

Enough is Enough: A Novella Exploring the Effects of Bullying on a Young Adult

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ABSTRACT

This creative work explores the effects of bullying on a young adult, highlighting its mostly negative effects on a young adult in a high school setting. Bullying is often described as an act of inflicting distress towards a weaker individual done by a stronger individual. The act of bullying can be found everywhere, but it is especially prevalent in academic settings, from elementary school up to university. Through Satria's point of view, this novella aims to raise awareness about the negative effects of bullying towards a young adult who is different from others. Satria experiences different negative effects of bullying, including depression, loneliness, and helplessness because of the difference between him and his classmates. Through his hobbies and close relationship with Indra, Satria manages to cope with the negative effects of bullying. This work aims to offer a different view and approach towards the negative effects of bullying.

Keywords: bullying, coping mechanisms, negative effects, novella

INTRODUCTION

Bullying is an aggressive behavior shown by repetition and an imbalance of power (Mohan and Abu Bakar, 2021). Bullying can occur in many places, such as academic setting, workplaces, or online spaces. School bullying is a common problem plaguing most if not all Indonesian schools. The Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (2023) stated that 6% of students in Indonesia were at risk of experiencing bullying, 35% were at risk of experiencing sexual violence, and 27% of Indonesian students were at risk of experiencing physical punishment. Bullying cases in Indonesia has not decreased in the past year, with 2024 having reached five hundred and seventy-three recorded cases of Indonesian school violence which is a one hundred percent surge compared to the year 2023 (New Indonesia, 2024). The act of bullying in Indonesian schools kept on happening because the lack of socialization when it comes to violence, sexual violence, and school bullying (New Indonesia, 2024).

This creative work explores the negative effects of bullying towards a young adult, particularly a third-year high school student, and the different coping mechanisms the victim uses. It focuses on Satria's distress when facing the negative effects of bullying done by his classmates, solely because he has different hobbies from them. This work demonstrates how a persistent act of bullying may affect the victim's mental health and the different coping mechanisms the victim used, mainly through building a close relationship with his friend, doing more of his favourite hobbies, and avoiding his bullies.

For the statement of the problem of this work, I want to explore the effects of bullying on the main character and how he deals with it. Specifically, this creative work aims to show the causes of Satria's bullying and the different coping mechanisms he uses to cope with the acts of bullying done towards him. This creative work shows how the negative effects of bullying may affect a young adult and how different coping mechanisms are used to help the young adult feel better after the bullying.

The purpose of this work is to show the negative effects of bullying on a young adult, and different ways he copes with it. Satria experiences depression, loneliness, and helplessness due to the bullying done by his classmates. Through forging a close bond with his friend, enjoying his hobbies, and avoiding his bullies whenever he can, Satria manages to cope with the effects of bullying done by his classmates and former friends.

Theory and Methodology

The theory that I will be using in my creative work is the theory of bullying from Tharishini

a/p Mana Mohan and Abu Yazid Abu Bakar (2021) and the theory of coping mechanisms against bullying in school by Arfa Imran (2020). Bullying can occur in different environments, one of the most prominent places of bullying is in school of any grade. School bullying can take many different forms. Physical bullying and verbal bullying are the most common forms of bullying that occurred on school grounds. There are different effects of bullying, including physical, behavioral, social, emotional, mental, and health and affect the victim's academic performance and achievement. There are several ways victims cope with bullying, they can avoid the bullies entirely, or use their hobbies to distract themselves from the stress of the bullying.

School bullying can take many different forms. Mohan and Abu Bakar (2021) identified four forms of bullying, which are verbal, physical, online, and exclusion. The forms of bullying I will be using in my creative work are verbal and physical bullying. Verbal bullying is a form of bullying that can be done through speech or written form. This includes name calling, threats of harm, inappropriate sexual comments, and abusive language. Physical bullying is the type of bullying where the act may affect the victim's physique. Physical bullying includes acts such as kicking, hitting, spitting, pinching, breaking the victim's belongings, rude gestures, and even ripping (Mohan and Abu Bakar, 2021, p. 36). This type of bullying is easier to identify because the actions are overt and observable. Not only because physical bullying occurs in a space where bystanders and eye witnesses could be present, but also because the effects and results of the act are physical and could be seen and observed, for example injuries such as bruises and cuts on different body parts.

There are several effects that a victim may experience because of bullying. The effects of bullying include physical, behavioral, social, emotional, mental, and health and affect the victim's academic performance and achievement (Mohan and Abu Bakar, 2021a). Victims of bullying tend to be bitter, angry, vulnerable, frustrated, helpless, and isolated from people they belong to the same social group (Mohan and Abu Bakar, 2021b). If the bullying is bad enough, the victims may suffer from depression and even think of committing suicide. Because of these intense emotions, victims of bullying usually avoid places, including class, where they might meet their peers and bully face-to-face. Nurhalimah et al. (2025) stated that verbal bullying has psychological effects and consequences such as anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem which may negatively affect the victim's social interactions.

