Mental revolution of child bullying victims in Indonesia: Parenting styles and ethnic groups effect

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Abstract

Recently, there has been a lot of information about bullying at school provided in the printed media or on the electronic media such as television broadcasts. In general, aggressive behavior or violence is common at schools in Indonesia, but is not getting enough attention. Even, it might not be considered as something serious. The characteristics of students identified as perpetrators of bullying showed 1.65 times more apparent in children from families with authoritarian parenting style compared with those who come from the families with open parenting style (participatory). Besides, bullying results from ethnic differences or races. It refers to the physical appearance such as skin color, hair style, and etc. Bullying which results from those differences tend to appear among children in various ethnic groups and races, but bullying among children who are from the same ethnic group and races is also inevitable. One of the strategies to minimize bullying at schools in Indonesia is to implement a religion and culture-based curricula to support the mental revolution program at schools. This strategy needs to be done through some curriculum areas such as personal development, health and physical education, child protection education and character building.

Keywords: bullying victims; parenting styles; ethnic groups; mental revolution

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1. Introduction

Bullying is a phenomenon spread worldwide. Prevalence of bullying is estimated 8 to 50% in some countries in Asia, America, and Europe. Bullying brings a negative impact on the offender and the victims, particularly students who experienced being bullied at schools (i.e. child bullying victims). In general, the bullying victims will suffer from psychosomatic disorders, psychosocial disorders as well as low achievement at school. Students who constantly skip classes are suspected of being bullied (Glew et al., 2000). Research has shown that the number of bullying at school has improved from 4% to 50%, and the number of bullying victims has increased from 11% to 50% (Dake, Price, & Telljohann, 2003). In 2006, there were 247 cases of physical violence found in Indonesia (29 cases occurred at school). There were also 426 cases of sexual violence (67 cases were raised at school), and 451 cases of psychological violence (96 cases appeared at school) occurred in this country (Multiply, 2007). In addition, from January to June 2007, the National Commission for Child Protection (KPAI) received 326 bullying cases reports occurred in the region of *Jabodetabek*. It shows a significant increase in bullying cases happened in Indonesia (Mohammed, 2009).

Based on the data from case reports received by KPAI in November 2009, there are at least 98 cases of physical violence, 108 cases of sexual violence, and 176 cases of child psychological violence occurring at schools. Juwita (2009) stated that Yogyakarta has the highest number of bullying cases compared with Jakarta and Surabaya. It has been recorded that there is approximately 70.65% of bullying cases occurred in middle and high schools in Yogyakarta. From January to October 2014, KPAI states that the number of cases of sexual assault on a child has reached 784 cases. This means that 129 children have become victims of sexual violence every month, and 20% of the children are the victims of pornography acts. Based on the data, there were 19 bullying cases occurred at school. These cases were reported as direct complaints, through some media and also electronic mail. These cases, according to KPAI, are various; it could be in the form of verbal harassment or violence which has left bad injury on someone.

Bullying is an alien term to most people in Indonesia although this phenomenon has existed long time ago and has occurred in various facets of life, including in the formal education setting. No formal studies have been conducted to measure students' understanding of the term in Indonesia. Bullying acts at school have been more popularly broadcasted through printed media as well as electronic media such as television. Brawl and some other forms of aggressive behavior or violence have long occurred at schools. They, however, do not gain any serious attention. Being intimidated by friends, for example, and being deserted could make students feel reluctant to attend school because they feel threatened and frightened. As a result, they suffer from mild depression stage which can affect their learning achievement in the classroom.

Bullying in the form of threatening or using physical abuse may result in injury, physical damage, developmental disorders and even death to both an individual and/or a group of people (World Health Organisation, 2003). Bullying is not a new phenomenon found at school. Courses of actions such as swearing, gossiping, slapping, kicking, pouting, threatening and others have often been committed by juveniles, both in primary and middle School. Bullying can be divided into two; they are direct bullying which means physical and verbal intimidation and indirect bullying which refers to social isolation (Olweus, 1993). Bullying usually occurs in the community, home, even at schools. There are victims as well as the perpetrators but sometimes someone does not realize that bullying acts performed by other people can affect his/her psychological aspects (National Department of Education and Training, 2005).

