



The impact of verbal *bullying on self-confidence* in fourth grade elementary school students

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Abstract: This research is motivated by the prevalence of bullying behavior at the elementary school level that affects students' self-confidence in learning. The purpose of this study is to identify the impact of verbal bullying on students' self-confidence in learning. A qualitative case study was conducted at SD Negeri 2 Pagedangan, Malang Regency, involving 20 fourth-grade students, classroom teachers, student affairs teachers, and parents. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. The results indicate that dominant forms of verbal bullying include teasing, giving nicknames, shouting, threatening, and humiliating. These behaviors negatively affect self-confidence indicators such as self-confidence, optimism, objectivity in thinking, responsibility, and rationality in acting. Victims tend to withdraw, become passive in learning, and fear participation. The findings highlight the need for preventive measures and proper handling of verbal bullying to maintain elementary students' self-confidence.

Keywords: verbal bullying, self-confidence, elementary school students

Introduction

Self-confidence is an individual's belief in their ability to face challenges and achieve satisfactory results (Zulqurnain & Thoha, 2022). In the context of primary education, self-confidence plays a crucial role in supporting students' psychological, social, and academic development. Students with high self-confidence tend to be more active, bold in expressing their opinions, and possess adaptive skills in completing learning tasks (Safitri & Mugiarto, 2022). However, this ideal situation is not always achieved, especially if students experience verbal bullying.

Providing social support can influence the self-confidence of individuals who are victims of verbal bullying. It can be argued that increased social support will increase self-confidence in individuals who have been victims of verbal bullying. Conversely, a lack of social support can be associated with reduced self-confidence in victims. Social support can be defined as providing comfort, attention, gratitude, and assistance to other individuals or groups. There are three main sources of social support: family, friends, and special interest groups (Sestiani & Muhid, 2022).

Bullying is a form of non-physical violence that is carried out repeatedly through insults, teasing, negative nicknames, threats, and even public humiliation (Pebriana & Supriyadi, 2024). Bullying can occur on various grounds, including individual characteristics such as race, religion, gender, and disability (Tomo & Nugroho, 2024).

The impact is not only emotional but can also disrupt students' academic and psychosocial development (Kennedy, 2020). The high incidence of bullying has become a serious concern at both the global and national levels. A UNESCO report (2019) shows that one in three students (32%) worldwide experience bullying at least once a month, while 1 in 13 (7.3%) children had been bullied for six or more days in the same period (Armitage, 2021).

In Indonesia, the urgency of this issue is evident from the results of the National Assessment (2022), which found that 36.31% of students had been victims of bullying in school. Data from the Indonesian Teachers' Union Federation (FSGI) for the period January–July 2023 reinforces this situation, with elementary schools recording the highest prevalence at 26%, surpassing junior high schools 25% and senior high schools 18.75% (Fintari, 2024).

The impact of bullying not only affects emotional aspects, but also hinders students' psychosocial development. Azmi's (2021) research at SD 104 Gresik revealed that of the 30 students exposed to verbal bullying, 10 of them had low self-confidence scores (below 60%). This is reflected in passive behavior, fear of asking questions, and reluctance to participate in class. This condition is exacerbated by Marsela's (2024) findings, which state that verbal bullying is often considered normal by the school environment, making its handling ineffective.

A series of observations and interviews conducted at SD Negeri 2 Pagedangan in February of 2025 revealed a systematic pattern of verbal bullying. The forms of bullying found included shouting, threats using certain objects such as "*cicak mati*", the use of negative nicknames such as "*boti*" and "*penakut*" (coward), and acts of extortion committed by the perpetrator (RCSRI) against the victim (ANK).

There was a discrepancy in perceptions regarding the appropriate course of action for this case. The incident was perceived by the homeroom teacher as a mere prank played on the part of the students. However, based on field data and the testimony of the student affairs teacher, these actions meet the criteria for serious verbal bullying. Because the reprimands given so far have been ineffective, the perpetrator's behavior continues to recur, which has a direct impact on the victim's psychological condition. Currently, the victim shows passive reactions, anxiety, withdrawal from the social environment, and low self-esteem that hinders his learning activities.

