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Examining Bullying: Types and Impacts on The Main Character in the Movie Rock Sugar

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Abstract

Bullying is an aggresive act both physically and emotionally. This act is a continous about of power in the form of verbal bullying an non-verbal bullying and this action can occure online. It can involve an individual or group using their power or perceived power to someone weaker than them. This research identified types of bullying and impact of bullying in the movie *Rock Sugar*. This research used descriptive qualitative analysis based on Creswell (2009) as a means to understand social issues originating from individuals or groups. Data collection in this study was carried out by first downloading the film, watching the film, identifying data related to this research, recording the screen of every scene of the main character related to the type of bullying according to Bauman (2008), and the impact of bullying according to Rigby (2003). Data analysis was conducted by collecting and reading all data, analyzing the data in detail using codes, processing the coding into thematic descriptions, describing according to qualitative descriptions, and interpreting the meaning of the data. In this study, twenty-five data points were found. Nineteen types of data were categorized as overt bullying, sixteen types as verbal bullying, and three types as physical bullying. Additionally, six types were categorized as indirect bullying. The researcher also identified thirteen instances of low psychological well-being, eleven instances of poor social adjustment, eight instances of psychological distress, and two instances of physical unwellness.

Keywords: *Bullying, Types of Bullying, Impact of Bullying, Movie Rock Sugar.*

INTRODUCTION

Film is an audiovisual medium that is very effective in conveying information to a wide audience through its distinctive mode of delivery. Bullying entails the perpetrator deliberate intention to disturb someone weaker than themselves. It encompasses acts of physical and psychological violence committed by individuals or even groups over an extended period against someone who is weaker and unable to defend themselves (Bauman, 2008: 363-375)

According to Rigby (2003: 584), it is stated that bullying always implies an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim, where the victim usually lacking power compared to the perpetrator. The consequences of threats or attacks from someone stronger, whether individually or in a group are vastly different from those of attacks from peers. Bullying can result in physical or even psychological disturbances for the victim, decreased self-confidence, trauma, feelings of isolation, guilt, an inability to retaliate, and even school phobia.

This act of bullying is a social reality widely depicted in a movie, one of which is the film "*Rock Sugar*" released in 2021. This movie is based on a true story experienced by Asians who were bullied by Australian, and it delves into the deep-seated animosity of Australians towards Asians stemming from the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. "*Rock Sugar*" tells the story of 12-year-old Charlotte, who is regularly bullied by Brenda and her friends. Meanwhile, Brenda use to escape her mistakes because she was a talented star student at school. Charlotte use to beer the blame from her principal and reluctantly accepts it to avoid prolonging the trouble at school. Charlotte makes efforts to compartmentalize her school problems from her home life, but her parents are always suspicious of her. This film discussed bullying behavior that is very harmful, and its impact can cause heartache and a desire for revenge, which can lead to murder. Therefore, the analysis of this film is not only beneficial for the school environment but can also raise awareness to foster a sense of respect for differences among others (Angela How, 2021).

Research on the topic of bullying is a subject that has been extensively discussed over time. In this study, researcher discovered several previous studies addressing the same topic but employing different theories. The first research by Hia (2019) entitled *"Portrayal of bullying in the movie Cyberbullying"*. This study focused on the types of cyberbullying and illustrated the impact of cyberbullying on cyberbullying movie. In this analysis, the theory used is Willard (2002) theory, which explains what Cyberbullying is. More over the researcher also used Rayes (2019) to describe the impact of cyberbullying.

The second study entitled **"Bullying in Elementary School: An analysis of The Film Wonder (2017)"** in this study discussed bullying in the film wonder using elementary school as the main focus in the story. In this study analyzed the presentation of bullying using Coloroso theory which has several messages conveyed from the presentation. In this study found several types of bullying. (Fatimah & Noorman, 2021).

The third research by Kamilah (2022) entitled *"Bullying the depicted in Cyberbully movie"* This study examined the types of bullying using the National Center for Bullying theory and the impact of bullying using Ken Rigby.

