



## Review

### Factors affecting youth bullying behavior: literature review

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## Abstract

### Article info

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*Background:* Bullying behavior that is unpleasant—whether verbal, physical, or social—occurs both in the real world and in cyberspace, making a person uncomfortable and repeatedly targeted by individuals or groups. We aimed to determine the factors that influence bullying behavior in adolescents.

*Methods:* This study used a literature review method. Data were obtained from electronic databases such as PubMed and Google Scholar.

*Results:* Based on a journal review, bullying often occurs among individuals aged 10-18 years, with a higher incidence in girls compared to boys. Factors that influence bullying include individual characteristics, family dynamics, peer relationships, the school environment, and the broader social environment. Solutions to bullying problems involve the roles of parents, schools, and the community.

*Conclusion:* Bullying is commonly experienced by adolescents aged 10-18 years, with many cases involving girls. Factors influencing bullying include individual characteristics, family dynamics, peer relationships, the school environment, and the social environment. Bullying behavior can have both physical and psychological impacts. Solutions involve the active roles of families, schools, and the surrounding community.

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## Introduction

Adolescents, defined as individuals aged 10-18 years, undergo significant physical and emotional changes. During this period, they face challenges in adjusting to their environment and must accomplish various developmental tasks (Diananda, 2019).

As individuals transition from childhood to adolescence, they begin to see a world beyond their family. The socialization they experience expands, and they start interacting more with peers, increasing their social competence. If the values taught by their parents are well-received,

they are likely to develop better social skills. This growth occurs as individuals move from one developmental stage to the next, building on what they have learned previously. Conversely, if children do not internalize the values socialized within the family, their behavioral and psychosocial development may be hindered. As a result, adolescents may exhibit pathological symptoms such as delinquency and other risky behaviors, including bullying (Zakiyah et al., 2017).

A 2018 UNESCO study showed that bullying occurs in many countries, with the lowest percentage being 7% in Tajikistan and the highest at 74% in Samoa (<http://uis.unesco.org>). The Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) observed an increase in cases of violence against children in recent years, with 119 cases of bullying reported in 2020. However, many cases go unreported and unnoticed. Bullying negatively impacts victims, affecting their mental and physical health, and in severe cases, leading to death (Faqih, 2023). According to UNICEF data, 41% of students in Indonesia aged 15 years have experienced bullying. The types of bullying reported include being bossed around, ridiculed, threatened, having false rumors spread about them, and having their belongings taken or destroyed.

Bullying behavior, whether verbal, physical, or social, occurs both in the real world and in cyberspace, making a person uncomfortable and oppressed by individuals or groups repeatedly (Harahap & Toni, 2023). Bullying in schools can be defined as repeated negative actions targeting individuals among adolescents who are physically or socially less strong (Gaffney et al., 2019). The impact of bullying on victims includes changes in character and daily behavior, such as experiencing depression, excessive anxiety, fear, and antisocial tendencies (Husna et al., 2022).