The objective of this study is to identify the specific forms of verbal bullying among fourth-grade students at SD Negeri 2 Pagedangan and to analyze their direct impact on self-confidence within the learning process. By addressing a gap in previous research which often focuses on general self-confidence rather than learning-specific confidence, this research provides a deeper understanding of the psychological dynamics at play. These findings lay the foundation for the development of targeted prevention and intervention strategies to support student well-being in the elementary school environment.

Method

This research employed a qualitative research design with a case study method, specifically a situational analysis case study. This method was chosen because it allows researchers to gain a deeper understanding of an event in a real-life context by involving multiple perspectives from directly involved participants (Abdussamad, 2021).

The research subjects consisted of 20 fourth-grade students from Pagedangan 2 Public Elementary School, fourth-grade teachers, guidance counselors, and 20 parents. Subject selection was carried out using purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques. Purposive sampling is a technique for determining informants based on certain criteria that are considered capable of providing relevant and in-depth information regarding the research focus (Laia et al., 2022). Snowball sampling is used to reach hard-to-reach populations by asking other people who meet the criteria to participate in the research (Ahmed, 2024). The research location is centered at SD Negeri 2 Pagedangan, Turen District, Malang Regency, which was chosen because there were repeated cases of verbal bullying at the school. The research was conducted from April 14 to June 18, 2025.

The presence of the researcher in qualitative research is crucial, as the researcher acts as the primary instrument in the data collection process (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). As a human instrument, the researcher plays a dual role as planner, implementer, data collector, interpreter, and reporter of research results (Fiantika et al., 2022). In this regard, the researcher must be responsive to the environment, able to adapt to situations, and promptly clarify and analyze data in the field.

Data collection techniques used purposive sampling and snowball sampling, including observation, interviews, questionnaires, and documentation (Sugiyono, 2020). Observations were conducted directly during the learning process and activities outside the classroom to observe student interactions and identify forms of verbal bullying. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with student victims, perpetrators, class teachers, student affairs teachers, and guardians to further explore the impact of verbal bullying on student self-confidence. Questionnaires were distributed to students and guardians used as a supporting qualitative instrument to obtain descriptive information regarding students' and parents' experiences of verbal bullying and perceived changes in self-confidence. The questionnaire items were exploratory and descriptive rather than intended for statistical generalization. Data obtained from questionnaires were integrated with observation and interview findings through source and technique triangulation to identify recurring patterns and strengthen the credibility of the qualitative analysis. The questionnaire method was chosen because it is considered efficient in collecting data systematically (Agustini et al., 2023). According to Lofland (1995), in qualitative research, the primary data sources are words and actions. Without robust data, research findings risk being biased, less representative, or unreliable, which can ultimately defeat the purpose of the research itself (Wendy, 2021). Documentation is used to complement and strengthen findings from observations and interviews through archives, field notes, and photo documentation (Prawiyogi et al., 2021).

The data obtained were analyzed using Sugiyono's (2020) interactive data analysis model, which consists of three components: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was performed to filter important information and eliminate irrelevant data. Data presentation was carried out in the form of thematic narratives and tables of findings, then logical and reflective conclusions were drawn based on validated findings. To ensure data validity, source and technique triangulation techniques were used, namely by comparing data from observations, interviews, questionnaires, and documentation.

Results and Discussion

bullying behavior that occurred in the fourth grade of SD Negeri 2 Pagedangan involved several forms of verbal bullying that had a significant impact on students' self-confidence. Based on the results of observations, interviews, and questionnaires, it was found that the dominant forms of verbal bullying included mocking the victim's physical appearance and character, giving derogatory nicknames, shouting, verbal threats, and attempts to humiliate the victim in public.

Based on observations conducted from April 14, 2025, to May 27, 2025, it was noted that verbal bullying frequently occurred in the classroom environment. Verbal bullying occurred in various situations, such as before the teacher entered the classroom, during learning, and after breaks. The most common forms of verbal bullying were teasing such as "bald" and "stupid," calling names such as "*boti*," shouting while talking to friends, making threats if they didn't get a cheat sheet, and embarrassing friends by calling their parents' poses funny, which drew laughter from their friends. These recurring patterns of verbal

bullying contribute to students' reduced self-confidence, as victims tend to withdraw from classroom interactions, hesitate to express opinions, and show decreased engagement in learning activities.