Rigby and Thomas (2010) defined bullying as an act committed by others and it comes with a variety of

behaviors such as hurting, threatening and frightening. These actions are done repeatedly. The bullying perpetrators usually treat other people badly and have no respect at all to others. Such is an example of power misuse. Based on those points explained above, it can be concluded that bullying is a very bad behaviors possessed by someone that makes him/her treat others with no respect such as hurting, threatening, terrorizing others. These acts are done repeatedly. The bullying targets are usually weak, easily mocked and could not defend themselves. The perpetrators actions are usually influenced by parenting style at home or school.

The characteristics of students identified as the perpetrators of bullying showed 1.65 times more apparent in children from families with authoritarian parenting compared with those who come from the families with open parenting style (participatory). Punitive/over discipline parenting style also causes the child to have a tendency to bully others. Parents are responsible to equip their children with moral values, ethics, character and even religious values from an early age because those values will leave an imprint in their heart forever. According to John Locke, the children's heart and brain are like a blank sheet of white paper. The sheets are so pure that anything received by the children since early ages will affect their thinking and behavior in the future (Dariyo, 2004). In other words, children thinking development depends on what parents wrote, cross out, draw or color on the blank sheet of paper.

According to Wiyani (2012), bullying perpetrators are usually the children whose parents have authoritarian parenting style, violent behavior, or too permissive attitude towards their children aggressive behavior. Besides the parenting style factors, there are also other causes of bullying, namely; ethnic differences, resistance to peer pressure, physical differences, being a new student, sexual orientation and also socio-economic background (Simbolon, 2012). The method used by parents as well as teachers in teaching their children to be disciplined but with violence will affect the behavior of children in the future. Children are good imitators. They will replicate anything they see, hear, feel, and experience. If parents and teachers treat them harshly, then the children will be likely to have bad personality and have a tendency to put it into practice (i.e. bullying) (Archipelago and Ariobimo, 2008).

Some other causes of bullying are also confirmed by Astuti (2008). She states that bullying could happen because of the differences in economic class, religion, gender, ethnic or races. Bullying can also occur if the teacher does not provide the students with sufficient supervision and guidance on ethics. It can also happen if the schools have a very rigid discipline, inadequate guidance and inconsistent regulations. Bullying that happens across various ethnics or races refers to physical quality such as skin color, hair, and etc. Bullying based on these factors usually occurs among students who come from different ethnics and races. However, it can also be found in the community which belongs to the same ethnic and races. The ethnic minority is more likely to experience bullying compared to the majority of students at a certain school (Frutos and Vicén 2014).

Based on the description of the background above, thus, it is necessary to examine a variety of sources related to child bullying victims at school. The scope of this article is limited to parenting style and ethnic groups' differences against the emergence of bullying. The purpose of this article is to examine child bullying, particularly from the aspects of parenting style and ethnic groups, as well as the efforts to develop a mental revolution to minimize bullying in schools in Indonesia.

2. Discussion

2.1 The Effect of Parenting Styles on Child Bullying at Schools

Parenting style will influence the child's development both physically and psychologically. During adolescence, parents must pay more attention to the psychological development of their children. Since adolescents usually spend more time outside rather than at home, the environmental factors will be very influential on their psychological development. Parents should be able to look carefully at behavioral changes experienced by the teenagers, one of which is bullying committed by the juveniles (Suartini et al., 2013). Every

parent has applied their attitudes and behavior patterns to the children. It is influenced by some of the attitudes they learned in caring for and educating the children, such as their initial experience with children, their cultural values on the best way to treat children either with authoritarian, democratic or permissive parenting style (Hurlock, 1993).