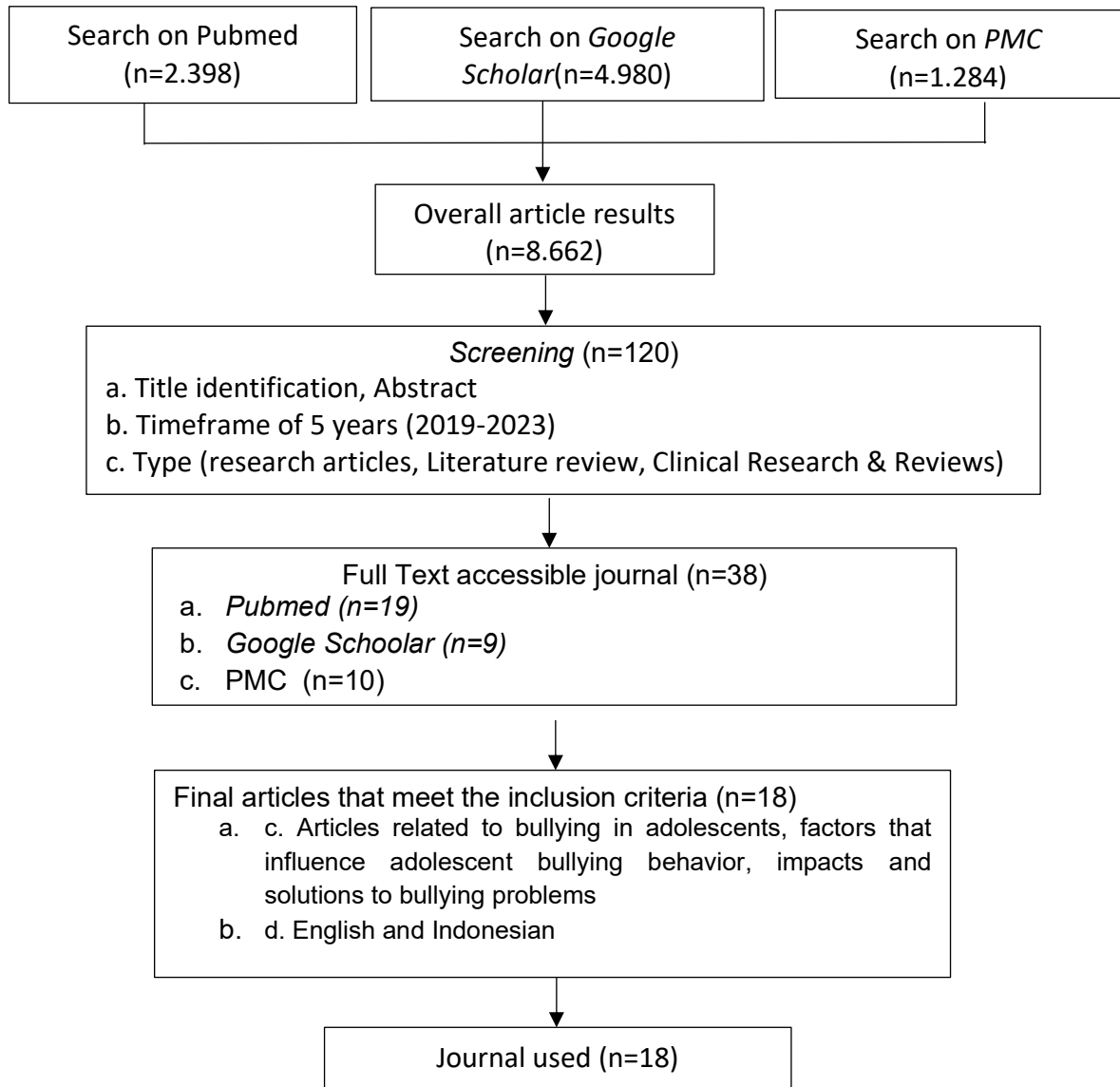
The impact of bullying is extensive. Adolescents who are victims of bullying are at higher risk of experiencing various physical and mental health problems. For example, bullied children are likely to suffer from psychological issues such as depression, anxiety, and sleep disturbances, which can persist into adulthood. Physical health problems might include headaches, stomachaches, and muscle tension. Victims may also feel insecure in the school environment, leading to decreased enthusiasm for learning and lower academic success (Zakiyah et al., 2017). The purpose of this literature review is to identify the factors that influence bullying behavior in adolescents, understand the causes of bullying, and explore strategies for preventing bullying behavior among adolescents.

## **Methods**

This study utilizes the Literature Review method, gathering data from national and international journals via Google Scholar, PubMed, and NCBI. The criteria for selection include: (1) content related to youth bullying, bullying demographics, and solutions for preventing bullying behavior, (2) publication within the last 5 years from 2019 to 2023, (3) alignment with the research objectives, and (4) articles available in English and Indonesian. Researchers identified 38 relevant articles, of which 18 were selected for review and summarization. These articles include information such as the researchers' names, publication years, measurement tools used, and study results. Based on these findings, researchers draw conclusions and categorize factors influencing bullying behavior according to the study results.