The Fourth research by Syahruddin (2019) entitled *"The relations between bullying type, bullying effect, social support and safe school among bully victims"*. This research discussed the issue of bullying in schools, focusing on three variables: the perpetrators of bullying, the impact of bullying, and the broad support for bullying victims. Quantitative methods, employing questionnaires as data collection instrument, were used to address the research questions. (Syahruddin, 2019)

The next research by Alkhalayleh (2017) entitled *Defining school bullying in Australia and abroad: the significance of understanding and agreeing on the definition of school bullying"*. This research discussed bullying associated with its numerous negative impacts on mental health, drug use, suicide. The study also delved into the definition of bullying in school, as weel as the discreancies in defining bullying it empasizes the importance of having a consensus on the definition of bullying in school so that students and the school residents can understand the nature of bullying in the educational setting.

In the movie *Rock Sugar*, the researcher identifies the research problems as follows: What types of bullying does the main character experience in the movie *Rock Sugar*? Additionally, what are the impacts of bullying on the main character in the movie *Rock Sugar*? The study aims to classify the types of bullying experienced by the main character and describe the effects of bullying faced by the main character in *Rock Sugar*.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Psychoanalysis

Medical conditions that are treated differently from conventional methods involve introducing patients to novel therapeutic techniques. Freud, for example, offers results through psychoanalysis, which differs from traditional treatments. Neurotic patients, in particular, may face challenges with these methods due to their specific needs, requiring adaptations that can

impact outcomes. Psychoanalysis primarily involves dialogue between the doctor and the patient, where the patient shares their past experiences, complaints, desires, and emotions. The therapist listens, directs the patient's thought processes, offers reminders, and observes their responses. Freud (1920: 9-11) viewed psychoanalysis as a distinct approach to treating neurological conditions through these conversational techniques.

Bullying

Many researchers essert that bullying is characterized by an imbalance of power, where the perpetrator holds greater strength or authority than victim. Several studies globally conceptualize bullying as the international desire to inflict harm through aggressive action by one or more students toward others, imbalance of power and typically entails repetitive behavior. Bullying is not solely defined by physical force, rather, if often provides a sense of gratification for the pepetrator while exerting preassure on the victim. Rigby also said if bullying occurs very aggressive and very detrimental to the victim. Others then the perpetrator who committed the act of bullying will get legal action Rigby (2003: 584).

Types of Bullying

Bullying is obviously deliberate and there is also bullying that is done subtly. The following are types of bullying according to Bauman (2008: 363).

1. Overt bullying

Overt bullying includes physical and verbal aggression. This include actions such as pushing the victim to the ground, hitting them, hitting pushing the victim them, assign derogatory nicnames, and threatening or taunting them with the intention of causing harm (Bauman, 2008: 363).

2. Indirect bullying

Indirect Bullying encompasses social aggression, where the bully undermines the victim relationships. This can involve ostracizing, spreading rumors, asking for praise or a certain action that can destroy friendships. Bullying is indirectly

considered less dangerous than physical bullying, usually this behavior is often interpreted as a joke between friends. In fact, indirect bullying is stronger with emotional stress compared to physical bullying. Physical bullying will decrease as students become older (Bauman, 2008: 363).

3. Cyberbullying.

Along with the development of the field of technology, at this time a lot can even be said that all students have new media to bully, both through mobile phones, WhatsApp, Instagram and even social media and other personal websites that can damage the reputation of others, hurt others repeatedly (Bauman, 2008: 363).

Impacts of Bullying

According to Rigby (2003: 584) in investigating the impact of bullying that can be experienced by victims focusing more on the negative problems experienced by victims after experiencing bullying both from mental and physical health. There are four categories of the impact of bullying experienced by victims

1. Low Psychological well-being, this includes states of mind that are generally considered unpleasant but not acutely distressing, such as general unhappiness, low self-esteem, and feeling of anger and sadness (Rigby, 2003: 584).

