatonah, 2025).

In response to the high number of bullying cases, the government initiated "Bandung Towards Zero Bullying" program. This program was declared by 75 school principals and 16 junior high schools in July 2024 as a preventative measure (Aurellia, 2024). The initiative indicates official recognition of the urgency of addressing bullying in Bandung area.

Various external and internal factors cause bullying in educational settings. According to Pradana (2024), the most influential external factor is the family, particularly the way parents raise children. In this context, children raised in families that frequently use violence or receive limited attention from parents are more likely to bully. According to Zakiyah et al. (2017), students are often bullied due to a desire for peer acceptance or to assert strength and power within social circles. Internal factors also vary, such as a desire for revenge, a sense of satisfaction after bullying, or simply viewing the act as a joke or entertainment (Nugroho et al., 2020; Retnowuni & Yani, 2022).

A comprehensive understanding of bullying necessitates acknowledging the nature as a group phenomenon, including multiple parties beyond the relationship between perpetrator and victim. Widyastuti and Soesanto (2023), as well as Gaffney et al. (2021), explained that a bully is an individual who consistently engages in negative, aggressive, and manipulative behaviors manifested as violence or intimidation. These actions are intentionally carried out to cause physical or psychological harm to others. Ruslan and Rezkiani (2023) found that bullies are generally older, have larger bodies, and tend to act in groups. Meanwhile, victims are the targets of violence or intimidation, often perceived as weak and having

difficulty creating a defense (Dewi, 2020). The role of bystander, comprising individuals who are present during bullying incidents, is important (Midgett et al., 2023). Smokowski and Evans (2019) emphasized that the presence of bystander as observers influenced the occurrence and intensity of bullying. Therefore, the role of bystander in the dynamics of bullying cannot be underestimated.

Bystander is an individual present during an event that holds the potential for creating victim, such as bullying. Salmivalli et al. (1996) identified four distinct roles of observers in bullying incidents, namely 1) assistant, defined as individuals who actively support perpetrator in victimizing their target, 2) reinforcer, individuals who passively encourage bullying through actions such as laughing or spectating, 3) outsider, individuals who remain neutral and often disengage from the situation, and 4) defender, individuals who intervene to offer assistance, solace, or support to victim. The role of an observer is critical in shaping the future outcomes for both victim and perpetrator. The likelihood of continued bullying behavior increases when more individuals select to support or in line with perpetrator (Salmivalli et al., 2011). In contrast, the decision of bystander to assume the role of a defender or to intervene on behalf of the target can effectively prevent the potential victim from experiencing a traumatic event and may diminish perpetrator's bullying behavior (Salmivalli et al., 2011).

The high rate of bullying in educational institutions has a negative impact on physical and psychological health of victim. Amnda et al. (2020) reported that the impact of bullying extended beyond physical harm to students, leading to a range of psychological issues, such as feelings of insecurity, social anxiety, difficulty concentrating on academic tasks, and reduced self-confidence. Zakiyah et al. (2017) added that victim of bullying often experienced prolonged feelings of sadness, anger, and self-loathing. Visty (2021) showed that bullying led to profound trauma, depression, and suicidal tendencies. These diverse negative impacts emphasize that bullying is a behavioral issue and a serious threat requiring comprehensive intervention from various stakeholders.

A comprehensive discussion is needed to understand the dynamics of bullying, given the complexity of the phenomenon. Previous research have focused more on profiles of bullying perpetrator and victim (Erkurnia et al., 2024; Retnowuni & Yani, 2022; Wahyuningsih et al., 2023). The crucial role of bystander in the dynamics of bullying remains understudied. Variations in the characteristics of the phenomenon have not been identified at the secondary school level in West Java. Therefore, this research aims to fill the gap by providing a comprehensive profiles of bullying perpetrator, victim, and bystander among

junior and senior high school students in Bandung and the surrounding area. Significant differences were also identified in profiles of bullying perpetrator, victim, and bystander based on gender, educational level, and age group. The results provided an empirical basis for designing targeted interventions and formulating school policies responsive to the phenomenon.

Methods

Quantitative descriptive method was used to present a detailed explanation of a specific situation, social setting, or relationship (Zellatifanny & Mudjiyanto, 2018). This type of analysis provided a more advanced stage by measuring the distributions in the sample. The data presented were in the form of numbers obtained from the field (Priadana & Sunarsi, 2021).