Interviews with the class teacher (Mrs. V) on May 20, 2025, and the student affairs teacher (Mrs. L) on May 21, 2025, revealed that verbal bullying was often considered a joke by some students and teachers, but had a real impact on the psychological condition of the victim. The student affairs teacher noted that the victim experienced changes in behavior, such as becoming quiet, passive in class, and showing a reluctance to attend school. Parents also expressed concern about changes in their child's attitude at home, who had become more withdrawn and reluctant to talk.

Table 1. Distribution of Forms of Verbal Bullying in Schools

Characteristics	No Question									
	1		2		3		4		5	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Very often	2	10%	1	5%	0	0%	1	5%	1	5%
Often	4	20%	6	30%	1	5%	4	20%	2	10%
Sometimes	10	50%	8	40%	3	15%	5	25%	4	20%
Never	3	15%	3	15%	7	35%	6	30%	6	30%
Absolutely Never	1	5%	2	10%	9	45%	4	20%	7	35%
Total	20	100%	20	100%	20	100%	20	100%	20	100%

The first statement stated that students had been teased by calling their parents', grandparents', or their body shape. Based on the data, 10 students (50%) stated that they sometimes received teasing, 4 students (20%) stated that they often received teasing, and 2 students (10%) said they very often received teasing. A total of 16 of the 20 students (80%) admitted to having experienced personal teasing. This indicates that insults that attack personal or family identity are a fairly dominant form of verbal bullying and occur widely in the school environment.

The second statement mentioned that students had been called nasty names because of their bodies, family, or attitudes. From the questionnaire results, 8 students (40%) stated that they sometimes received nicknames, 6 students (30%) often received nicknames, and 1 student (5%) very often received nicknames. Thus, 15 students (75%) admitted to having received negative nicknames from their peers. This data shows that nickname-calling is a common form of verbal bullying and has a serious impact on students' self-perception and self-esteem.

The third statement explains that students have been yelled at by friends with harsh words and a high tone. The results show that 3 students (15%) stated that they have sometimes been yelled at, 1 student (5%) often received yelling, and none stated that they received yelling very often. Thus, only 4 students (20%) admitted to having received verbal yelling. Although the proportion is smaller than other forms of verbal bullying, this form of verbal bullying still requires attention because it can cause fear or psychological stress, especially if it occurs in students with sensitive emotional conditions. Interview findings revealed that students who frequently experienced shouting reported feelings of fear and discomfort in the classroom, which led them to avoid asking questions and participating actively in lessons.

The fourth statement focuses on students' experiences of being coerced, threatened, or intimidated. Based on the data, 5 students (25%) reported receiving threats sometimes, 4

students (20%) frequently, and 1 student (5%) very frequently. A total of 10 students (50%) reported receiving threats. This demonstrates a form of bullying that is coercive and tends to lead to abuse of power in children's social interactions, which can ultimately lead to fear or discomfort in the school environment. Experiences of threats and intimidation caused students to feel unsafe, resulting in passive classroom behavior, fear of participation, and withdrawal from learning activities.

The fifth statement mentioned that students had been embarrassed by their peers' comments. Four students (20%) stated they were sometimes embarrassed, two students (10%) often embarrassed, and one student (5%) very often embarrassed. Thus, seven students (35%) had experienced humiliating insults. This form of bullying directly attacks self-esteem and can have long-term psychological effects, such as low self-esteem or social withdrawal.

Table 2. Distribution table of forms of verbal bullying based on student guardians.