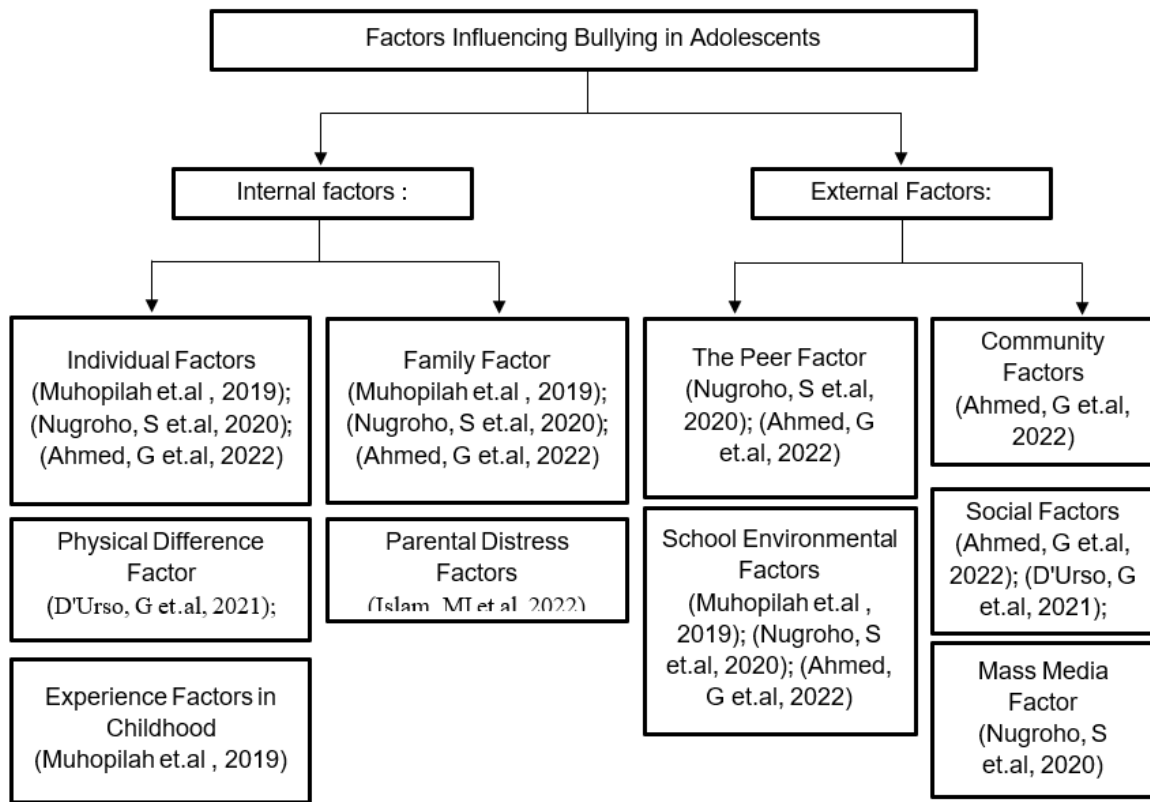
## Results

**Figure 1** depicts the selection process. Out of all considered articles, eighteen met the inclusion criteria and were thus included in the review.



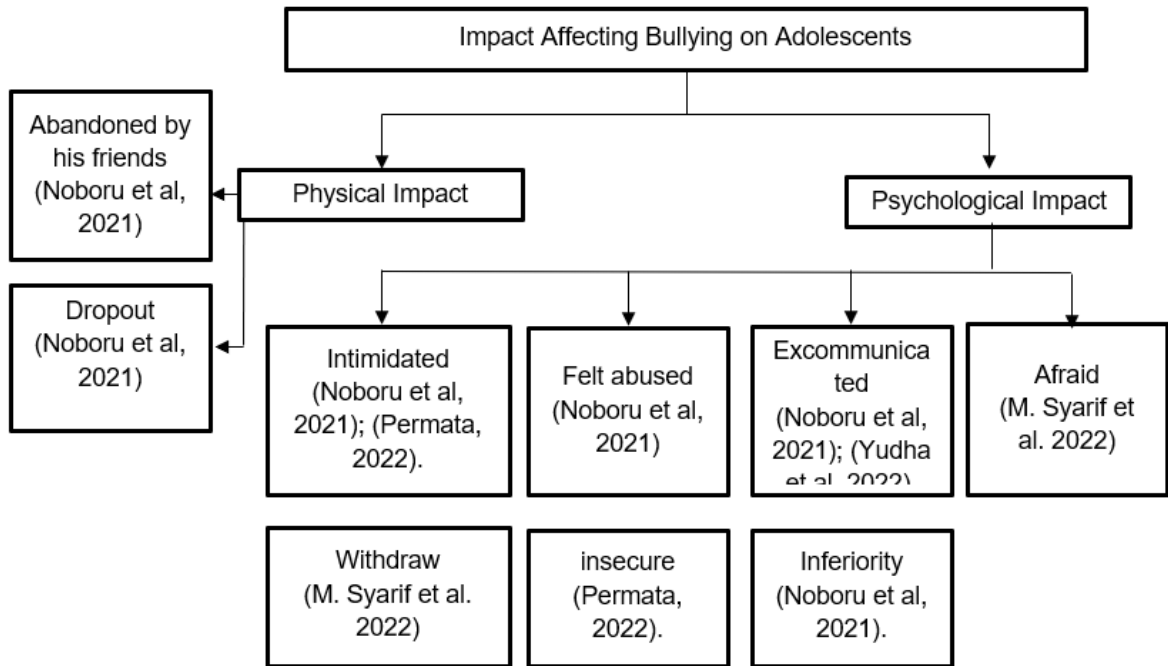
**Figure 1.** Flow diagram.