Participant

Participants comprised 1,290 junior and senior high school students, aged 11-19 years. Approximately 832 (64.5%) were female and 458 (35.5%) were male. A total of 683 (53.78%) and 587 (46.22%) were enrolled in junior and senior high school. Purposive sampling was used to select participants based on certain criteria in line with the research objectives. The inclusion criteria included (1) active students in junior or senior high school, and (2) residing or attending school in Bandung and the surrounding area.

Data Collection and Ethical Considerations

The research procedures were conducted under established ethical principles categorized as minimal risk and carried out using non-invasive survey instruments without any intervention or manipulation of participants. Informed consent was secured through a two-stage process. Authorization was procured from the administration, the institutional body granting permission for the execution in the school premises. Subsequently, individual consent was obtained directly from student participants. This second stage included the provision of a comprehensive information sheet detailing the objectives, data collection methodologies, the voluntary nature of participation, and the right of withdrawal.

The data collection process was carried out through coordination with teachers at the school through remote communication and in-person visits. Survey implementation was delegated to class teachers, emphasizing the voluntary nature of participation and allowing students the opportunity to refuse without consequence. Participant confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained, with no personal identification information provided, and data were stored securely for academic purposes.

Measuring Instrument

This research used Bullying Scale, namely Perpetrator, Victim, and Bystander, developed by Maslihah et al. (2024) based on the theory of Salmivalli et al. (1996). This instrument consisted of 3 main scales, namely perpetrator (13 items), victim (14 items), and bystander (34 items). The instrument showed good reliability coefficient with Cronbach's alpha value on perpetrator scale (α = .81), victim scale (α = .87), and bystander scale (α = .83), as well as good construct validity shown through CFA results on perpetrator (RMSEA = .05; CFI = .92; TLI = .92; S-RMR = .03), victim (RMSEA = .04; CFI = .93; TLI = .92; S-RMR = .04), and bystander (RMSEA = .04; CFI = .92; TLI = .91; S-RMR = .04) scales.

Bystander scale, designed to assess four distinct roles, was subjected to refinement based on factor analysis results. The reinforcer role was not retained as an independent dimension due to an insufficient number of valid items. A total of three items originally associated with the reinforcer role were reallocated to the outsider dimension. The remaining two items from the reinforcer role were integrated into the assistant dimension. Therefore, the revised and final bystander scale effectively measured four dimensions, namely assistant, outsider, defender, and digital defender.

Analysis Method

The data analysis method used descriptive statistics, where the collected data were described and summarized by calculating the total respondent score, frequency, and percentage. The results were presented in tabular form for ease of interpretation (McClave & Sincich, 2018). Furthermore, a normality test was conducted using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to determine data distribution and select the appropriate inferential analysis. The results showed that the variables had a non-normal distribution (p < .05), which was quite reasonable considering the large sample size (n = 1,290) and the sensitivity of the normality test to samples exceeding 300 (Field, 2020).

Spearman Correlation Analysis was used to test the relationship between variables using the formula rs = 1 - $(6\Sigma d^2)/(n(n^2-1))$, where rs is Spearman correlation coefficient, d is the rank difference, and n is the number of samples. This method was selected because the data were not normally distributed. Independent t-test was used to test the mean difference between groups. Even though the assumption of normality was not met, the t-test was quite robust for large samples (Field, 2020).

Results and Discussion
Results

In Table 1, the total sample comprised 1,290 respondents. The female and male participants were 832 (64.5%) and 458 (35.5%), respectively. Based on

Table 1

Respondent Demographic Data

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	832	64.5%
Male	458	35.5%
Total	1290	100%
Educational Level		
Senior/Vocational High School	598	46.4%
Junior High School	692	53.6%
Total	1290	100%
Age		
11-15	783	60.7%
16-19	505	39.1%
N/A	2	.2%
Total	1290	100%