Characteristics	Question Number									
	1		2		3		4		5	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Very often	2	10%	2	10%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Often	5	25%	2	10%	3	15%	0	0%	1	5%
Sometimes	6	30%	7	35%	7	35%	5	25%	6	30%
Never	5	25%	7	35%	9	45%	13	65%	10	50%
Absolutely Never	2	10%	2	10%	1	5%	2	10%	3	15%
Total	20	100%	20	100%	20	100%	20	100%	20	100%

The first statement states that "My child has told me that he/she was teased by calling his/her parents', grandparents', or because of his/her physical characteristics at school." Based on the responses from the parents, 6 (30%) stated that their child sometimes received teasing, 5 (25%) stated that they often received teasing, and 2 (10%) said they received teasing very often. Thus, 13 out of 20 parents (65%) stated that their child had experienced personal forms of teasing. This indicates that verbal bullying in the form of teasing that can attack family identity or physical characteristics is a form of bullying that is quite real for parents. Parents' perceptions indicate that personal teasing experienced by children is associated with noticeable behavioral changes, such as increased withdrawal, decreased enthusiasm for learning, and reduced self-confidence both at school and at home.

The second statement read, "My child has told me that he or she has been called names related to his or her physical condition, parents, grandparents, or behavior at school." The questionnaire results showed that 7 parents (35%) stated that their child sometimes received nicknames, 2 (10%) often received nicknames, and 2 (10%) very often received nicknames. A total of 11 of 20 parents (55%) stated that their child had received nicknames or negative labels. This indicates that verbal bullying in the form of nicknames is quite common and can influence parents' perceptions of their child's comfort at school.

The third statement is, "My child once told me that his/her friend at school shouted at him/her with harsh words, either in a high tone or when angry." Based on the data, 7 parents (35%) stated that their child was sometimes shouted at, and 3 (15%) stated that they were shouted at frequently. None stated that they were shouted at very often. Therefore, 10 out of 20 parents (50%) stated that their child had experienced verbal shouting. This data shows that verbal bullying through shouting is a significant concern for most parents.

The fourth statement states that "My child once told me that a friend at school asked him for something through force, threats, or intimidation." Six parents (30%) stated that their child sometimes received threats, and one (5%) stated that they often received threats. None stated that it was very frequent. Thus, seven parents (35%) indicated that their child experienced a form of social pressure that led to intimidation. Although the number is smaller, this form of threat accompanied by coercion still requires attention because it can affect a child's sense of security in the school environment. Parents also reported that experiences of threats and intimidation led children to become more passive in class and hesitant to interact with peers, reflecting a decline in self-confidence.

The fifth statement is, "My child once told me that he or she was verbally humiliated by a friend at school." Based on the questionnaire results, 6 parents (30%) stated that their child was sometimes humiliated, and 1 parent (5%) stated that they were often humiliated. None stated that they were humiliated very often. Thus, 7 out of 20 parents (35%) stated that their child had been the victim of verbal humiliation. This indicates an experience that has the potential to reduce a child's self-confidence and self-esteem.

From five statements in a questionnaire administered to parents, it was found that most parents reported that their children had experienced one or more forms of verbal bullying at school. The percentage of incidents varied from 35% to 65%, with the most common forms being teasing, physical abuse (65%) and negative labeling (55%). Overall, data from students and parents consistently demonstrate that verbal bullying experiences contribute to a decline in students' self-confidence and behavioral engagement in learning.

Table 3. Distribution of Levels of Decline in Student Self-Confidence at School

Frequency	Amount	%
Absolutely Never	2	10%
Never	7	35%
sometimes	9	45%
often	1	5%
Very often	1	5%
Total	20	100%

Table 4. Distribution of Levels of Decline in Students' Self-Confidence at Home

Frequency	Amount	%
Absolutely Never	4	20%
Never	8	40%
sometimes	6	30%
often	2	10%
Very often	0	0%
Total	20	100%

Based on questionnaire data distributed to 20 students, it was found that 30% of students stated that they "sometimes" feel insecure due to verbal bullying carried out by peers at school, 5% admitted that they "often" experience a decrease in self-confidence at school after receiving verbal bullying, and 5% stated that they "very often" experience a decrease in self-confidence at school after receiving verbal bullying. Based on questionnaire data distributed to 20 parents, it was found that 30% of students sometimes experience a decrease in self-confidence at home after receiving verbal bullying and 10% admitted that

they “often” experience a decrease in self-confidence at home after experiencing verbal bullying. The questionnaire results also showed that the majority of parents noticed changes in their children’s attitudes at home after experiencing bullying at school, especially in terms of decreased enthusiasm for learning and reluctance to speak. As shown in Tables 03 and 04, the decline in self-confidence is more pronounced in the school environment, which subsequently affects students’ behavior at home, particularly in terms of motivation and emotional withdrawal.