**Figure 2** illustrates the risk factors influencing bullying in adolescence. Our findings highlight family and individual factors as internal influences, while external factors encompass peer relationships and community dynamics. The impact of bullying is depicted in

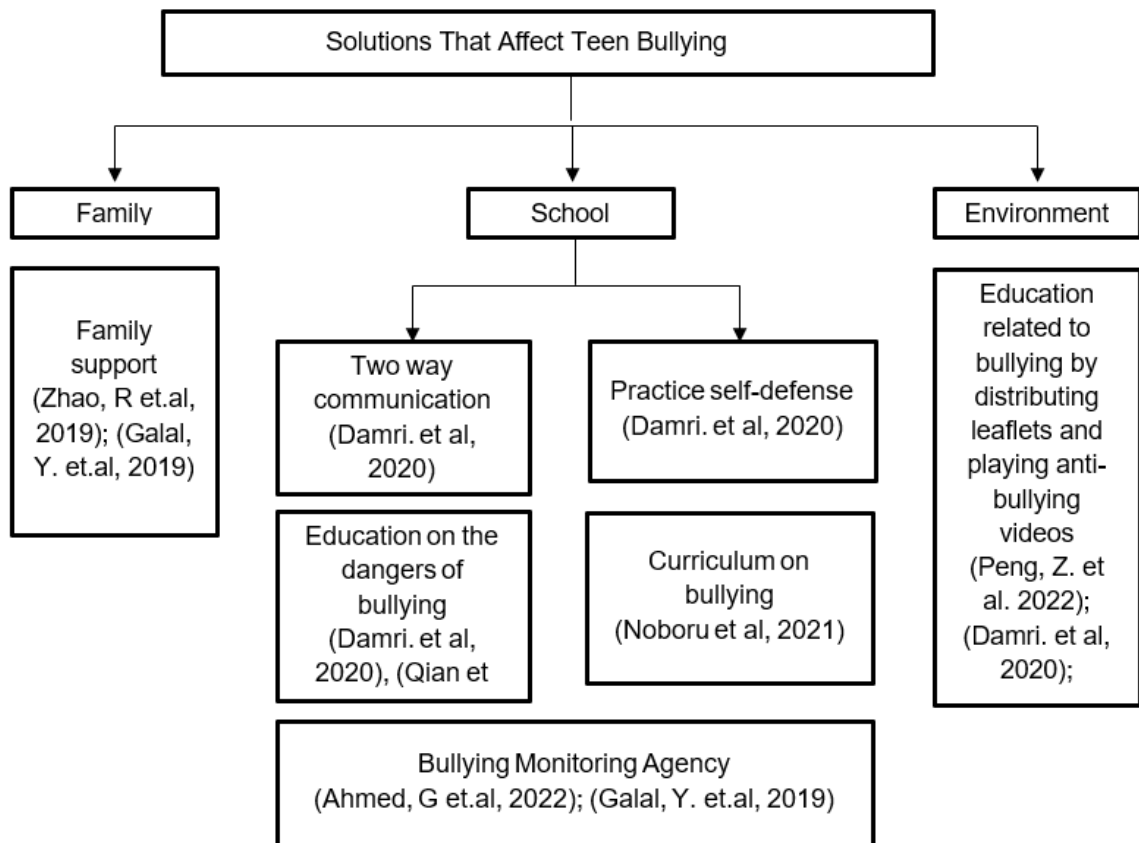


**Figure 2.** Risk factors.

**Figure 3**, encompassing both physical and psychological consequences. Physical effects may include social abandonment and school dropout, while psychological effects encompass feelings of intimidation, abuse, isolation, fear, withdrawal, insecurity, and inferiority. **Figure 4** outlines the solutions for addressing bullying among adolescents.



**Figure 3.** The physical impact and psychological impact.



**Figure 4.** The solution for supporting bullying among adolescences.

## Discussion

Bullying entails deliberate and aggressive behavior aimed at causing physical and psychological harm to others (Muhopilah et al., 2019). Theoretically, it manifests as negative and repetitive actions where the perpetrator possesses an advantage over the victim, making defense difficult. A person is considered a bully when they consistently direct negative behavior towards one or more individuals over time. This definition emphasizes three key aspects: the deliberate nature of the negative behavior, its repetitive occurrence targeting victims, and the power imbalance—both physical and psychological—between the bully and the victim (Olweus, 1993 in Muhopilah et al., 2019).

