

## FAMILY COMMUNICATION APPROACH IN ADDRESSING BULLYING AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN INDONESIA

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### Abstract

This study explores the role of family communication in addressing bullying among adolescents in Senior high schools in Bogor City. This research focuses on the attitudes of openness, empathy, positivity behavior, support, and equality in assisting adolescents in facing the impact of bullying. The research method utilizes a qualitative approach through in-depth interviews with adolescents who have experienced bullying, as well as thematic analysis to identify patterns of family communication and adolescent responses to bullying. The findings indicate that informants who demonstrate high levels of openness communication with their parents, empathy, and collaboration in addressing bullying tend to have better abilities to handle bullying cases and cope with their psychological impacts. However, some informants do not exhibit the same level of openness, empathy, support, and positivity in communication with their parents, possibly experiencing imbalance in their family communication dynamics. In conclusion, open, empathetic, supportive, positive, and balanced interpersonal communication among family members can play a crucial role in helping individuals deal with bullying. Therefore, promoting healthy communication relationships within families is an important effort in bullying prevention and intervention.

**Keywords:** Adolescents, Bullying, Family Communication, Prevention.

### INTRODUCTION

Bullying among adolescents, both girls and boys, has become a serious concern in recent years. Bullying behavior can have detrimental effects, both emotionally and psychologically, which can persist into adulthood (Olweus, Limber, and Breivik 2019). Family communication plays a crucial role in shaping adolescents' responses to bullying and addressing its impacts (Nocentini et al. 2019). Bullying among adolescents, particularly in high schools, has garnered serious attention in recent years (Nurvadila et al., 2020). The city of Bogor is no exception to this phenomenon, with increasing reports of bullying cases in high schools in the area. Bullying behavior, whether verbal or physical, can have harmful effects on the emotional and psychological well-being of victims, often lasting into adulthood. In addition to families, schools also play a significant role in safeguarding their students, with both entities being equally important. Schools serve as environments where students not only acquire academic knowledge but also develop social skills, emotional intelligence, and moral values (Solihin et al., 2022). Many researchers have analyzed bullying among adolescents, such as researchers (Stamatis and Nikolaou 2016) with the title Communication and Collaboration between School and Family for Addressing Bullying. The research findings indicate that teachers support the importance of school-family collaboration in addressing bullying. Additionally, they deem this

collaboration crucial, as it significantly influences children's attitudes toward school and their behavior in the school environment. Furthermore, they suggest that school-family collaboration can enhance students' social skills, thereby improving their emotional development and reducing social isolation from peer groups.

Finally, they affirm that school-family collaboration can empower the relationship between children and their parents and teachers, ultimately contributing to improving their academic performance. Subsequent researchers (Aminah et al., 2023) with the title Family Communication and School Environment as a Cause of Bullying Behavior in Adolescents. The research findings indicate that the communication environment within families, schools, and adolescent peer groups plays a crucial role in the occurrence of bullying behavior. Bullying behavior in adolescents starts as victims and then as perpetrators, or perpetrators become victims. Bullying by female adolescents at school is verbal and social, while bullying by male adolescents at school is verbal and physical. Previous research has highlighted the importance of environmental factors, including family communication, in shaping adolescents' responses to bullying. However, there is still a lack of understanding of how family communication can be a key factor in addressing bullying, especially in high school environments in the city of Bogor. Based on the above background and previous research, the aim of this study is to investigate the role of family communication in addressing bullying among adolescent girls and boys in high schools in Bogor. This research will explore a family communication approach consisting of attitudes of openness, empathy, positivity, supportiveness, and equality in family efforts to help adolescents overcome the impacts of bullying in the school environment.

This study will use a qualitative approach, conducting in-depth interviews with adolescent girls and boys who have experienced bullying in several high schools in Bogor. Interviews will focus on their bullying experiences, interactions with family members, and family communication strategies used in addressing bullying. Qualitative data will be analyzed using a thematic approach to identify major patterns in family communication and adolescents' responses to bullying. This research is expected to provide a better understanding of the role of family communication in addressing bullying among adolescents in high schools in Bogor. The findings of this study may serve as a basis for developing more effective interventions to assist adolescents in coping with bullying by involving their parents and family environments. Thus, it is hoped to create a safer and more supportive environment for adolescents in schools by reducing bullying incidents and improving their emotional well-being.

