

The Incidence of Bullying Reports Among Junior and Senior High School Students

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received May 21, 2024

Accepted August 07, 2024

Available online September 25, 2024

Kata Kunci:

Prevalensi Perundangan, Perundangan Fisik, Perundangan Sosial, Perundangan Verbal, Viktimisasi

Keywords:

Bullying Prevalence, Physical Bullying, Social Bullying, Verbal Bullying, Victimization



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ABSTRAK

Masalah bullying yang marak di kalangan siswa SMP dan SMA berdampak pada emosi dan akademis. Menangani masalah ini dapat menciptakan lingkungan sekolah yang lebih aman dan mendukung, meningkatkan prestasi akademis, dan memastikan penegakan kebijakan yang efektif. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis prevalensi bullying di kalangan siswa SMP dan SMA. Dengan menggunakan desain korelasional deskriptif dan teknik pengambilan sampel multistage, peneliti mengumpulkan data dari 416 siswa SMA: 184 siswa kelas 12, 232 siswa kelas 13 menggunakan metode pengumpulan data berupa kuesioner dan instrumen pengumpulan data berupa lembar kuesioner dengan jenis instrumen Adolescent Peer Relations. Analisis statistik melibatkan hitungan frekuensi, rata-rata aritmatika, dan uji chi-kuadrat. Hasil penelitian menemukan bahwa, terdapat perbedaan signifikan terkait usia dalam pola bullying dan viktimisasi di antara siswa SMP dan SMA yang diteliti. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa bullying dan viktimisasi, khususnya verbal, hadir secara signifikan di antara siswa sekolah menengah pertama dan atas, dengan variasi terkait usia yang nyata dalam frekuensi dan sifatnya. Implikasi dari penelitian ini melampaui sekolah, berdampak pada masyarakat yang lebih luas dan berkontribusi pada pemahaman dan pencegahan perundungan yang lebih luas.

ABSTRACT

The rampant problem of bullying among middle and high school students has emotional and academic implications. Addressing this issue can create a safer and more supportive school environment, improve academic achievement, and enforce effective policy. This study analyses the prevalence of bullying among junior and senior high school students. Using a descriptive correlational design and multi-stage sampling technique, researchers collected data from 416 high school students: 184 12th graders and 232 13th graders utilizing the data collection method of a questionnaire, and the data collection instrument was a questionnaire sheet with the Adolescent Peer Relations instrument type. Statistical analysis involved frequency count, arithmetic mean, and chi-square test. The results found that there were significant age-related differences in bullying and victimization patterns among the junior and senior high school students studied. The study concludes that bullying and victimization, exceptionally verbal, are significantly present among junior and senior high school students, with marked age-related variations in their frequency and nature. The implications of this study go beyond schools, impacting the wider society and contributing to a broader understanding and prevention of bullying.

1. INTRODUCTION

Bullying is characterized by repeated aggressive behavior aimed at intimidating or controlling vulnerable individuals, manifesting in forms such as physical, verbal, and relational aggression (Hellström & Lundberg, 2020; Slattery et al., 2019). It typically involves a power imbalance and occurs across different settings, impacting victims' social, emotional, and academic well-being (Van Canegem et al., 2024). Studies globally highlight widespread student exposure to bullying, with prevalence rates varying by country and age group (Gaffney et al., 2021; Pörhölä et al., 2020). Factors like aggression, low self-esteem, family dysfunction, and unsupportive school environments increase vulnerability to bullying. Victims often suffer emotional distress and academic setbacks, while perpetrators may face disciplinary actions and future social challenges (Camodeca & Nava, 2022; Purbasafir & Fasikhah, 2024). To address bullying, prevention

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strategies focus on school-wide programs and fostering empathy among students. Cultural differences in bullying perception underscore the need for context-specific interventions. Understanding regional factors such as socio-economic conditions and community resources is crucial for effective local interventions (Hasibuan & Rizana, 2023; Milnes et al., 2022; Sembiring & Yahya, 2024; Volk et al., 2022).