Table 2

Frequency of Response to Bullying Experience

Experiencing Bullying	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	499	38.7%
No	791	61.3%
Total	1290	100%
Seeing Bullying Incidents		
Yes	927	71.9%
No	363	28.1%
Total	1290	100%
Experience of Seeing Bullying Incidents at Educational Level		
Ever seen at one level of education	671	52.0%
Ever seen at more than one level of education	292	22.6%
Never	327	25.3%
Total	1290	100%
Helping Bullies		
Yes	257	19.9%
No	1031	80.1%
Total	1290	100%
Experience Helping Bullies in Education		
Have helped at one level of education	371	28.8%
Have helped at more than one level of education	102	7.9%
Never	817	63.3%
Total	1290	100%
Bullying		
Yes	175	13.6%
No	1115	86.4%
Total	1290	100%
Experience of Bullying at Educational Level		
Ever been bullied at one level of education	182	14.1%
Ever been bullied at more than one level of education	29	2.3%
Never	1079	83.6%
Total	1290	100%

educational level, 692 (53.6%) and 598 (46.4%) were from junior high and senior high schools, respectively. The age distribution showed that the 11-15 and 16-19 groups contained 783 (60.7%) and 505 (39.1%) participants.

Table 2 presents data depicting sample responses to the initial question, which includes direct experiences with bullying. The results showed that 38.7% of respondents were victim of bullying, while 61.3% did not experience the act. A substantial majority of the respondents (71.9%) witnessed bullying. Approximately 52% observed bullying in a single educational level, while 22.6% experienced the phenomenon across multiple educational levels. A total of 19.9% participated as assistant to perpetrator, with 28.8% and 7.9% reporting assistance at one and multiple levels. In addition, 13.6% admitted to engaging in bullying behavior, with 14.1% and 2.3% participating at single and multiple levels.

According to Table 3, the participation profile shows a dominance of the very low category in the roles of perpetrator (92.9%) and assistant (94.6%). Victim profile was also dominated by the very low (67.9%) and high (26.7%) categories. For outsider bystander, the majority were in the very low (62.2%) and low (28.9%) categories. The distribution for defen-

Table 3
Percentage of Bullying Involvement

Bullying Perpetrator	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	2	.2%
High	83	6.4%
Low	6	.5%
Very low	1199	92.9%
Total	1290	100%
Bullying Victim		
Very high	7	.5%
High	344	26.7%
Low	63	4.9%
Very low	876	67.9%
Total	1290	100%
Bystander Type Assistant		
Very high	2	.2%
High	60	4.7%
Low	8	.6%
Very low	1220	94.6%
Total	1290	100%
Bystander Type Outsider		
Very high	1	.1%
High	11	.9%
Moderate	103	8.0%
Low	373	28.9%
Very low	802	62.2%
Total	1290	100%
Bystander Type Defender		
Very high	13	1.0%
High	117	9.1%
Moderate	373	28.9%
Low	476	36.9%
Very low	311	24.1%
Total	1290	100%
Bystander Type Digital Defender		
Very high	0	.0%
High	633	49.1%
Moderate	373	28.9%
Low	142	11.0%
Very low	142	11.0%
Total	1290	100%

der bystander appeared most even across low (36.9%), moderate (28.9%), very low (24.1%), and high (9.1%) categories. Meanwhile, digital defender showed a different pattern with a dominance of high (49.1%) and moderate (28.9%) categories.

In Table 4, gender has a significant relationship with all aspects except victim role. Negative relationships were found in the roles of perpetrator (ρ = -.204, p < .01), assistant (ρ = -.160, p < .01), and outsider (ρ = -.141, p < .01). Meanwhile, positive relationships were reported in the roles of defender (ρ = .186, p < .01) and digital defender (ρ = .122, p < .01). Educational level was negatively correlated with the roles of perpetrator (ρ = -.080, p < .01) and outsider (ρ = -.138, p < .01), and positively correlated with digital defender (ρ = .131, p < .01). Age was negatively correlated with defender (ρ = -.100, p < .01) and digital defender (ρ = -.167, p < .01) roles. The variable was positively correlated with perpetrator (ρ = .092, p < .01) and outsider (ρ = .149, p < .01) roles.