Coping mechanisms used against bullying vary among victims. Imran (2020) identifies twelve different types of coping strategies used by victims of bullying, namely self-control, compliance, relaxation, retaliation, seeking assistance, distancing, concealment, verbal aggression, self-blame, self-harm, and drug abuse. Relaxation coping strategy refers to many different activities that the victim used to calm themselves during and after the bullying incident. This strategy includes crying, breathing exercises, listening to music, reading a book, or even using mindfulness and distraction techniques. Seeking assistance is the act of seeking help or informing other parties, such as friends and family members, about bullying. Distancing refers to the act of staying away or avoiding facing the bullies directly.

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I am going to implement this theory from the point of view of the main character, Satria. The antagonist of the story will use verbal bullying through rumor spreading to incite other classmates to also avoid and even bully Satria. Because of this verbal bullying, Satria will also face relational bullying because of his broken friendships caused by the rumor. In the climax of the story, Satria will experience direct physical bullying perpetrated by Citra, the main antagonist of the story. The main type of Satria's bullying is a non-physical characteristic, including Satria's unusual behavior by enjoying reading more than sports and physical activities which make him different from his other male classmates. The effects of bullying Satria endures include loneliness, depression, and helplessness. Satria will use three types of coping mechanisms, which include building a close relationship with Indra, avoiding his bullies whenever he can, and immersing himself in his hobbies.

For this paper, I conducted secondary research, gathering information from books and journal articles about bullying and the effects it has on the victim of bullying, as well as the coping mechanisms usually used. The steps I followed in creating this novella are deciding on the ending, brainstorming ideas that could be used in the story, creating the outline of the story to reach the ending, creating the characters, and finally writing the creative work using the knowledge from the research we have done.

CONCEPT OF CREATIVE WORK

This creative work will be written in the realistic fiction genre. Jensen (2014, p. 5) stated that realistic fiction often features the real world, and the setting is in a period that is not too far removed from our own. Realistic fiction is a genre of fiction where the characters, settings, and events which happened can also happen in real life. Through this genre, we can explore and portray the topics of bullying in a clear manner. The novella will focus on the negative effects of bullying endured by the main character and what kinds of coping mechanisms he will use to deal with the acts of bullying.

Inspired by a novel titled *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio, which tells the story of August "Auggie" Pullman, a boy with facial deformities who entered public middle school for the first time after being homeschooled since he was young. Auggie experienced constant bullying from Julian, one of his classmates, because he was different from the rest of the students due to his facial deformities. This story shows that one of the many reasons for the act of bullying is because the victim thought to be weird by the perpetrator.

In terms of genre codes and conventions, the characters' stories in realistic fiction resemble real life, and the fictional characters within these stories react similarly to real people (Guarneri, 2018). Satria is a high school student, who faces challenges in school in the form of bullying perpetrated by his classmates. This creative work takes place in Cempaka Harapan Public High School, a fictional high school inspired by the real life public high schools in Indonesia. The story will take place in the present time, like that in real life. Technology advancement will be similar, and there will be no historical references to the past.

Theme

The theme of the creative work is bullying towards people who are different from the majority may cause psychological harm and the bullied people will struggle hard to cope with the bullies. This creative work demonstrates how bullying may affect a young adult who is perceived as weird or different by the classmates around him. The bully might overpower them and leave the bullied in a worse state than before, either physically or relationship-wise. It is

hard for a young adult to recover from an already widespread rumor, especially when it comes to their relationships with the people who are affected by the rumor. However, even though the situation seems hopeless, there are still people who care for the bullied and will help them overcome their struggles as best as they can.

Plot

The premise of the creative work is that Satria, a 17-year-old high school boy, must endure the negative effects of bullying done by his classmates solely because he is different from them. This creative work shows how Satria reacts to bullying and suffers from the negative effects such as depression and helplessness through his actions and internal monologues. This creative work will be divided into five chapters, each focusing on different plot points of the story.

The story begins with the exposition on how Satria's bullying begins during the beginning of the third year, before Indra's arrival. Instead of picking a sports club to join, which was what almost all Satria's male classmates picked, he opted to choose the literature club. At first, being different from most of the boys in his school was not a big deal, until a strange rumor about Satria started going around the entire school. Because of this rumor, Satria's peers started to drift away from him, not talking and outright ignoring him when he tried to ask them a question. Some even resorted to insults and called Satria things he was not. After four months of entering the third year of high school, Indra transferred into Satria's class in the middle of the school year. Despite the spread rumor, Indra was willing to befriend Satria and talk to him while others did not. Satria and Indra ended up spending more time together, where Indra gradually learned more about Satria, that he was the opposite of what the rumor said. He was slowly getting close to him and eventually becoming best friends and study buddies. Satria was happy that he finally found a friend after months of enduring loneliness in school and class.