Good parenting style covers exemplary leadership and practice in communicating with children properly and correctly. This is done to prevent children from having negative behaviors. Parents must help children to develop positive social skills (Peter et al., 2013). Bad parenting styles such as paying little attention to children will lead to negative emotional responses by children. According to Honig and Simblom (2013) mostly boys and girls show negative emotional responses towards bullying which causes sadness, anger, rejection, frustration, and fear. These negative emotional responses are demonstrated by the children who get little attention from their parents and whose parents are authoritarians.

According to Fagan (in Badingah, 1993), there is a relationship between family factors and the level of delinquency (bullying) at schools. *Broken home*, lack of unity and lack of interaction between family members, and authoritarian parents are factors which construct the teenagers' bad behaviors. These behaviors will later influence the teenagers' activities at school. Through parenting style performed by parents and teachers, children learn about many things, including the character. Authoritarian parenting style (which requires the children to comply with any decision made by the teacher / parent) and permissive parenting style (which tends to give full freedom to the children to do what they want) have different impact on children's character development compared to the democratic parenting style (which tends to encourage children to be open, but responsible and independent). It means that the type of parenting style that is applied by the teacher as a parent at school also determines the success of the children's character development. Authoritarian parenting style is likely to restrict affection, touch, and emotional attachment between teacher/parents and the children. Therefore, it seems that there is a dividing wall between them. They are separated into the "authoritarian" (teacher / parent) and "the obedient" (child). Permissive parenting style that tends to give liberty to the children to do anything is not very conducive to their character development. Children, however, still need guidance from parents to know what is good or wrong. By giving them too much freedom, they will somehow feel confused and have misleading behavior.

Democratic parenting style seems to be more conducive for children education at school. It can be seen from the results of the research conducted by Baumrind which show that parents whose parenting style is democratic are more supportive towards their children mental development, especially in self-reliance and responsibility. Meanwhile, the teacher/parents who are authoritarians could make the children more dependent, less responsible and more aggressive. In addition, the teacher/parents who have applied the permissive parenting style might create children who have difficulties in adjusting outside the home. According to Arkoff (as cited in Badingah, 1993), children who are educated in a democratic way generally express their aggressiveness in constructive actions or in the form of temporary hatred. On the other hand, children who are educated in authoritarian style have a tendency to express their aggressiveness in the form of harmful acts. Meanwhile, children who are educated in permissive way tend to develop aggressive behavior openly or overtly.

According to Nurhayanti, (2013) students who are raised with permissive parenting style will do some 'light' bullying actions while students who are raised with authoritarian parenting style will mostly do some "heavy" bullying actions. Middlebrook (as cited in Badingah, 1993) states that corporal punishment commonly applied in authoritarian parenting is less effective to form the children behavior because : (a) it causes anger and frustration (and not good for learning); (b) it raises any painful feelings that produce aggressive behavior; (c) those painful feelings drive the children to extend their target of anger; for instance, the children restraint to hit or damage someone/something when their parents are there watching, but will do the harmful acts when their parents are not around; (d) the teachers / parents are the role models of the children aggressive behavior. The result of the research conducted by Rohner (as cited in Megawangi, 2003) showed that one's childhood experiences influence his/her personality development (character or emotional intelligence). The study which

employed the theory of PAR (Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory) showed that the parenting style, either in the form of acceptance or rejection towards their children, will affect the development of children's emotional, behavioral, social-cognitive, and psychological condition when they become adult.

Therefore, the "accepted" children can be defined as children who are given enough affection, either verbally (e.g. given words of love and affection, words of encouragement, and praise), or physically (e.g. given the kiss, stroking the head, hugs, and intimate eye contact). Meanwhile, the rejected children are those who are treated by the parents' aggressiveness, both verbally (e.g. rant, negative sarcasm, yelling, and other words that are discouraging), or physically (e.g. hitting, pinching, or slap). Maternal rejection properties can also be in the form of indifference or neglect which means that the parents do not care about their children physical and mental needs (undifferentiated rejection). It could also refer to not-too-visible rejection which means that the children do not feel being loved and accepted by the parents, but the parents feel the way around.