## **METHOD**

The study employs a qualitative approach to explore the role of family communication in addressing bullying among adolescents in high schools. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows us to gain in-depth understanding of the experiences, perceptions, and strategies used by adolescents and their families in coping with bullying. The data collection technique we use is in-depth interviews with adolescent girls and boys who have experienced bullying in several high schools in Bogor. In-depth interviews were conducted in January 2024, located in several high schools in the city of Bogor. In-depth interviews enable us to obtain

detailed narratives about their bullying experiences, interactions with family members, and family communication strategies used in addressing bullying. Subsequently, the collected data will be reduced through thematic analysis. Thematic analysis allows us to identify major patterns in family communication and adolescents' responses to bullying. By attending to themes emerging from the data, we can develop a deeper understanding of the role of family communication in addressing bullying.

From the data analysis results, the researchers draw conclusions about how family communication influences adolescents' responses to bullying, as well as effective family communication strategies in helping adolescents cope with the impacts of bullying in the school environment. These conclusions will provide valuable insights into the role of family communication in building a safe and supportive school environment for adolescents.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Bullying**

Bullying is a repetitive aggressive behavior over time by one individual or group towards another individual, deliberately intended to hurt, injure, or make the individual feel physically or emotionally uncomfortable (Olweus & Limber, 2010). Bullying often involves a power imbalance where the bully has a strength advantage over their victim, who often struggles to defend themselves or feels powerless in facing the bully (Baiden & Tadeo, 2020). Forms of bullying can vary, including physical violence, verbal abuse, social exclusion, or other behaviors aimed at harming the targeted individual.

### **Family Communication**

Family communication as the third dimension that applies to facilitate. It means that family communication determines where the family will belong to comply with the two basic dimensions of cohesion and adaptation (Olson et al., 2012). Olson identifies that specific communication skills that facilitate the transition include speaking skills for oneself and avoiding speaking for others, listening skills such as active listening activities and empathy, and general communication skills such as self-disclosure, clarity, articulation, tracking, and showing respect and appreciation for others.

Family is a commitment to sharing intimacy, resources, decision-making, responsibility, and values. Strong families demonstrate commitment, appreciation, positive communication, enjoying time together, spiritual health, and the ability to cope with stress. Family commitment is not about weakness but provides freedom and encouragement for each family member to realize their desires. Child rearing is a shared responsibility between father and mother, which is interrelated with marriage, development, child behavior, and parenting patterns. Parenting patterns have a significant impact on adolescent behavior, such as being authoritarian, permissive, or authoritative. Effective parental treatment includes establishing understandable rules, paying attention to good behavior, explaining reasons, encouraging reflection, and consistency in enforcing rules (Olson et al., 2012).

Family influences child development through family member relationships, lifestyle patterns, and their behavior towards children. The adolescent period is considered important because rapid changes occur at the beginning of adolescence. Adolescents try to internalize values from their peer environment, which can influence their attitudes, behaviors, and values.

Parental attitudes, parenting patterns, and family interactions influence the formation of adolescent attitudes and behaviors towards people, objects, and life in general. Adolescents tend to prefer peer influences over family. Social interactions shape individual attitudes and behaviors, while closeness in adolescent friendships is considered important because it allows them to understand and share with each other. In conclusion, families play an important role in shaping adolescent attitudes and behaviors, but peer influence also has a significant role in their development.

### Role of Family Communication

Families play a crucial role in nurturing and guiding the development of their children (Adi & Solihin, 2022). Family communication plays a crucial role in shaping the effectiveness of interpersonal communication, especially in the context of student relationships. One form of interpersonal communication, as defined by DeVito, is the delivery of messages from one person and received by another person with immediate effects and feedback. In this context, factors influencing interpersonal communication, as proposed by (Solihat et al., 2014), including trust, sportsmanship, and openness, become highly relevant. Further details can be seen in table 1 below.

**Table 1: Role of Family Communication in Addressing Bullying**

Interpersonal Communication Aspect	Influence of Family Communication
<b>Openness</b>	Families that encourage openness among family members will create an environment where students feel comfortable to communicate and share thoughts without fear of judgment.
<b>Empathy</b>	Families that teach and practice empathy values in daily interactions will help students develop their empathy skills, enhancing interpersonal communication effectiveness with peers.
<b>Supportive Attitude</b>	Families that provide positive support tend to shape the same attitudes in students in their interpersonal relationships with their peers.
<b>Positive Attitude</b>	Families that provide positive encouragement tend to shape the same attitudes in students in their interpersonal relationships with their peers.
<b>Equality</b>	Families that treat each family member with respect and equality will shape students with the same attitudes towards their peers, creating more balanced and respectful relationships.