Bullying can occur in various settings, including schools, workplaces, and online platforms, with significant and long-lasting effects on those involved (Crowley & Cornell, 2020; Farley et al., 2023). Research shows that a substantial proportion of students experience bullying during their school years, with prevalence rates varying across countries and age groups (Gaffney et al., 2019; Pörhölä et al., 2020). Different forms of bullying include physical aggression (hitting or pushing), verbal aggression (name-calling or teasing), relational aggression (social exclusion or spreading rumors), and cyberbullying (using electronic communication to harm or harass others) (Hellström & Lundberg, 2020; Johansson & Englund, 2021; Torres et al., 2020). Several factors at the individual, family, and school levels can influence the risk of involvement in bullying, including aggression, low self-esteem, family dysfunction, lack of parental involvement, and unsupportive school environments (Iyanda et al., 2022; Ma et al., 2019). Victims may experience emotional distress, academic difficulties, social withdrawal, and physical health problems (Armitage, 2021; Purbasafir & Fasikhah, 2024). Perpetrators may face disciplinary consequences, struggle to form positive relationships, and have a higher risk of engaging in criminal behavior in adulthood (Camodeca & Nava, 2022; Hardesty & Ogolsky, 2020).

To combat bullying, researchers focus on developing effective prevention and intervention strategies. These include school-wide anti-bullying programs, promoting positive school climates, fostering empathy and social-emotional skills, and empowering bystanders to intervene (Salin et al., 2020; Volk et al., 2022). Ongoing research continues to enhance our understanding of bullying and refine interventions. For a comprehensive understanding, consulting academic journals, books, and other reputable sources is advisable (Mishna et al., 2022; Yun & Juvonen, 2020). Understanding regional and cultural variability in bullying perception and prevalence is essential. Effective local interventions must consider regional factors such as socio-economic conditions, school policies, and community resources (Hasibuan & Rizana, 2023; Iñiguez-Berrozpe et al., 2021). Strategies for prevention and intervention may need to be tailored to match the socio-cultural, economic, and educational conditions of different settings (Nguyen et al., 2022; Sadjadi et al., 2021; Spears et al., 2021). By incorporating a cross-cultural perspective and adapting research designs to local contexts, studies can provide specific recommendations that are relevant and effective in preventing and addressing bullying.

The novelty of this research lies in the development of an empathy-based anti-bullying program tailored to the cultural context and social conditions of schools in Indonesia. This approach focuses on training students and involves the active participation of teachers, parents, and the entire school community. Through this program, it is expected to create a school environment that supports the formation of prosocial behaviour and reduces the incidence of bullying among students. The urgency of this research is very high, given the long-term impact that bullying has on students' social, emotional and academic development. In relation to the experiences of bullying, it is worth noting that students are not exempt from such encounters.

This scholarly study specifically investigates the prevalent occurrence of bullying among junior and senior high school students, while also exploring their individual experiences as victims or perpetrators of such behavior. The outcomes obtained from this research endeavor will serve as a solid foundation for the development and implementation of targeted anti-bullying programs within educational institutions. This study has the objective of analyzing the prevalence of bullying among junior and senior high school students. It focuses on demographic profiles, the prevalence of bullying in various forms (including verbal, social, and physical bullying), and the prevalence of bullying victimization. Moreover, the study aims to determine if there is a significant relationship between the prevalence of bullying victimization and the age of the students. By addressing these research questions, the study intends to provide valuable insights into the extent and dynamics of bullying among junior and senior high school students. The ultimate goal is to inform strategies for prevention and intervention. This research study is of considerable importance as it illuminates the prevalence and dynamics of bullying among junior and senior high school students. It also provides valuable insights for targeted prevention and intervention strategies. By understanding the extent of bullying and its impact, educational institutions can establish safer and more inclusive environments that foster tolerance, respect, and well-being for all students.

2. METHOD

This study utilized a descriptive correlational research design and a quantitative methodology to investigate the prevalence of bullying. It also examined the significant relationship between the prevalence

of bullying victimization among junior students and their age, in both junior and senior high school levels at Matalom National Vocational High School. The study sample comprised 416 secondary school students, including 184 seniors and 232 juniors. These participants were selected through a multistage sampling technique, which incorporated purposive, stratified, and random sampling. This method was employed to ensure an adequate representation of both year levels and genders in the study. The research instrument utilized in this study was the Adolescent Peer Relations Instrument, a questionnaire specifically designed for junior and senior high school students (Paez & Briones Robinson, 2023; Parada, 2000).