Karen E. Herne (2014) explains that there is a collaborative relationship between intimidation at school and parenting styles. The key reasons are described in some points as follows: (1) psychological conceptualization of bullying as an individual pathology behavior, (2) social conceptualization of bullying as a systemic problem, (3) interpretative conceptualization of bullying as a social-interactional process, and (4) post-structural conceptualization of bullying as the product of the relationship between authoritarian style, social subjectivity process and cultural practices. Related to this opinion, according to David (2011), bullying can be associated with social culture (Figure 1). This culture was taken from the family to the school environment and vice versa.
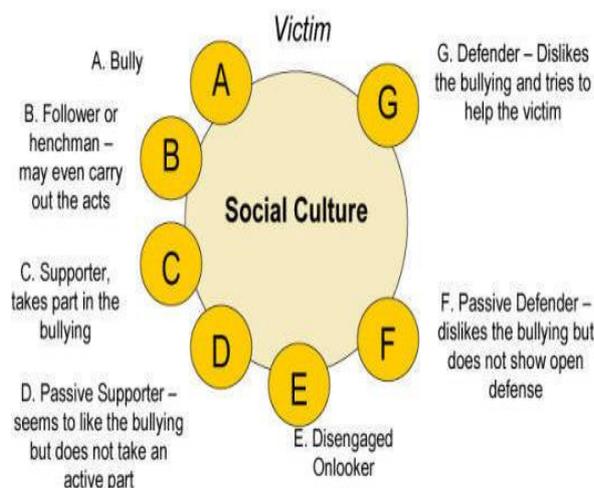

Figure 1. Bullying cycle (Source: David, 2011)

Figure 1 shows that bullying cycle exists because of; (A) victim, (B) bullying perpetrator or bully, (C) follower of the perpetrators who also carries out the bullying, (D) supporter of the perpetrators who takes part in the bullying, (E) passive supporter who sees the bullying but is not actively involved in the activities, (F) defender/helper, who does not like the bullying and tries to help the victim, (G) passive helper who does not like the bullying but cannot do any defense and only watches from afar. The bullying victims are those who are regarded as a week individual or group. Faye and Wiener (2006) point out that the collaboration parenting style of parents, teacher and school administrators is necessary to prevent the bullying at school. The collaborative parenting style is designed through trainings to improve knowledge and understanding about various perceptions of bullying. Jordan and Austin (2012) state that parenting style through the parents-teacher/educator collaboration at school is very crucial to minimize the bullying in the form of: (a) physical intimidation, (b)

verbal intimidation, (c) intimidation through relational aggression, (d) intimidation through social aggression, and (e) cyber-bullying. Besides, it is also important to focus on emotional and physical behavior, namely: (a) perpetrator, (b) passive victim, (c) bullying victim, (d) audience. It is expected that the collaborative parenting style could bring impact on the children bullying in short or long period of time. The involvement of the parents through parenting style can bring hope for children in a positive way, regardless their academic achievement. Democratic parenting style which is implemented by the parents could diminish the discrimination among children at school (Jeynes, 2008).

Research done by Hokoda et al. (2006) shows that some parenting styles (e.g. authoritative, warm) are related to positive outcomes found in Taiwan children development, but other styles (e.g. authoritarian, overprotective) might not have any relationship with intimidation, unlike the result of the research done in Western countries. This means that cultural value embraced by the Taiwanese (Confucianism) could influence parents to be authoritarian and overprotective.