Table 5. Categories of Student Self-Confidence Levels at School

Category	F	%
High self-confidence	6	30%
Moderate self-confidence	12	60%
Low self-confidence	2	10%
Total	20	100%

Based on the data above, there are 3 main categories of student self-confidence at school, for the first category there are 6 students (30%) who have high self-confidence, 12 students (60%) have moderate self-confidence, and 2 students (10%) have low self-confidence. The dominance of the moderate self-confidence category indicates that although many students have not experienced severe self-confidence decline, repeated verbal bullying has gradually weakened their confidence, positioning them at risk of further psychological impact if the behavior persists. This finding aligns with previous qualitative evidence showing that bullying experiences significantly reduce various aspects of self-confidence among elementary school students, including optimism and social engagement (Amalia *et al.*, 2025).

Table 6. Categories of Students' Self-Confidence Levels at Home

Category	F	%
High self-confidence	12	60%
Moderate self-confidence	7	35%
Low self-confidence	1	5%
Total	20	100%

Self-confidence at home refers to children’s belief in their abilities and emotional security within the family environment, which is reflected in their willingness to communicate, express feelings, and engage in daily activities. Prior research indicates that the quality of family environment and parenting styles influence children’s self-esteem and psychological resilience, affecting their responses to peer interactions including bullying (Antonio, Izquierdo-rus and Baena-morales, 2024; Cheng *et al.*, 2025). Based on the data above, there are three main categories of student self-confidence at home. For the first category, there are 12 students (60%) who have high self-confidence, 7 students (35%) have moderate self-confidence, and 1 student (5%) has low self-confidence. The impact of verbal bullying behavior on student self-confidence can be seen in five main indicators. In the student self-confidence indicator, victims appear to be reluctant to ask or answer questions in class. In the optimism indicator, victims show a pessimistic attitude about their abilities. The objectivity indicator is also disturbed, because victims tend to view themselves negatively and feel worthless. In the responsibility indicator, some victims show a decrease in motivation

to follow class rules or activities. Finally, in the rationality indicator, victims often show unstable emotions and withdrawal from the social environment.

Overall, the research findings indicate that verbal bullying is not only a destructive behavior for social relationships among students, but also a significant threat to their self-confidence and academic success. Appropriate interventions from schools, teachers, and parents are essential to reduce the prevalence of verbal bullying and restore the self-confidence of students affected by verbal bullying.

This study revealed that verbal bullying behavior in fourth-grade students at SD Negeri 2 Pagedangan consisted of various forms, such as teasing, name-calling, shouting, threatening, and even publicly humiliating the victim. These findings reinforce the classification of verbal bullying as expressed by Kennedy (2020), which includes insults, taunts, insults, and threats that are carried out repeatedly and systematically. Verbal bullying is often seen as a common occurrence in children's social interactions, yet its impact is very significant on students' psychological well-being and academic development. As a result, the school environment can become a place where bullying can thrive without appropriate intervention, potentially causing negative impacts on students' mental and emotional well-being (Saputri et al., 2024).