This instrument facilitated the collection of pertinent data for the research study, including participant age and their experiences as bullies or victims. The questionnaire comprised two sections that focused on victimization and bullying, as well as age-related data. Section A consisted of an 18-item measure that employed a six-point scale, ranging from "Never" (1 point) to "Once a Week" (4 points), and further to "Several Times a Week" (5 points) and "Everyday" (6 points). Subscales within Section A assessed verbal, social, and physical bullying, with specific items assigned to each subscale (e.g., items 1, 3, 5, 7, 10, and 14 for verbal bullying). Participants were asked to indicate the frequency with which they had engaged in these behaviors toward fellow students since the start of the school year. Section B of the questionnaire comprised an 18-item measure that assessed victimization using the same six-point scale. The items within Section B were categorized into subscales targeting verbal, social, and physical victimization (e.g., items 1, 4, 7, 11, 13, and 18 for verbal victimization).

In this study, frequency counts were employed as a statistical tool to explore of the student-respondents in relation to age. To ascertain the prevalence of bullying among junior and senior high school students, arithmetic calculations were employed to analyze the occurrence of distinct forms of bullying, namely verbal, social, and physical bullying. In a similar vein, arithmetic mean analysis was utilized to determine the prevalence of bullying victimization, encompassing verbal, social, and physical victimization, within this cohort of students. Moreover, chi-square analysis was implemented to investigate the noteworthy association between the prevalence of bullying victimization and the age of the students, thereby examining the potential relationship within the data. Participants were instructed to indicate the frequency with which they had experienced these behaviors from their peers since the start of the school year.

The researcher followed established protocols when collecting the baseline data. An official request for approval was submitted to the principal of Matalom National Vocational High School, and upon receiving approval, the researcher personally administered the questionnaires to students within their classrooms. The survey responses were promptly collected to facilitate subsequent analysis. Confidentiality of information was ensured, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without any financial consequences. They were also encouraged to report any discomfort encountered during participation. The distribution of Bullying Prevalence in Junior and Senior High School Students is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution on the Prevalence of Bullying Among Junior and Senior High School Students

Range of Mean	Qualitative Description
6 - 5.17	everyday
5.16 - 4.33	Several times a week
4.32 - 3.50	Once a week
3.49 - 2.67	Once/twice a month
2.66 - 1.83	sometimes
1.82 - 1.00	never

The distribution outlined in Table 1 depicts the prevalence of bullying among junior and senior high school students, categorized by ranges of mean scores accompanied by corresponding qualitative descriptions. The frequency of bullying incidents varies, with daily occurrences indicated by mean scores ranging from 6 to 5.17. Incidents that happen several times a week are reflected by mean scores between 5.16 and 4.33. Bullying occurring once a week corresponds to mean scores from 4.32 to 3.50, while incidents happening once or twice a month are represented by mean scores ranging from 3.49 to 2.67. Occasionally, bullying occurs for mean scores falling between 2.66 and 1.83, and students report never experiencing bullying for mean scores between 1.82 and 1.00. The Distribution on the Prevalence of Victimization Among Junior and Senior High School Students is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution on the Prevalence of Victimization Among Junior and Senior High School Students

Range of Mean	Qualitative Description
6 - 5.17	everyday
5.16 - 4.33	Several times a week
4.32 - 3.50	Once a week
3.49 - 2.67	Once/twice a month
2.66 - 1.83	sometimes
1.82 - 1.00	never

Table 2 presents a comprehensive distribution outlining the prevalence of victimization among junior and senior high school students, utilizing ranges of mean scores along with qualitative descriptions to depict the frequency of victimization experiences reported by students. These mean scores, likely derived from surveys or studies, represent the average frequency of victimization incidents. Each range of mean scores is coupled with a qualitative description, ranging from "everyday" to "never," providing nuanced insight into the extent of victimization experiences reported by students. For instance, scores ranging from 6 to 5.17 indicate victimization occurring daily, while scores from 1.82 to 1.00 signify never experiencing victimization.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The age profile distribution of the junior and senior high school students is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Age Profile Distribution of the Junior and Senior High School Students