Based on the results of gender test, 5 of 6 variables showed significant differences. Males had higher scores on assistant (M = 11.13; M = 10.09), outsider (M = 21.38; M = 19.21), and perpetrator (M = 17.62; M = 15.60). Meanwhile, females had higher scores on defender (M = 27.86; M = 24.60) and digital defender (M = 5.11; M = 4.45). There was no significant difference in victim variable (p = 0.58). In the context of education level, 4 variables showed significant differences. High/vocational school students had higher scores on assistant (M = 10.72; M = 10.24), outsider (M = 21.12; M = 18.99), and perpetrator (M = 16.85; M = 15.86). Junior high school students reported higher scores on digital defender (M = 5.14; M = 4.57). The 16-19 year group had higher scores on assistant (M = 10.77; M = 10.26), outsider (M = 21.39; M = 19.08),

Table 4
The Relationship between Demographic Data and Profiles of Bullying

Variable	Perpetrator	Victim	Bystander			
			Assistant	*Outsider*	*Defender*	*Digital Defender*
Gender	-.204**	.032	-.160**	-.141**	.186**	.122**
Education Level	-.080**	-.033	-.053	-.138**	.047	.131**
Age	.092**	-.007	.052	.149**	-.100**	-.167**

Table 5
Results of Difference Test Based on Gender, Education Level, and Age

Catagory	Variable	Group 1	M (SD)	Group 2	M (SD)	t	df	P	Significant
Gender	Assistant	Male (N=458)	11.13 (3.45)	Female (N=832)	10.09 (1.94)	5.93	620.18	.00	Yes
	Outsider		21.38 (7.39)		19.21 (6.44)	5.26	838.61	.00	Yes
	Defender		24.60 (8.45)		27.86 (8.53)	-6.60	1288.00	.00	Yes
	Digital Defender		4.45 (2.24)		5.11 (2.68)	-4.74	1088.81	.00	Yes
	Victim		22.36 (8.25)		22.61 (7.79)	-.55	1288.00	.58	No
	Perpetrator		17.62 (5.34)		15.60 (3.37)	7.35	662.00	.00	Yes
Education	Assistant	Senior High School (N=598)	1.72 (3.15)	Junior High School (N=692)	1.24 (2.04)	3.18	995.53	.00	Yes
	Outsider		21.12 (7.38)		18.99 (6.23)	5.55	1174.30	.00	Yes
	Defender		26.26 (8.53)		27.09 (8.73)	-1.71	1288.00	.09	No
	Digital Defender		4.57 (2.44)		5.14 (2.62)	-4.00	128.35	.00	Yes
	Victim		22.76 (8.11)		22.32 (7.82)	1.01	1288.00	.31	No
	Perpetrator		16.85 (4.99)		15.86 (3.51)	4.07	105.44	.00	Yes
Age	Assistant	11-15 (N=783)	1.26 (2.10)	16-19 (N=505)	1.77 (3.26)	-3.07	772.88	.00	Yes
	Outsider		19.08 (6.35)		21.39 (7.40)	-5.78	957.07	.00	Yes
	Defender		27.43 (8.82)		25.62 (8.24)	3.73	1126.91	.00	Yes
	Digital Defender		5.20 (2.67)		4.38 (2.28)	5.88	1189.29	.00	Yes
	Victim		22.58 (7.89)		22.45 (8.07)	.29	1286.00	.77	No
	Perpetrator		15.86 (3.53)		17.03 (5.17)	-4.45	805.32	.00	Yes

and perpetrator (M = 17.03; M = 15.86). In contrast, the 11-15 year group had higher scores on defender (M = 27.43; M = 25.62) and digital defender (M = 5.20; M = 4.38). Victim variable did not show significant differences in the two demographic characteristics, as reported in Table 5.

Discussion
The data in Table 2 shows that more than a third of respondents are bullying victim. These results report that bullying remains a serious problem in schools. Salmivalli et al. (2011) stated that bullying cases were common in educational institutions. Even though several respondents have witnessed bullying, only a small proportion admitted to being perpetrator. According to Thornberg and Jungert (2013), this indicates the possibility of social desirability bias in self-reports.

Regarding profiles of bullying perpetrator, most respondents are in the very low category, indicating a low tendency to actively engage in the behavior. The results are consistent with Olweus (2013), where bullies are small groups in the school population. Perpetrator shows stable and repetitive behavioral patterns in carrying out bullying. According to Kowalski et al. (2021), bullying is consistently viewed

as repetitive, aggressive behavior aimed at harming and positively correlated with moral disengagement in perpetrator.

For victim profile, the distribution is more varied, with the majority in the very low and high categories. This higher proportion shows that victim tend to experience bullying consistently, as reported by Salmivalli (2010). Hosozawa et al. (2021) stated that 15-year-olds in 71 countries experienced frequent bullying. The diverse pattern of victim experiences is also consistent with Khasanah et al. (2017) in Bandung City. The results reported variations in the frequency of bullying among victim, with 3.8% and 26.4% experiencing high and moderate intensities, respectively. Therefore, the prevalence of bullying in Bandung schools is quite high and consistent across time.