2. Poor Social Adjustment, this normally includes feelings of eversion toward one's social environment, evident through expressed dislike for school or workplace, manifest loneliness, isolation, and absenteeism (Rigby, 2003: 584).

3. Psychological distress, this is considered more serious than the firs two categories and includes high levels of anxiety, depression, and suicidal thinking (Rigby, 2003: 584).

4. Physical Unwellness, here, there are clear signs of physical disorder, evident in medically diagnosed illness (Rigby, 2003: 584).

Synopsis

This film involves young Asian-Australian female artists. This film discussed the issue of hatred against Asians due to the economic crisis due to Covid-19. So this true story is raised on a wide layer, but from the story of this film is a personal film. Charlotte, portrayed by Jecinta Klassen, often faced intimidation, whether through violence or mistreatment from Brenda, played by Lulu Fits. Despite Brenda harsh behavior, she managed to evade punishment because of her status as a star student. Meanwhile, Charlotte receives threats from the school, and her parents, especially her mother, who suggests distancing herself from Brenda. Despite Charlotte

attempted to avoid Brenda, sometimes she find herself unable to escape. Fortunately, during the Crhismas holiday, Charlotte hoped for peace her family. However, her parents became aloof as they entertain friends, leaving Charlotte feeling neglected. On Christmas eve, while the family and their guest party, Charlotte, her sister, and her father friend pregnant wife abstain from alcohol. Later, Charlotte sneaked to the garden and secretly drunk until she felt semi-conscious. Suddenyt, Brenda appeared, threatening her white a broken bottle. In a panic, Charlotte defended herself, causing Brenda to fall and injure herself.

METHOD

Researchers utilize qualitative descriptive analysis methods. The data presented in this section are descriptive in nature, rather than numerical. Research design is the plan and procedure of research involving broad assumptions and data analysis. In research design, it's a method employed by researchers to gather and analyze data. In this study, the researcher utilized qualitative data analysis based on Creswell (2009).

To support this method, the researcher uses Bauman (2008) theory to classify the types of bullying experienced by the main character and Rigby (2003) theory to describe the impacts of bullying on the main character in the movie *Rock Sugar*.

To analyze the movie, the researcher undertakes several steps downloading the film, watching it, identifying relevant issues, and performing screen recording of scenes related to the types and impacts of bullying.

There are several steps to collect data related to the type of bullying and the impact of bullying:

1. Collecting every scene in the *Rock Sugar movie* that portrayed bullying.
2. The collected data is then read carefully to understand the context and get an overview of bullying.
3. Analyzing in detail data to giving a code relate to classify the types and to describe the impact bullying portrayed in the *Rock Sugar* movie.
   a. Type of bullying.
      - Overt bullying (T1)
      - Indirect bullying (T2)
      - Cyberbullying (T3)
   b. Impact of bullying.

- Low Psychological well-being (I1)
- Poor Social Adjustment (I2)
- Psychological distress (I3)
- Physical Unwellness (I4)

4. Describing themes according to qualitative descriptions.

- Describing each theme according to the theme using data examples from the *Rock Sugar Movie.*

5. Interpreting and drawing conclusions the data.

- Interpreting bullying in terms of both type and impact.
- Drawing conclusions on how bullying is portrayed in The *Rock Sugar movie* so that it can influence readers on how to prevent it in society, schools, and social media.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Finding

This section explains the findings of the study regarding the types of bullying and the impacts of bullying. To analyze the types of bullying, researchers used Bauman (2008) theory, and they utilized Rigby (2003) theory to describe the impacts of bullying. The researcher found twenty-five of data related to the research were identified. Nineteen data points were classified as overt bullying, with sixteen categorized as verbal bullying, and three as physical bullying. Additionally, six data points were identified as indirect bullying. The researcher also found thirteen instances of low psychological well-being, eleven instances of poor social adjustment, eight instances of psychological distress, and two instances of physical unwellness.