Age Profile	frequency	percentage
15 & below	209	50.24%
16 - 17	184	44.23%
18 - 19	19	04.57%
20 & above	4	0.96%
	n = 416	100%

Table 3 shows the age distribution of the study's junior and senior high school participants. Out of the total sample of 416 students, 50.24% were aged "15 & below." The next largest group included 44.23% (184 students) in the "16 - 17" age range. A smaller portion, 4.57% (19 students), fell into the "18 - 19" age group. Only 0.96% (4 students) were aged "20 & above." These figures provide a demographic overview of the study sample, totaling 100%. The distribution on the prevalence of bullying among junior and senior high school students is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Distribution on the Prevalence of Bullying Among Junior and Senior High School Students

Type of Bullying	Junior High School (n = 232)		Senior High School (n = 184)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Verbal	1.87	1.03	1.62	0.73
Social	1.53	0.73	1.60	0.70
Physical	1.77	0.86	1.50	0.68
Total	1.72	0.87	1.57	0.70

The data presented in Table 4 outlines bullying prevalence among junior and senior high school students across verbal, social, and physical bullying categories, measured by means (M) and standard deviations (SD). Among junior high school students (n = 232), mean scores indicate 1.87 (SD = 1.03) for verbal bullying, 1.53 (SD = 0.73) for social bullying, and 1.77 (SD = 0.86) for physical bullying, yielding an overall mean of 1.72 (SD = 0.87). Senior high school students (n = 184) show mean scores of 1.62 (SD = 0.73) for verbal bullying, 1.60 (SD = 0.70) for social bullying, and 1.50 (SD = 0.68) for physical bullying, resulting in an overall mean of 1.57 (SD = 0.70). These scores indicate low prevalence levels, with junior high students reporting slightly higher frequencies compared to seniors. The distribution on the prevalence of victimization among junior and senior high school students is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Distribution on the Prevalence of Victimization Among Junior and Senior High School Students

Type of Victimization	Junior High School (n = 232)		Senior High School (n = 184)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Verbal	1.94	1.02	1.74	0.88
Social	1.56	0.68	1.35	0.59
Physical	1.69	0.84	1.20	0.46
Total	1.73	0.85	1.43	0.64

Table 5 presents the distribution of victimization prevalence among junior and senior high school students across verbal, social, and physical victimization categories, measured by means (M) and standard deviations (SD). Among junior high school students (n = 232), mean scores are 1.94 (SD = 1.02) for verbal victimization, 1.56 (SD = 0.68) for social victimization, and 1.69 (SD = 0.84) for physical victimization, resulting in an overall mean of 1.73 (SD = 0.85). Senior high school students (n = 184) show mean scores of 1.74 (SD = 0.88) for verbal victimization, 1.35 (SD = 0.59) for social victimization, and 1.20 (SD = 0.46) for physical victimization, with an overall mean of 1.43 (SD = 0.64). These findings indicate low prevalence levels, with junior high students reporting slightly higher levels of victimization compared to seniors. The significant relationship between prevalence of bullying victimization among students and students' age is presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Significant Relationship Between Prevalence of Bullying Victimization Among Students and Students' Age

	Chi-Square Value	p-value	Decision	Conclusion
Junior High School	168.206	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant
Senior High School	18.091	0.021	Reject Ho	Significant
Grand Mean	93.149	0.011	Reject Ho	Significant

*Significant at 5% level of significance

Table 6 displays the results of a chi-square analysis investigating the relationship between bullying victimization prevalence and students' age across junior and senior high school levels. For junior high school students, the chi-square value is 168.206 with a p-value of 0.000, indicating a significant relationship and rejecting the null hypothesis (Ho). Similarly, senior high school students show a chi-square value of 18.091 with a p-value of 0.021, also rejecting Ho and demonstrating a significant relationship. The overall chi-square value is 93.149 with a p-value of 0.011, confirming overall significance. Asterisks denote significance at the 5% level. These findings underscore that age correlates significantly with bullying victimization prevalence, with notable differences between junior and senior high school students.