#### 1. Openness

Based on the research findings from four informants: S, J, H, and N. Informant S shows openness in her communication relationship with her mother, reflected in the frequency and depth of their interactions. Although not explicitly mentioned, the information indicates that Informant S's mother likely shows empathy by listening to Informant S and jointly finding solutions to the problems she faces. However, in Informant J, there were no indications of initial

openness from the parents, and it is not explained whether there was a change in this openness over time. The information provided does not give a clear picture of the level of openness between Informant J and their parents. Next, in Informant H, although not explicitly mentioned, one-way communication with the father tends to indicate a lack of openness or lack of empathic response from the father towards the problems faced by Informant H. Finally, in Informant N, although not explicitly mentioned about openness, his father provides solutions that indicate a response to the problems faced.

However, the information provided does not give a clear picture of the extent of openness in communication between Informant N and their parents. In the overall analysis, openness in family communication plays a crucial role in addressing bullying cases, with varying levels of openness that can affect parental responses and the resolution of bullying cases faced by each informant. The attitude of openness plays a very important role in dealing with cases of bullying experienced by Adolescents. First and foremost, openness allows Adolescents to feel comfortable and safe to talk about the bullying experiences they have experienced. In a family environment that encourages openness, Adolescents are more likely to share their experiences, allowing parents or other family members to provide the necessary support and assistance (Andriani, 2018).

Openness also helps reduce the sense of isolation that may be felt by Adolescents who are victims of bullying. By sharing their experiences, Adolescents realize that they are not alone in facing this problem. This can increase confidence and give them the courage to deal with bullying situations better (Kurnianti and Afrilia 2020). Additionally, through openness, parents can better understand how Adolescents respond to bullying and can provide appropriate assistance. They can provide emotional support, practical advice, or seek professional help if needed. Thus, openness plays a key role in helping Adolescents find solutions to the bullying problems they experience (Pörhölä et al., 2012)

In addition to family support, openness also facilitates effective communication between Adolescents and schools or the community. Adolescents who feel comfortable talking about the bullying they experience may find it easier to seek help from teachers, school counselors, or organizations concerned with bullying issues. Openness helps promote broader social and cultural changes in addressing bullying issues. By initiating discussions about bullying, both at the family and community levels, we can raise awareness of its negative impacts and create a more inclusive and safe environment for all Adolescents (Andriani, 2018).

## **2. Empathy**

There are differences in parental responses to bullying cases experienced by informants S, J, H, and N. Informant S, although not explicitly mentioned, likely experiences empathic responses from her mother. This is indicated by her mother's ability to listen to Informant S and jointly find solutions to the problems she faces. Conversely, initially, there were no indications of empathy from the parents of Informant J. Although not explained whether this changed over time, it raises questions about the quality of parental responses to the bullying experiences of Informant J. Furthermore, in Informant H, although not explicitly mentioned, one-way

communication with the father tends to show less empathic response. This highlights the importance of empathic and responsive communication from parents in addressing bullying cases. Lastly, Informant N experiences responses that indicate a supportive attitude from his father. Although not explicitly mentioned, the father's efforts in providing solutions indicate a response to the problems faced by Informant N. In conclusion, empathic responses and support from parents play an important role in helping overcome their children's bullying experiences.

Empathy plays an important role in addressing bullying in Adolescents because it has a significant impact on understanding, responding to, and helping victims overcome these experiences. Firstly, by having empathy, parents and teenage mentors can more deeply understand the experiences and feelings experienced by their children when they become victims of bullying. This allows them to build stronger relationships with their children, creating a safe environment where children feel heard and emotionally supported (Gerdes et al., 2011).