Bullying behavior can be classified into three categories: verbal bullying, physical bullying, and psychological bullying. Furthermore, factors influencing bullying include peer influence, social media, and environmental conditions (Maemunah et al., 2023). The forms of bullying found correspond to the indicators of verbal bullying described by Zainul Ihsan (2024), such as mocking parents' names, calling them by derogatory nicknames, and shouting with angry expressions. This behavior not only damages students' social relationships but also weakens the victims' emotional state, which then impacts their self-confidence. This impact is empirically supported by questionnaire data showing that 45% of students reported sometimes experiencing a decline in self-confidence at school, while 10% reported often or very often experiencing reduced self-confidence following verbal bullying incidents (Table 03). The causes of verbal bullying are also inseparable from the role of the school environment. When schools tend to ignore or fail to take firm action against perpetrators, this can indirectly reinforce and justify the behavior. Furthermore, schools that are prone to bullying cases are generally characterized by discriminatory practices, both among teachers and students. Several other influencing factors include a lack of supervision and education from teachers and school staff, social and economic disparities between students, including gender disparities between male and female students, the implementation of very rigid or vice versa disciplinary patterns, inadequate guidance, and inconsistent regulations (Amnda et al., 2020). Verbal bullying is a form of bullying that is easily carried out by someone. Verbal bullying is also the beginning of other bullying behaviors. Examples of verbal bullying actions include inappropriate nicknames, insults, cruel criticism and very prominent, namely shouting or threatening a weaker person or group (Diannita et al., 2023).

Children generally desire to spend time at school with their friends. This can lead to the formation of dominant social groups or cliques, which in some cases can lead to verbal bullying. Peers are often the cause of verbal bullying. They can have a negative influence, conveying the view that bullying is normal and merely a joke, so the behavior continues without being considered a serious problem (Najah et al., 2022). Various studies have shown that bullying in schools impacts adolescents' social development. Therefore, it is important to understand in depth how bullying behavior can affect aspects of students' social development (Putra et al., 2025).

bullying process usually begins with an incident that can cause negative emotions in an individual. Bullying is influenced by several factors, including family problems and conflicts at school. The impacts that can occur for the perpetrator of bullying include the formation of personality development disorders, a tendency to dominate, and the emergence of feelings of superiority or power over others. Short-term effects of bullying behavior include depression and loss of self-confidence due to being bullied, decreased interest and motivation in completing school assignments given by teachers, and decreased interest in participating in learning (Wulandari, H., & Jasmine, 2023). This self-confidence is the foundation for students to develop their abilities (Rahmah & Purwoko, 2024). Verbal bullying activities carried out by students include behaviors such as mocking, making fun of parents' names, calling them inappropriate names, and physical insults, for example, calling the victim "black." This can cause victims to lose self-confidence, become gloomy, and prefer to be alone. Individuals with good self-confidence are generally able to act according to their desires, are happy, optimistic, tolerant, and responsible. Furthermore, self-confidence is an important asset in the process of self-actualization. Someone who has the freedom to think will feel like they are growing into a person with healthy self-confidence (Aginda & Sarajar, 2024). The impact of verbal bullying on students' self-confidence is evident in various aspects. Students who are victims show a decline in indicators of self-confidence, objectivity, responsibility, and rationality. They are reluctant to speak in front of the class, lack confidence in answering questions, and show symptoms of social withdrawal. This is in line with the opinion of Lauster & Gulo (2006), who stated that self-confidence includes aspects of self-confidence, optimism, objectivity, responsibility, and rationality.

According to Erikson's (1993) theory of psychosocial development, elementary school-aged children are in the stage of industry versus inferiority. At this stage, they strive to demonstrate their abilities and gain recognition from their environment. However, if they fail due to negative treatment such as bullying, they tend to experience an identity crisis, low self-esteem, and a loss of motivation to learn. This is further supported by Piaget & Inhelder's (1969) theory, which states that in the concrete operational stage (ages 7–11), children are learning to think logically and require social support to form rational perceptions of themselves and their environment.

Based on questionnaire data, the majority of students and parents stated that verbal bullying causes children to feel fear, anxiety, and shame. This aligns with Ghaffar's (2022) findings, which suggest that low self-confidence can be caused by negative experiences, including verbal intimidation, which leaves individuals feeling insecure and unappreciated.