Bullying behavior, as observed in demographic studies, predominantly affects adolescents aged 14-17 years. Research by Chiu et al. (2022) indicates that females in the 14-16 age group experience higher rates of bullying than males, placing them at greater risk of suicide. Ahmad et al. (2023) further support this, identifying women and adolescents aged 16-17 years as having the highest risk of self-harm and suicide. This pattern is consistent with findings in Australia, where Abuhammad et al. (2020) report that women and adolescents aged 16-17 face the highest risks of self-harm and suicide. Sagala et al. (2023) affirm that bullying commonly occurs between ages 10-18, while Kwan et al. (2022) note a prevalence among adolescents aged 10-13. Additionally, Qing et al. (2022) find that bullying is more prevalent among female adolescents, with verbal aggression being more common among girls and physical aggression among boys (Armitage, 2021).

The occurrence of bullying is influenced by multiple factors across different domains. Nugroho et al. (2020) identify individual, family, mass media, peer, and school environment factors as contributors to bullying. Ahmed et al. (2022) further delineate these factors into individual, peer group, school, parental, community, and social risk factors. Muhopilah et al. (2019) emphasize personality, family, childhood experiences, and school environment as influential factors. Additionally, Islam et al. (2022) highlight parental distress, family stressors, parental separation, substance use history, and mental health disorders as risk factors for bullying. Furthermore, Sabramani et al. (2021) identify age, gender, ethnicity, social media usage, psychological pressure, peer relationships, household conflicts, troublesome classmates, teacher-student relationships, and class attendance as influential factors in student involvement in bullying. Another perspective emphasizes family background, societal tolerance levels, and individual self-confidence as common factors contributing to bullying behavior.

Family background significantly influences the occurrence of bullying, with a notable connection between family dynamics and adolescent involvement in bullying. Studies indicate that adolescents from single-parent households and those with parents of lower education and employment statuses are more prone to engage in bullying behavior. The lower education levels of parents often correspond to unstable or low-income jobs, exacerbating the risk. Moreover, the absence of one parent in single-parent homes can result in less time spent interacting with children, potentially contributing to behavioral issues. Alongside family factors, school-related aspects also contribute to bullying occurrences, particularly the quality of student-teacher relationships. When this relationship is compromised, there tends to be an increase in behavioral problems among students. Additionally, students who perceive a supportive social environment, with many helpful and supportive classmates, are significantly less likely to engage in bullying

behaviors. Conversely, those who lack social connections may feel marginalized and withdraw from social interactions (Tintori et al., 2021).

Bullying exerts significant physical and psychological effects on teenagers, with the latter being particularly pronounced among victims. Those who experience bullying often suffer from lower self-esteem, feelings of abuse, discomfort, and ostracization. These psychological effects can extend to their parents as well. Additionally, bullied adolescents tend to exhibit poor academic performance and are at increased risk of dropping out of school (Noboru et al., 2021). Victims commonly report feelings of intimidation, inferiority, and fear, transforming school from a comfortable environment to a frightening one (Permata, 2022). Bullied students may withdraw from social situations due to fear and discomfort. Furthermore, perpetrators also face negative consequences, as their behavior often leads to social rejection from peers (M. Syarif et al., 2022). They may experience feelings of guilt and regret for their actions towards others (Yudha et al., 2022).

Preventing bullying requires a collaborative effort from schools, families, and communities. Effective communication, understanding of the school and surrounding environment, and promoting positive values are essential strategies for prevention. This includes fostering two-way communication and providing guidance on self-defense in the face of violence, teaching children to stand up for themselves, educating them on the dangers of bullying among friends, promoting respectful behavior and empathy, and creating a safe and supportive environment where children feel comfortable discussing their problems (Damri et al., 2020). Educational interventions such as religious and citizenship education play a vital role in instilling positive values among students and should be integrated into school-based bullying prevention programs by revising academic curricula (Noboru et al., 2021). Family support and healthy peer relationships are crucial in reducing the prevalence of bullying in schools, as they influence students' motivation to learn. Higher levels of family support, quality peer relationships, and perceptions of fairness from teachers positively impact student motivation and reduce the prevalence of bullying. Thus, fostering family support, promoting healthy peer relationships, and ensuring fairness from teachers are key solutions in preventing bullying among motivated students, thereby decreasing its prevalence in schools (Zhao and Chang, 2019).

## **Conclusion**

Bullying, a negative action that causes physical or verbal harassment of others, is experienced by many adolescents aged 10 to 18 years and by many women. Factors that influence bullying can stem from the individual, family, peers, school environment, and also the social environment. Bullying behavior can have physical and psychological impacts, such as low self-esteem, discomfort, cowardice, and withdrawal from social situations. The solution to prevent bullying can be achieved through the active involvement of families, schools, and the surrounding community.

## **Ethics approval**

Not applicable.

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None.

## Competing interests

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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## Underlying data

Derived data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author on request.

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