Second, empathy helps reduce the stigma and isolation often experienced by victims of bullying. By showing empathy, parents and mentors can provide moral support to their children, showing that they are not alone in facing the problem. This can increase children's confidence and emotional well-being, as well as prevent more serious psychological impacts such as depression or anxiety. Additionally, empathy encourages parents and mentors to take concrete steps in addressing bullying, both in school and social environments (Gerdes et al., 2011). By directly experiencing the suffering experienced by victims, they will be more motivated to take effective interventions, such as reporting the incident to authorities or providing guidance to their children to resolve conflicts in healthy and constructive ways. Furthermore, empathy helps promote the formation of a more inclusive and friendly school and community culture. By showing empathy to victims of bullying, parents can set an example for others in treating others with respect and appreciating individual uniqueness.

This can help change collective attitudes and behaviors in society, so that bullying is no longer seen as acceptable or ignored behavior. Empathy is also important in building positive relationships between children and adults, including teachers and counselors at school (Gerdes et al., 2011). By experiencing empathy from adults, children will feel more comfortable opening up and asking for help when they experience problems, including problems related to bullying. This creates a supportive environment for growth and development for Adolescents, as well as facilitating effective learning and recovery processes when they face life challenges.

### **3. Supportive Attitude**

The supportive attitude of family environment towards adolescents bullying behavior becomes the focus of the research. Information obtained from four informants (S, J, H, and N) highlights various forms of parental responses to their children's experiences of bullying. Informant S, who lives with his mother, describes that his mother supports him by listening to his complaints and collaborating in finding solutions to the bullying problems he faces. On the other hand, informant J's parents don't have a supportive attitude. The lack of support is reflected in the one-way communication pattern between informant J and his parents. Meanwhile, informant

H as a bully notes that although communication with his mother tends to be supportive, there is no specific information illustrating the type of support provided. Finally, informant N indicates that his father provides concrete solutions and encouragement to face bullying, indicating a supportive attitude from the father towards his situation.

This study highlights the important role of parental supportive attitudes in addressing bullying experienced by their children. The responses provided by parents can have a significant impact on the well-being and ability of children to cope with bullying situations. Although some informants show supportive attitudes, there is also information highlighting the lack of support provided by parents, as seen in the case of informant J whose communication tends to be one-way with his parents. These differences in responses indicate the complexity of communication dynamics within families in dealing with bullying (Duggins et al., 2016).

Understanding and identifying supportive attitudes from the family environment in the context of bullying prevention and intervention efforts is an aspect that needs attention. Recognizing the important role of parents in providing emotional and practical support to their children experiencing bullying can serve as a foundation for the development of effective support programs. Thus, this research provides valuable insights for practitioners, academics, and policymakers in addressing bullying issues in school and family environments (Duggins et al., 2016).

#### **4. Positive Attitude**

In analyzing positive attitudes in the context of family communication related to bullying experiences, the data show significant variation among informants. First, informant S describes a communication relationship based on a positive attitude with his mother. Although specific details about this attitude are not mentioned, it is presumed that the presence of openness, empathy, and support in their communication reflects a positive attitude that allows informant S to feel supported and understood. On the other hand, informant J does not present explicit information about positive attitudes from his parents. However, the lack of empathy shown initially may indicate a lack of positive attitude in their family communication (Hartono, 2016).

This raises questions about family relationship dynamics and their influence on the informant's attitudes and perceptions of family communication. Furthermore, informant H also does not explicitly describe the presence of a positive attitude in communication with parents, especially with a father who tends to be authoritarian.

This indicates that authoritarian communication dynamics may not be based on positive attitudes, which can affect the informant's interactions and responses to bullying situations. Although not detailed, information from informant N suggests that the father's efforts to provide solutions indicate a positive attitude in their communication. Although not explicit, the father's response to the informant's problems indicates support and a positive attitude that may influence how the informant copes with and responds to bullying experienced.

Positive attitudes play a crucial role in addressing bullying in adolescents. First, positive attitudes can help build confidence in Adolescents who are victims of bullying. By reinforcing positive self-perceptions, Adolescents will be better able to cope with the pressures and discomfort caused by bullying. They will feel more valuable and have the confidence to face challenging situations with a stronger attitude (W. Wang et al., 2022).

Second, positive attitudes from the surrounding environment, including family, peers, and society, can be protective factors for Adolescents experiencing bullying. When Adolescents feel support and encouragement from those around them, they will feel more emotionally and socially supported. This can help reduce the negative effects of bullying and encourage Adolescents to seek appropriate help and solutions. Furthermore, positive attitudes can also affect Adolescents' perceptions of themselves and the world around them. By viewing everything from a positive perspective, Adolescents are more likely to find creative and effective solutions to address bullying problems. They will be more open to new possibilities and not be trapped in negative or desperate thinking patterns (Deal & Peterson, 2016).