Overt Bullying

Overt bullying is a type of bullying carried out openly and is usually performed blatantly by the perpetrator without fear. This type of bullying includes two forms: physical bullying and verbal bullying.

Physical Bullying

This type of bullying includes actions such as pushing the victim to the ground, hitting the victim, and other behaviors that can cause physical harm to the victim. Physica bullying can entail anything frompushing and sovong or being phydically (Nicolai 2023)

Datum 24

Code: T1/I4/31.45.32

Charlotte: Ah!

Brenda: got you there, didn't I, Tan? And I'll get you again, and again, again!

Figure 4.2 Charlotte is injured in the right arm.

Brenda attacked Charlotte using a broken bottle, injuring Charlotte arm, and then threatened Charlotte that she would continue to harass her. Where Brenda physically harmed Charlotte, is categorized as **overt bullying**, specifically **physical bullying**, because the perpetrator caused physical harm to the victim using a broken bottle.

Brenda, who injured Charlotte with a broken bottle, has a psychological impact that can cause significant harm to the bullying victim. Due to the injuries or wounds and the resulting pain, the victim may experience **psychological unwellness** as they feel threatened and unsafe.

Datum 25

Code: T1/I3/31.52.32

Figure 4.3 Brenda attacked Charlotte

After Brenda drank the beer until it was finished, she smashed the bottle and began attacking Charlotte, who was drunk. Charlotte struggled hard to hold back Brenda hand that was holding the broken bottle used to attack her. In this incident, Brenda actions **overt bullying**, specifically a type of **physical bullying**. More specifically, this is physical bullying where the perpetrator pushes the victim and attempts to attack them with a broken bottle.

The impact of this bullying action is **psychological distress**, where the victim experiences excessive anxiety caused by the perpetrator. This psychological distress can harm the victim significantly. The victim may feel anxious, including fear of further attacks, a sense of unsafety, and discomfort with their surroundings. Over time, this impact can also affect the victim's overall well-being and quality of life.

Verbal Bullying

Verbal bullying involves actions such as giving the victim derogatory nicknames, insulting, threatening, or mocking them with the intent to cause harm. Verbal bullying is when one individual or group target anhother with insluting and harmful language Joon (2023).

Datum 11

Code: T1/I1/02.07.32

Brenda: fucking bitch.

Brenda words to Charlotte were extremely offensive, Brenda called Charlotte a "fucking bitch" in front of other students, causing them to laugh and cheer at Charlotte. This action constitutes bullying that falls under the category of **overt bullying** specifically **verbal bullying**, which involves the perpetrator hurling insults at the bullying victim. Such behavior not only degrades and humiliates Charlotte publicly but also creates a hostile environment where the victim is subjected to ridicule and social rejection.

The impact of this bullying action is **low psychological well-being**, as the victim may feel that their self-esteem is diminished due to the insults from the bully. Additionally, another impact is poor social adjustment because the insults from the bully were extremely harsh and delivered in front of many other students, causing the victim to feel embarrassed and dislike the school environment.

Datum 15

Code: T1/I2/12.40.32

Charlotte: I don't have camera.

Brenda: use this, I've got a backup copy of your photo and not funny business, alright?

In this conversation, there is a statement indicating a threat from the bully to the victim, where the bully threatens the victim not to mess with him because he has a copy of the victim photo taken in the bathroom. This form of bullying is categorized as **overt bullying,** which includes **verbal bullying** involving threats that can harm the victim.

The impact of this bullying action is **poor social adjustment**, which is one of the most serious impact compared to other types of bullying. The effects experienced by the victim of such bullying include anxiety, depression, and suicidal thinking.

Indirect Bullying

Indirect bullying is an action typically carried out by the perpetrator to damage the victim's social relationships, either by spreading rumors, isolating the victim, or doing certain things that can harm the victim's relationships with others.

Datum 1

Code: T2/I2/01.10.32

Brenda: Not good enough, Tan come on.

Figure 4.8 Brenda humiliated Charlotte in front of other students.