Bullying at schools has strong relationship with the parenting style. This research has proven that parents act as a role model for their children. If parents implement the authoritarian parenting style, children will develop a tendency to intimidate others. Therefore, although there is no cause and effect relationship, this study has shown that children with authoritarian parents are likely to perform the acts of bullying (Georgiou, 2013). Democratic parenting style can be developed by parents by maintaining effective communication with their children. In addition to that, parents who care about their children development will keep educating their children in an effective way to prevent them from doing harmful acts (Bindiya and Erchul, 2014). School also needs to implement good parenting style through providing students with counseling services so that bullying can be detected as soon as possible. School counselors and teachers also require support from the headmaster in order that they can listen to their students about what their feeling of being intimidated verbally or physically (Alice and Sjoblom, 2014).

Based on the opinions identified above, it can be concluded that teacher/parents parenting style is vital to children psychological development. Parents who have good parenting style will accept and protect their children. Conducive parenting style can support the children personality development (e.g. their social adaptation, confidence, and independence as well as caring about environment). Children who are rejected by their parents or teachers are usually dependent or they look independent but like to ignore the people around them. Besides, the children usually get angry easily and always have negative thinking towards others and towards themselves, become very aggressive, or lack of confidence and always think that they are nothing.

Based on the explanation, it is clear that parenting style determines the success of the children at school. Mistakes in children education will result in failure in their character building. According to Megawangi (2003), there are some parents' misconducts which affect the emotional intelligence of the children and their behavior. Parents: 1) do not express their affection both verbally and physically, 2) spend little time on their children, 3) verbally insult their children through bad and discouraging words and sarcasm, 4) physically insult their children such as hitting, pinching, and any other kinds of physical abuse, 5) force their children's to be cognitively competent since early ages, 6) do not build the children good character.

Children who are raised by this kind of parenting style, according to Megawangi, will have personality problems and bad emotional intelligence. Children become: 1) ignorant and reject friendship because when they were younger, they were raised in great anger, no trust, and other negative emotions. When they grow up, they will reject support, sympathy, love, and other positive emotions from people around them. They look independent but not warm and open to others, 2) less responsive. It means that they cannot love others, 3) aggressive. They always want to hurt people verbally and physically (bullying), 4) less confident. They always feel that they are useless and wasted, 5) negative thinkers towards their environment. They feel insecure, worry much, skeptical and always think that people are criticizing them, 6) people with unstable emotions. They become intolerant and easily get depressed and angry. Their emotions changes are unpredictable, 7) people with

imbalanced emotion and intellectual. They do not want to study and like to get involved in juvenile delinquency and etc, and 8) less confident in their parents. Instead, they trust their peer more so that they get easily influenced by them.

2.2 The Effect of Ethnic Groups Differences on Child Bullying at Schools

Many people can perform bullying acts, including children. The ethnic majority group usually intimidates the minority and vice versa. The result of the research conducted by Mike & Kafeela (2000) has revealed that bullying also exists among ethnic group from Hindu, Indian Moslems, and Pakistan Moslems. Survey has shown that these three ethnic groups have the same possibility to report their bullying experiences. Bullying done by white children to black children also exists. On the other hand, the perpetrators of bullying are mostly Asian children who come from different ethnic groups. For instance, the Hindus are often bullied by the Pakistanis; Indian Moslems and Pakistanis are often insulted by the Hindus. Indian Moslems also like to disturb the Pakistanis boys. A lot of intimidation cases are reported by all ethnic groups except by the Indian Moslems girls. Mitsunori (2009) asserts that the phenomenon of bullying also exists among graduate students in Japan. In his article, he explains that a gay has experienced racial and homophobic intimidation. This happened because of cultural differences.

The research conducted by Callaghan et al. (2006) in London schools and Glasgow school has shown that the students who come from the minority ethnic community have a higher tendency to experience bullying compared to those who come from the majority. This finding was discussed by referring to the bullying phenomena happening in the school. There is also finding showing that bullying also occurs among students from different gender. Boys are more intimidated compared to girls. This finding, however, was unexpected. Naomi et al. (2014) in their research entitled "*You are not born being racist, are you?' Discussing racism with primary aged-children*" have found out that students who come from the ethnic group minority often experience racist bullying. These students told that they received bad treatment from friends who come from majority group and other minority groups as well as society in general. The students who come from East Africa often experience racist bullying compared to other students from other minority group.