Discussion

Initially, the age profile distribution of the junior and senior high school students participating in the study. The majority of the students fell into the youngest age profile category. The next largest group comprised students who fell within the mid-teenage years. A smaller portion of the sample fell within the late teenage years. Lastly, a very small fraction of the sample fell into the oldest age category. These findings provide information on the distribution of age profiles among the junior and senior high school student participants, allowing for a demographic understanding of the study sample. Studies focusing on educational attainment, age-grade distributions, and student transitions between different levels of schooling can inform our understanding of the factors influencing the age composition of junior and senior high school populations (Abdous, 2019; Cooper & Berry, 2020; Jiang & Zhang, 2023; Origenes & Alejandro, 2024).

The age profile distribution of junior and senior high school students provides critical implications and insights for educational policy and practice. The distribution of students in different age groups highlights the significance of providing equal educational opportunities and facilitating seamless transitions from primary to secondary school. Additionally, the presence of older students raises concerns regarding retention and dropout rates, suggesting potential instances of grade retention or delayed enrollment (Simanjuntak et al., 2022; Takyi et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2023). Age-grade mismatch may impact academic performance and social integration, while the existence of diverse educational pathways for older students highlights the need for tailored interventions. Additionally, socioeconomic factors likely influence age profiles, emphasizing the importance of addressing disparities in access to quality education. The

transitions between educational levels represent crucial junctures in students' trajectories, necessitating effective support programs. By integrating these insights, stakeholders can strive towards creating inclusive learning environments that meet the diverse needs of students across age groups.

Additionally, the age profile distribution of junior and senior high school students reveal a predominance of younger students, with a gradual decrease in numbers as the age groups progress. This distribution pattern offers valuable insights into the demographic composition of the study sample, contributing to a better understanding of the age-related dynamics within educational settings. The research underscores the importance of examining educational attainment, age-grade distributions, and student transitions, which are critical factors in shaping the age composition of junior and senior high school populations (Abdous, 2019; Cooper & Berry, 2020). The study's strength lies in its ability to shed light on the demographic distribution of students, which can inform educational policies and practices aimed at accommodating the diverse needs of learners (Goldberg et al., 2019; Simanjuntak et al., 2022). By highlighting the presence of older students, the research raises awareness about potential issues such as grade retention, delayed enrollment, and their implications for academic performance and social integration (Hungo & Casinillo, 2023; Sapouna et al., 2023). However, a potential weakness is the lack of in-depth analysis of the reasons behind the age-grade mismatch, which could limit the study's ability to propose targeted solutions.

The research may be limited by its focus on a specific demographic without considering broader socioeconomic factors that could influence age profiles. This oversight might restrict the generalizability of the findings to different contexts or populations. To address these limitations, future studies should incorporate a more comprehensive analysis of the socioeconomic determinants of age-grade distributions. Additionally, exploring the experiences and needs of older students could provide valuable insights for developing tailored interventions. The findings have significant implications for the development of educational policies and practices that aim to support students across various age groups. By acknowledging the strengths and addressing the limitations of the research, stakeholders can work towards creating more inclusive and supportive educational environments that cater to the diverse needs of all students.

Next, the distribution of bullying prevalence among junior and senior high school students, categorized by type of bullying. For junior high school students, the mean scores for verbal, social, and physical bullying are relatively high, with an overall mean indicating a moderate level of bullying. For senior high school students, the mean scores for verbal, social, and physical bullying are slightly lower, with an overall mean indicating a slightly lower level of bullying. These mean scores fall within a certain range, indicating that bullying incidents are categorized as 'Never' occurring. The data indicating a low prevalence of bullying among junior and senior high school students, has several implications for various stakeholders. For students, it suggests most experience little to no bullying, but even low levels can impact well-being, so they should be encouraged to report incidents and support peers (Coyle et al., 2022; Huang et al., 2024). Schools can infer that their anti-bullying policies might be effective but must remain vigilant, promoting a positive climate and regularly updating strategies. Educators should maintain proactive measures, fostering inclusive environments and being attentive to subtle bullying signs, with ongoing professional development. Families can find reassurance but should stay engaged in their children's lives, ensuring open communication about school experiences and collaborating with schools on any concerns. Policymakers should see the low rates as a sign of effective policies but avoid complacency, continuing to fund and support anti-bullying programs and mental health resources, with flexible policies to adapt to new challenges. While the data shows bullying as "never" occurring on average, continuous efforts and vigilance are necessary across all stakeholders to ensure a safe and supportive environment for all students.