However, as the final week was getting closer, the bullying grew even worse. More insults were thrown at Satria, and they even decided to finally bully him physically. It was during one of these sessions that Satria finally found the person behind the rumor from the beginning of his third year, namely Citra, the basketball team's captain. Satria told Indra about this discovery, and Indra suggested that Satria talk to Citra directly. Satria opposed this idea in the beginning because he was afraid Citra would just bully him again, but Indra convinced him to get to the root of the bullying so that they both could stop it once and for all. Though still hesitant, Satria agreed with Indra's suggestion. The next day, Satria finally found his courage and confronted Citra on the school's sports field after school. He asked why Citra decided to spread those rumors of him even though he did not do something wrong towards her. She then asked Satria back why he was so weird compared to other students in his class. The banter between Satria and Citra went on until one of Satria's comments struck a nerve within her. That was when Citra decided to get back at Satria by physically harming him. She could overpower and knock him down because she was taller and larger than Satria. Indra decided to intervene by running towards the commotion and pushing Citra away from Satria with his whole body while threatening to report her actions to the headmaster. However, Citra was unfazed because of her mother's status and decided to leave because bullying Satria was no longer fun because he fought back.

After their confrontation with Citra, Satria and Indra finally filed a report to their headmaster. Their headmaster was appalled at Citra's sudden aggression and promised that her mother would hear about this. To avoid even more conflicts, the headmaster suggested that Satria and Indra visit the town's library after school to study together and avoid further bullying. After a few months of studying in the public library and avoiding Citra, the final examination was over. Satria and Indra managed to graduate high school with no more problems beyond

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their confrontation with Citra. Satria learned to not be afraid of Citra anymore because he did not have to face her in the future since she would go abroad because of her mother finding out what she had done during her third year from her headmaster. So, he bid her farewell, though he knew Citra could still appear before him at any time in the future. The story ended with Satria accepting Indra's invitation to a book fair that just started two days before, feeling hopeful that even though his final year of high school might had been awful, he still had someone he could confide in.

Characters

Main Character:

Satria Adnan, a 17-year-old third-year student at Cempaka Harapan Public High School. He has short dark brown hair. He does not like to engage in conversations, but he will ask first when he needs something from a person. Compared to other boys around him who enjoy doing various types of sports, Satria prefers to stay away from the sports field. He is often looked down on because he refuses to participate in activities which are normal for boys of his age.

Side Character:

Indra Guntara, a 17-year-old transfer student from the neighboring city who attends the same school and classes as Satria. He has medium brown hair which he always ties into a short ponytail. Indra is not the brightest when it comes to academics. He often falls short of the passing grade and thus must take remedial classes often. However, despite all of this, he has a warm and inviting personality, albeit a little cheeky at times.

Antagonist:

Citra Jagaadithya, an 18-year-old third-year student who is the daughter of one of Cempaka Harapan's investors. She has long, blackish brown hair and green eyes. She is the school's basketball team captain, arrogant, self-centered, and always belittles those who are weaker than her. Citra is the type of person who does not like seeing people being different from the norm, thus enabling her to start harassing Satria during their third year of high school.

Conflict

The main conflict that will occur in my creative work is Man vs. Man. According to Thompson (2018), Man vs. Man is a type of external conflict where the protagonist must face off against their antagonist. Citra is the most prominent bully among Satria's peers, who all refused to interact with him because of Citra's rumors. She is also the one who instigates Satria's willingness to try and fight her back by physically hurting him. Even though Man vs. Society might also work because Satria struggles with his interpersonal relationships with his peers due to the rumors, Citra still appears as the central and most prominent antagonist throughout our creative work because she is the one who directly confronts and belittles Satria by using the rumors she spread against him.

CONCLUSION

This thesis shows how the act of bullying has more negative effects towards a young adult. The act of bullying has always been a major problem in Indonesian society, especially towards young adults in educational environments. Young adults who experience the act of bullying are often considered outcasts due to differences in aspects of their lives. Not only because of their familial, economic, or social statuses, but also because of the differences in their interests which others may not see as normal. The act of bullying can make a young adult feel alienated from the environment they live in just because they are different from the rest.

Different types of bullying cause different effects towards a young adult, which are almost always negative. This creative work shows a few types of effects on bullying towards a young adult, which include relational effects and physical effects. Due to these different effects, a young adult may find it difficult to cope unless they have their own tried and true coping mechanism. All in all, the effects of bullying felt by a young adult are often negative effects and the young adult usually suffers through it.

I have learned many important lessons during the writing of this paper and the creative work, one of them is to never stop digging for sources. In this creative work, the theory used to analyze the act of bullying comes from many different sources which discuss the different types of bullying, the reasons why perpetrators may bully others, the different but often negative effects bullying has on its victims, and different coping mechanisms which a victim of bullying can use.

When it comes to my plans, I am planning to write more works exploring the different effects bullying can have on different people. Whereas this creative work focused on the effects of bullying towards a young adult in an educational environment, I want to write different aspects of bullying from different characters and perspectives. I hope I can reach out to publishers to get our manuscript printed and turned into a real book.

The act of bullying is still rampant in Indonesia, thus doing more research on the topic of bullying will yield more awareness towards the act of bullying in Indonesia. Moreover, future research should explore the reasons why a perpetrator decides to do the act of bullying towards others.

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