In this situation, Charlotte receives an F on her exam, and Brenda snatches the exam results and displays them to other students in the middle of the field. While the other students laugh at Charlotte, she continues to try to retrieve her exam results from Brenda. Seeing Charlotte being laughed at by the other students, Brenda mocks her by saying "not good enough, Tan come on." This action constitutes **indirect bullying**, where the perpetrator taunts the victim in public.

In this instance of bullying, the specific impact on the victim is a **poor social adjustment** to their environment, where the victim feels negatively about the school environment as a result of the perpetrator's actions that humiliate the victim in front of other students in the schoolyard.

Datum 2

Code: T2/I2/01.15.32

Brenda: Come get it retartd.

Figure 4.9 Brenda humiliated Charlotte in front of the other students.

Same with the first context, Brenda again refuses to return Charlotte exam result with an F that she has taken. She continuously flaunts Charlotte exam paper and belittles Charlotte efforts, while Charlotte jumps repeatedly to reach Brenda hand in an attempt to retrieve her exam result. Charlotte keeps urging Brenda to hand it over. In this scene, Brenda treatment of Charlotte constitutes **indirect bullying**, which damages Charlotte social relationships with her peers at school. Consequently, Brenda actions have the potential to lead to Charlotte being ostracized by other students.

In this instance of bullying, the specific impact on the victim is a **poor social adjustment** to their environment, where the victim feels negatively about the school environment as a result of the perpetrator's actions that humiliate the victim in front of other students in the schoolyard.

DISCUSSION

Based on the data analysis, among the three types of bullying and the four identified impacts of bullying, the researchers found that one type of bullying is more dominant than the others, **overt bullying**. This type includes two categories, **verbal bullying** and **physical bullying**. Of these two categories, **verbal bullying** is the more dominant. **Verbal bullying** involves the use of derogatory names, making threats, and mocking the victim with the intent to cause harm. In this movie, **verbal bullying** within the overt bullying type is predominantly carried out by most of Charlotte female classmates, who are fellow students at the same school. In addition to **verbal bullying**, Charlotte also experiences social bullying, such as being publicly humiliated, and physical bullying, which includes several instances of bodily harm. These bullying behaviors cause significant harm and impact to Charlotte as the victim. Charlotte experiences **low psychological well-being**, including feelings of unhappiness, low self-esteem, anger, and sadness. Additionally, she has difficulty adjusting to her social environment, which is reflected in her expressions. She feels lonely, isolates herself, and shows signs of absenteeism. Among the four impacts analyzed by the researchers, one impact is more dominant

low psychological well-being, while **physical unwellness** is experienced the least by the victim of bullying in this movie.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

Based on the findings from the research on bullying in the movie *Rock Sugar*, it can be concluded that among the types of bullying namely overt bullying, indirect bullying, and cyberbullying overt verbal bullying is the most prevalent. This is because the bullies are primarily female students who are still in school, and they predominantly use harsh language to intimidate, insult, and demean the victim, labeling them as disgusting and stupid.

The consequences of bullying include low psychological well-being, poor social adjustment, psychological distress, and physical unwellness. The most significant impact observed is low psychological well-being. Additionally, the research reveals that the bullying depicted in the film is persistent, partly due to the encouragement from peers who laugh at and observe the victim during bullying incidents. School authorities fail to adequately protect the victim, even when physical harm is evident. This bullying mainly takes place in public areas within the school environment.

Suggestions

The researcher acknowledges that this study needs to be continued by further research. There are still many limitations in this study, so the researcher recommends that future research be more specific by employing psychoanalytic methods to investigate the perpetrators of bullying in greater depth. Although cyberbullying was not found in this study, the researcher suggests that future research should focus more on cyberbullying. Given that cyberbullying is increasingly prevalent in the current era, it must be addressed due to its potential negative impact on an individual's mental health. In addition to cyberbullying, other forms of bullying also need to be addressed and prevented as much as possible. In conclusion, the researcher hopes that this study will provide insights for readers to continue with future research.

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