The research has significant implications for the development of the scientific field of educational psychology and school safety. It contributes to the understanding of bullying dynamics across different age groups and types of bullying behaviors. This knowledge can inform the development of more targeted anti-bullying interventions and policies (Astor et al., 2021; Bradshaw et al., 2021). By identifying the prevalence rates and their variation by age group, the study underscores the need for age-appropriate strategies to address bullying effectively. A strength of the research is its comprehensive approach to categorizing bullying, which provides a detailed picture of the types of bullying experienced by students. This granularity allows for more precise interventions. However, a potential weakness is the reliance on self-reported data, which may underestimate the true prevalence of bullying due to social desirability bias or fear of repercussions.

The study's limitation lies in its interpretation of 'Never' occurring bullying, which may not fully capture the complexity and sporadic nature of bullying incidents. This interpretation could lead to an underestimation of the impact of bullying on students' well-being. To address this, future research should employ mixed methods, including qualitative approaches to capture the depth and nuances of bullying

experiences. Additionally, longitudinal studies could provide insights into the long-term effects of bullying and the efficacy of interventions over time. While the data suggests that bullying is categorized as 'Never' occurring on average, the study highlights the need for continuous vigilance and proactive measures by all stakeholders. Students should be encouraged to report incidents and support peers, schools must maintain and update anti-bullying policies and practices, educators should foster inclusive environments and be trained to recognize subtle signs of bullying, families should remain engaged in open communication about school experiences, and policymakers should continue to support anti-bullying programs and mental health resources. Collectively, these efforts are essential to ensure a safe and supportive environment for all students.

Then, the distribution of victimization prevalence among junior and senior high school students, categorized by type, is as follows. For junior high school students, the mean scores for verbal, social, and physical victimization are relatively high, resulting in an overall moderate level of victimization. On the other hand, senior high school students have slightly lower mean scores for verbal, social, and physical victimization, indicating a slightly lower level of victimization (Huang et al., 2024; Vidourek & King, 2019; Yun & Juvonen, 2020). The data reveals that there are generally low rates of verbal, social, and physical victimization among both junior and senior high school students. However, junior high students report slightly higher mean scores across all types of victimization (Aizenkot & Kashy-Rosenbaum, 2021; Randa et al., 2019). These findings carry significant implications for students, guardians, schools, curriculum makers, and policymakers. For students, the slightly higher victimization rates in junior high emphasize the importance of resilience-building and coping resources to minimize potential impacts on mental health and academic performance (Basu et al., 2020; Randa et al., 2019). Guardians should remain vigilant about their children's social interactions, particularly during the transition to junior high, and prioritize open communication and emotional support. Schools must maintain robust anti-victimization programs, focusing on creating a supportive environment where students feel safe to report incidents. Incorporating social-emotional learning into the curriculum, especially in junior high, can help reduce victimization by fostering empathy and effective communication among peers. Policymakers should prioritize continued investment in anti-bullying and victimization prevention programs, ensuring that schools have the necessary resources and training to effectively address incidents. Although the data demonstrates low victimization rates overall, the slightly higher rates among junior high students highlight the need for targeted interventions at all levels to promote a safer and more supportive educational experience for all students.

The strength of the study lies in its ability to differentiate the prevalence of victimization by type and grade level, providing a nuanced understanding of the issue. This detailed categorization enables more precise interventions and policies. However, a potential weakness is the reliance on self-reported data, which may not fully capture the extent of victimization due to underreporting or recall bias. This could lead to an underestimation of victimization rates and an inadequate response to the problem. To address this limitation, future research should consider triangulating data from multiple sources, such as peer nominations or teacher reports. Additionally, longitudinal studies could offer deeper insights into the long-term effects of victimization and the effectiveness of interventions over time. Therefore, the findings underscore the importance of resilience-building programs, particularly in junior high, to mitigate the impacts of victimization on students' mental health and academic performance. Parents should be aware of the increased vulnerability during the transition to junior high and maintain open lines of communication with their children. Schools must ensure that their anti-victimization programs are robust and include social-emotional learning to foster empathy and effective communication among students. Policymakers should prioritize funding for initiatives that prevent bullying and victimization, ensuring that schools have the necessary resources and training to create safe learning environments. While the data shows low overall rates of victimization, the slightly higher rates among junior high students warrant focused attention and action from all stakeholders. By addressing these findings, we can strive towards a more supportive and safer educational experience for all students.