An interesting result shows that bystander dynamics vary across types. For assistant type, the data shows that the majority are in the very low category since few students participate in assisting the bully. This can be a positive indicator of moral awareness in students. For outsider type, this varied data distribution suggests a tendency for some students to remain excluded from bullying situations. This phenomenon can be explained through the concept of the passive bystander effect proposed by Latané and Darley (1970). In this context, individuals often refrain from intervening in emergencies or social conflicts due to the assumption that someone else will take responsibility or action. Thornberg et al. (2012) reported that students were often aware of bullying situations but preferred to remain silent due to group norms and fear of becoming the next target. Defender type shows a more even distribution of data across all categories. This distribution reports the potential for peer support interventions in line with Salmivalli et al. (2011), which suggests the significant influence of bystander in enhancing the effectiveness of anti-bullying strategies.

Spearman correlation analysis reports a pattern of relationships between demographic factors and bullying behavior, as well as bystander role. Gender has a significant correlation with all variables except victim role. Males show a positive correlation with the roles of perpetrator, assistant, and outsider. Meanwhile, females, as bystander, are more correlated with the roles of defender and digital defender. This correlation is consistent with the difference test conducted. A total of 5 variables tested show significant differences based on gender, except for victim role. The result suggests that the experience of being victim can be witnessed equally. This differed from several previous research, such as Feijóo et al. (2021) and Zhou et al. (2022), where females were more often in victim position than males.

The significant differences in the role of perpetrator based on gender are consistent with Ordóñez and Prado (2019). The results show that males are more dominant in the bully role than females. According to Obregon-Cuesta et al. (2022), this occurs because masculine stereotypes related to dominance and aggressiveness are assimilated since childhood. In bystander role, males record higher scores in the roles of assistant and outsider, while females are mostly defender and digital defender. This result is consistent with previous research indicating a higher propensity for males to engage in bullying behavior directly and indirectly as assistant. Females are more frequently observed in the role of defender (Pöyhönen et al., 2010). This may be related to differences in gender socialization patterns (Jenkins & Nickerson, 2017).

Educational level showed a significant negative correlation with the roles of perpetrator and outsider, as well as a significant positive correlation with digital defender and bystander. This shows a difference in behavioral patterns between junior and senior high school students in the context of bullying. A total of 4 variables show significant differences based on educational level, except for victim and defender bystander. Therefore, bullying does not discriminate based on victim's educational level. There are also significant differences in the roles of perpetrator and other types of bystander. Senior high school students record higher scores as perpetrator and in bystander roles, such as assistant and outsider, while junior high school students score higher as digital defender.

Age is significantly and positively correlated with bystander roles. This variable is significantly and negatively related to defender and digital defender roles, as strengthened by a t-test. A total of 5 variables show significant differences based on age group, except for victim role. This confirms that bullying does not discriminate based on victim age. However, there are significant differences in other roles. Older age groups report higher participation as perpetrator and in bystander roles such as assistant and outsider, while younger age groups score higher as defender and digital defender.

The results on education level and age were consistent with Changlani et al. (2023), where younger students participated in interventions. This confirms that bystander intervention is not a "one-size-fits-all" method and cannot be generalized to all ages and education levels since student responses vary.

Several factors support the occurrence of bullying in school environments. Demographic factors such as male gender and older age groups indicate a higher tendency to be perpetrator, supported by masculinity norms. Kenny (2016) showed that traditional masculinity norms reinforced aggressive behavior in male students as a form of gender identity assertion in

a competitive social environment. The passive bystander phenomenon also perpetuates bullying due to the lack of intervention. Tsang et al. (2011) found that low self-efficacy and an unclear social identity made students reluctant to intervene, specifically when group norms supported an attitude of indifference. Several factors reports the potential to inhibit bullying. This includes students' low tendency to assist perpetrator, suggesting a sense of moral awareness. The relatively even distribution of defender reports the potential for optimized peer support. Frey et al. (2015) showed that social ties and peer solidarity enabled students to be more courageous in acting as active defender. Female students who act as defender and digital defender are also important assets in prevention. In this context, Dailey and Roche (2025) reported that females possessed higher empathic sensitivity and digital communication skills as key actors in cyberbullying prevention strategies. The better preparedness of junior high school students as digital defender shows the adaptability of the younger generation to the challenges of cyberbullying.