Positive attitudes can trigger changes in the school culture and the environment where Adolescents interact. When positive and inclusive norms are adopted by the entire school community, Adolescents will feel safer and more comfortable participating in social and academic activities. This can help reduce bullying incidents and create a more conducive environment for teenage growth and development (Deal & Peterson, 2016). The support from parents provides a strong foundation for the mental and emotional well-being of Adolescents. Bullying experiences can have long-term impacts on the mental health of Adolescents, but when they have strong support from parents, they are more likely to develop into resilient individuals who can better cope with life's challenges. Therefore, positive attitudes from parents play a very important role in helping Adolescents overcome bullying and grow into mentally and emotionally healthy individuals (C. Wang et al., 2013).

## **5. Equality**

In the context of equality in family communication related to bullying experiences, the provided data show variations in communication dynamics between informants and their parents. First, informant S experiences open and collaborative communication with his mother. This indicates equality in expressing opinions and cooperation in problem-solving between both parties. However, in the case of informant J, communication tends to be unbalanced, with the informant possibly feeling less valued or heard by his parents.

This condition reflects inequality in communicative interactions, which can affect the psychological well-being of the informant. Furthermore, informant H describes different dynamics between communication with the father and mother. Communication with the father tends to be unbalanced, while communication with the mother tends to be more balanced. This indicates a disparity in responses and participation between both parents in the family communication process.

Finally, informant N faces inequality in communication with the father, who seems to have less deep understanding of the informant's condition. This highlights the importance of equality in understanding and support from both parents in addressing complex issues such as bullying.

Equality in family communication plays a crucial role in addressing cases of bullying against Adolescents. Firstly, equality allows Adolescents to feel heard and valued by their parents. When Adolescents feel that their opinions and feelings are considered important in family interactions, they are more motivated to open up about their bullying experiences. Thus, equality creates an environment where Adolescents feel comfortable sharing and seeking solutions together with their parents (Rainey & Melzer, 2021).

Equality also empowers Adolescents to feel more capable of handling bullying. By listening to Adolescents' opinions and views seriously, parents can provide support tailored to their needs. This enables Adolescents to feel more confident in dealing with bullying situations, both by boosting their self-esteem and by seeking help from adults (Segrin & Flora, 2018).

Furthermore, equality in family communication helps build a strong relationship between parents and Adolescents. When Adolescents feel that they are treated fairly and equally by their parents, the emotional bond between them tends to be stronger. This is important because a strong parent-teenager relationship can be a solid foundation in facing challenges such as bullying. Equality also creates opportunities for learning and growth together between parents and Adolescents.

In a family environment that values equality, Adolescents are taught to appreciate their parents' opinions while being given space to express and voice their own opinions. This allows for enriching and strengthening family communication processes.

Equality in family communication provides a strong foundation for Adolescents to develop healthy and effective communication skills. By participating in discussions based on equality, Adolescents learn to listen empathetically, express themselves honestly, and collaborate in finding solutions. These skills are highly valuable in addressing bullying, as well as other challenges they may face in their lives (Segrin & Flora, 2018)..

## CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the role of interpersonal communication in addressing bullying from the four informants (S, J, H dan N), several conclusions can be drawn:

1. Openness: Informant S demonstrates a high level of openness with his mother, while the other informants do not explicitly show the same level of openness.
2. Empathy: Informant J,H,dan N clear information about the level of empathy from parents towards the informants, except in the case of informant S whose mother seems to show empathy by listening and helping to solve his problems.
3. Supportive Attitude: Informant S receives support from his mother by listening and finding solutions together. Other informants may also receive support.

4. Positive Attitude: The communication relationship of informant S with his mother is based on a positive attitude, while the other informants do not have clear information about positive attitudes in communication.
5. Equality: Informant S's communication with his mother occurs openly and collaboratively, while other informants may experience imbalance in communication with their parents.

In this context, open, empathetic, supportive, positive, and balanced interpersonal communication can play an important role in helping individuals overcome bullying cases. Informants who have better communication with their parents tend to have better abilities in handling bullying situations and overcoming potential psychological impacts. Therefore, it is important to encourage healthy communication relationships among family members as part of bullying prevention and intervention efforts.

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