Lastly, the results of a chi-square analysis examined the significant relationship between bullying victimization prevalence among students and students' age, specifically distinguishing between junior and senior high school levels. For junior high school students, the chi-square value was significant, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis and indicating a significant relationship between bullying victimization and age. Similarly, for senior high school students, the chi-square value was also significant, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis and signifying a significant relationship (Iyanda et al., 2022; Walters, 2021; Wu et al., 2023). The grand mean chi-square value was significant, resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis, indicating overall significance. The asterisk denotes significance at a specific level of significance. The analysis reveals a significant correlation between bullying victimization prevalence and

students' age, as evidenced by chi-square tests for both junior and senior high school levels, with implications for various education stakeholders (Duah, 2023; Gaffney et al., 2021).

Among students, the findings implies age-related variations in bullying victimization, emphasizing the vulnerability of younger students, particularly those in junior high school. This highlights the necessity for tailored interventions and support systems to address bullying, especially considering the delicate social dynamics and peer relationships of younger students. Schools need to acknowledge these age-related differences and adapt anti-bullying policies accordingly, implementing age-appropriate prevention programs, fostering inclusive cultures, and promoting empathy and respect among students. Educators play a vital role in identifying and addressing bullying, requiring training in recognizing signs, responding effectively, and creating safe reporting environments (Hellström & Lundberg, 2020; Sapouna et al., 2023). Guardians should be attentive to age-associated risks of bullying and engage in conversations about prevention and intervention, providing support and advocacy for their children. Curriculum makers have an opportunity to integrate lessons on bullying prevention, empathy, and conflict resolution into the curriculum, reinforcing positive social behaviors. Policymakers should utilize these findings to develop comprehensive anti-bullying policies, allocating resources, establishing reporting mechanisms, and fostering collaboration to create safe learning environments. Recognizing bullying as a developmental issue and adopting a holistic approach involving proactive interventions, supportive environments, and targeted education efforts can mitigate bullying prevalence and enhance student well-being.

The study's limitation lies in its reliance on a single statistical test, which may not fully capture the complexity of the relationship between age and bullying victimization. To address this limitation, future research could incorporate additional analytical methods, such as regression analysis, in order to explore the direction and magnitude of the relationship. Additionally, qualitative research could provide valuable insights into the lived experiences of students at various age levels, thus offering context to the statistical findings. The findings imply that age-related variations in bullying victimization are significant, indicating the necessity for targeted interventions. For students, this implies that younger students, especially those in junior high, may require increased support and access to resources in order to effectively navigate instances of bullying. It is crucial for schools to tailor their anti-bullying policies and programs to address the specific needs of different age groups, fostering inclusive cultures and promoting empathy amongst students. Educators should undergo training to effectively recognize and respond to instances of bullying, thereby creating safe environments where incidents can be reported. Guardians should be aware of the age-associated risks of bullying and engage in open dialogues with their children about prevention and intervention strategies. Curriculum-makers can integrate lessons on empathy, conflict resolution, and bullying prevention into educational materials. Policymakers should develop comprehensive anti-bullying policies that allocate resources and establish reporting mechanisms, thereby fostering collaboration to create safe learning environments. The significant relationship between bullying victimization and students' age underscores the importance of adopting a developmental perspective in anti-bullying strategies. By recognizing the unique challenges faced by students at different age levels, stakeholders can work together to mitigate bullying and enhance student well-being.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the study concludes that the insights gained can help school administrators and educators understand the issue of bullying and implement appropriate measures to address and prevent it, creating a safe and supportive learning environment. The study also raises awareness among students about the prevalence and impact of bullying, empowering them to recognize and report incidents while promoting respect and inclusivity. Parents can benefit from understanding bullying, enabling them to have meaningful discussions with their children and collaborate with the school to address the issue. This study adds to the existing knowledge on bullying prevalence in junior and senior high school settings and can inform future research, evidence-based interventions, and policies. The implications of this study extend beyond the school, impacting the wider community and contributing to the broader understanding and prevention of bullying.

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