The main challenge faced is the complexity of bullying patterns that vary based on demographic characteristics, requiring different methods. The phenomenon of passive bystander increases the situation because students do not participate in bullying for fear of becoming the next target or assuming others will take action. The challenges will become more complex with the development of digital technology that creates new spaces for cyberbullying. The greater activity of junior high school students as digital defender shows a gap in preparedness to address online bullying. Changes in increasingly individualistic social patterns also complicate efforts to build solidarity and concern.

Addressing bullying requires collaboration between perpetrator, victim, and bystander, using a comprehensive method. For perpetrator, specifically male students and older age groups, special programs are needed to develop empathy and change the method of thinking that justifies aggressive behavior (Kowalski et al., 2021). Khasanah et al. (2017) showed psychological impacts in the form of recurring negative thoughts. In this context, psychological support is needed for victim, regardless of gender, age, or educational level. Changing the role of bystander from passive spectators to active advocates is important in addressing the high outsider tendencies in male and older students through intervention skills training programs and reducing the fear of participating.

Prevention and response efforts are implemented through anti-bullying programs targeting perpetrator and changing the social dynamics in school environment. An example is KiVa program, developed in Finland and focused on changing peer group norms

through the activation of bystander role. Initial evaluations in New Zealand showed that implementing KiVa significantly reduced rates of bullying and victimization among younger students (Green et al., 2020). These results reinforce the importance of developing programs that adapt to the social and cultural context of each school, including local values such as social harmony and mutual respect in Sundanese society. Therefore, the prevention strategies become more relevant, widely accepted, and effective in producing a meaningful impact.

This research has several important implications for the development of effective anti-bullying programs. The consistent results showing no significant differences in bullying victimization based on gender, educational level, or age suggest that any individual, regardless of demographic characteristics, can become victim. In this context, prevention programs need to be universal and inclusive. However, the differences in the roles of perpetrator and bystander require a more specific and differentiated method. Intervention programs need to consider gender differences, with an emphasis on reducing bullying behavior in males and strengthening the role of defender and bystander across all genders. Differences in bullying patterns based on educational level and age must be accommodated with different methods for junior and senior high school students, as well as age groups.

Strengthening the role of defender is crucial, given the relatively even distribution. Therefore, programs should capitalize on the potential by enabling defender to participate in preventing and addressing bullying. Downes and Cefai (2019) emphasized that designing effective anti-bullying programs required differentiating strategies based on social roles, including the development of specific interventions for defender, assistant, and outsider. Another critical focus is promoting a shift in the passive responses of outsider toward more proactive participation in bullying situations, particularly among older and higher educational level students. Myers and Cowie (2017) also emphasized that cultural differences and local social norms influenced responses to bullying situations. Therefore, outsider activation strategies need to be contextualized. Anti-bullying programs are designed more effectively to address the complex dynamics of bullying by considering the factors comprehensively.

This research has limitations in terms of sample variation obtained from public schools in Bandung area. Future analysis needs to include more diverse samples from private schools, madrasas, and Islamic boardings to enrich understanding of the dynamics of bullying in a broader context. Based on diverse bystander profiles, more in-depth analysis is needed on

the factors influencing the decisions of participating in bullying situations. An important area for further exploration is the extent to which the gender of victim influences bystander's likelihood of providing assistance. This can provide insight into the extent to which bystander' empathy and participation are shaped by specific factors. The understanding supports the design of effective intervention programs that are consistent with the social context and the dynamics of student relationships.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research showed that the number of bullies was the smallest in the population. Bullying behavior of perpetrator was mostly in the very low category. Over a third of respondents were subjected to bullying, and a significant majority had observed the incidents. Significant differences were found based on gender, education level, and age in the roles of perpetrator and bystander. Males were mostly reported as perpetrator, assistant, and outsider bystander, while females scored higher in the roles of defender and digital defender bystander. High/vocational school students and older age groups showed higher scores as perpetrator, assistant, and outsider bystander. Additionally, junior high school students and younger age groups scored higher as defender and digital defender bystander. An interesting result was the even distribution of defender roles as a basis for developing peer-support-based bullying prevention programs for various demographic characteristics.

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