Self-confidence is a person's belief in their ability to display certain behaviors or achieve predetermined goals. Individuals with a high level of self-confidence are generally able to interact effectively with their social environment, have good tolerance, are not easily influenced by pressure from others in making decisions, and are able to make choices independently (Hermi & Ramadan, 2024). Self-confidence allows individuals to have a clear direction and steps in their lives. In line with the research findings above, self-confidence can build a resilient personality, both emotionally and with a positive mindset. Therefore, individuals with high levels of self-confidence tend to be stronger in facing social pressure and are less easily targeted by bullying. Therefore, it is important to understand that self-confidence is not the only factor that determines whether someone avoids verbal bullying. Environmental factors, social support, and the role of parents and schools also influence a person's vulnerability to verbal bullying (Permana et al., 2021). These conceptual characteristics are reflected in the present study's findings, which show that students who experienced verbal bullying demonstrated decreased optimism, reduced responsibility in

learning activities, negative self-perception, and reluctance to participate in classroom interactions.

Being strong doesn't just mean being physically strong, but can also be mentally strong. In this case, the victim of bullying is unable to defend themselves due to physical or mental weakness. Therefore, it's important to consider the impact of the action on the victim, not just the action itself. For example, a student pushes a friend roughly on the shoulder. The person being pushed will feel intimidated, especially if the action is repeated, then bullying has occurred. This opinion aligns with the view that someone is considered a victim of bullying if they are faced with negative actions that are repeated and occur over time. Furthermore, bullying involves an imbalance of power and strength, leaving the victim unable to effectively defend themselves against or protect themselves from such negative treatment (Ani & Nurhayati, 2019). In an educational context, self-confidence plays a crucial role in learning success. Students with high self-confidence tend to be more active in discussions, bold in expressing their opinions, and able to face learning challenges with a positive attitude (Safitri & Mugiarto, 2022). On the other hand, those who are victims of bullying appear less optimistic, less responsible for their tasks, and reluctant to express their opinions, as found in the results of observations and interviews. In this study, observational and interview findings revealed that verbal bullying such as mocking, shouting, and threatening caused students to feel fearful and insecure, leading to passive classroom behavior, reluctance to participate in discussions, and withdrawal from learning activities.

Bullying phenomenon identified in this study also shows that such actions are often supported by the social environment. As stated by Pramanik (2024), teasing is often considered "normal" joking among students, even though it has serious psychological implications for victims. School neglect and a lack of education from teachers also contribute to bullying (Amnda et al., 2020). Bullying can have negative effects both academically and psychologically on victims. Bullying can be a serious obstacle to learning in the school environment, resulting in decreased academic achievement and student interest in learning. Meanwhile, negative social impacts cause individuals to feel inferior or have low self-esteem when interacting with friends. This causes victims to withdraw from their social environment and experience difficulties in establishing healthy interpersonal relationships (Yunita & Isnawati, 2022). Students who have been victims of bullying are at higher risk of experiencing mental and physical health problems (Umara et al., 2020).

Based on the analysis and data obtained, it can be concluded that verbal bullying behavior is directly linked to a decline in student self-confidence. This situation requires immediate action from various parties, including teachers, parents, and schools, to create a healthy, safe, and supportive learning environment for student development.

Conclusion

The present study elucidates that instances of verbal bullying in the fourth grade of SD Negeri 2 Pagedangan encompass actions such as mocking, addressing victims with derogatory names, shouting, issuing threats, and humiliating victims in public. This behavior is frequently characterized as "just joking around," despite the evidence that it can have a substantial impact on students' confidence in the learning environment. The primary findings indicate that victims encounter significant impediments when attempting to pose questions, respond to prompts, or proactively engage in class discussions. These obstacles disrupt the objectivity, responsibility, and rationality of their learning process. The present study makes a significant contribution to the academic literature by focusing on self-confidence in an academic context, a departure from previous studies that discussed self-confidence in a more general sense.

In light of these findings, educational institutions are encouraged to implement concrete preventive measures to address verbal bullying in elementary schools. Teachers should actively monitor classroom interactions, respond promptly to verbal bullying incidents, and provide consistent guidance to support students' self-confidence in learning. Schools are also expected to establish clear anti-bullying policies and collaborate with parents to create a safe and supportive learning environment. Future studies are recommended to explore non-verbal forms of bullying and examine the effectiveness of specific intervention programs using larger populations and quantitative approaches.

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