Devine et al. (2008) explain that the majority of the students have known and experienced racial discrimination which is associated with skin color, though the teachers at the school teach the students how to respect a particular ethnic group. The teachers also teach the students about cultural difference through inclusive/exclusive experiences at school. Aveling (2007) argues that racial bullying should not exist in school because school is a place for students to learn how to respect one another regardless their ethnic. According to Pearce (2014), teachers need to think and put some efforts on how to understand each individual involved in the social mechanism at school. In the nowadays context, collaborative approach is essential to keep the children's proactive behavior at school, especially towards racism.

The same thing as explained earlier also occurs in Indonesian schools. In general, the verbal bullying could be in the form of threat in the name of ethnic, calling ethnic name, insulting a particular local or non-local ethnic and the examples of physical bullying are kicking, hitting, or pushing. Bullying that is done in schools is usually taken out to the community resulting in intimidating other people and even fighting against other villages in the name of a particular ethnic group. Bullying on behalf of ethnic groups has always been encountered in school near downtown or suburbs. Verbal intimidation is a kind of bullying that continues to happen. It is difficult to detect because it happened more prevalent when there is no adult around. This intimidation does not leave physical damage, but psychological impact on the victims. It results in over-anxious students which are less motivated in learning either at school or at home. When the students continue to experience bullying at school, they will feel socially isolated (Figure 2). The ongoing anxious will risk the children's personality development.

Figure 2. Bullying cycle (Source: The Anxiety Child Program, 2010)

Based on the explanations, it can be concluded that bullying experienced by certain ethnic group (the majority or the minority) is a form of violence which is repeatedly done in a certain period of time. That kind of bullying is a part of aggressive behavior because it involves aggression or attack which harms other people. Someone becomes the victim of bullying if s/he is often badly treated by others. This could lead to a pattern to attack individuals or groups. The perpetrators intentionally hurt the victim physically, verbally or by other ways. Therefore, based on the explanations above, bullying can be defined a repeated physical or verbal attack towards someone's psychological, social, and physical condition. This is done to satisfy the perpetrators' needs. Bullying is an earlier form of aggressive behavior (i.e. abusive behavior) either through physical, psychological, verbal abuse or the combination of those kinds of abusive behavior. This can be done by an individual or a group. The perpetrators usually attack those who have been regarded as the week ones. The week ones will be disturbed, intimidated, or isolated.

2.3 An Alternative Solution to Bullying: a Mental Revolution

One of the alternative solutions to bullying is to promote mental revolution through character education which covers four things; they are teaching, modeling, reinforcing, and habituating. Values in character education are taken from four pillars: religion, local culture, Pancasila, and the National education purposes. The effect of mental revolution through humans' resources development is to heal someone's emotional/mental illness and make him/her a person with healthy soul, good intelligence, and good personality. A strategy to realize the mental revolution in education is to implement a religious-cultural based curriculum. This can be done through personality development, health and physical education, child protection education and character education to minimize bullying at schools in Indonesia.

3. Conclusion

Bullying is categorized as aggressive behavior which can exist in every facet of life. Bullying is divided into two parts: direct bullying (physical and verbal intimidation) and indirect bullying (social isolation). The bullying perpetrators are usually children who are raised by parents who have authoritarian parenting style, bad behavior and been too permissive towards their children's aggressive acts. Besides, ethnic group difference also causes violent actions both verbally and physically. The students who come from minority group experience bullying more than those who come from majority group. This is because the majority group shows their selfishness more than the minority. Parents need to notice the phenomenon of bullying at school. They need to realize that it is a

negative behavior which can hurt and harm others. Verbal and physical affection, thus, needs to be given to their children. They also need to dedicate their time to educate their children at home.

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