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Media Literacy to Overcome Cyberbullying: Case Study in an Elementary School in Bandung Indonesia

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Abstract

Cyberbullying of children is a very worrying phenomenon. Media literacy is needed to avoid children from cyberbullying. This study aims to formulate media literacy in children in primary schools on several research focuses, namely on how students' understanding of cyberbullying, efforts of students and schools to overcome cyberbullying and media literacy to overcome cyberbullying in elementary school students. The method used in this study is a qualitative research method with a case study approach. We selected the 5th-grade students and the teachers from a Private Elementary School in Bandung Indonesia to become research informants. Meanwhile, the triangulation is done through triangulation between researchers and literature studies. Nowadays, almost all elementary schools in Indonesia do not allow students to bring mobile phones to school. However, the results of this study indicate that almost all the informants in this study have used the internet either through computers or mobile phones in their homes. Therefore, media literacy to overcome cyberbullying is expected to start at home. Schools, parents, students, legal regulations and environmental conditions are key factors in minimizing cyberbullying in children. The introduction of internet characteristics, privacy awareness, understanding the legal consequences and internal policies are important to convey to children so that children can avoid cyberbullying.

Keywords: media literacy, cyberbullying, elementary school, internet ethics, internet wise

1. Introduction

The development of information and communication technology has positive and negative impacts. One of negative impacts is the abuse of freedom of expression and opinion through the cyber world. Cyberbullying is a very worrying phenomenon. Moreover, cyberspace has an anonymity feature where cyberbullying can be very out of control (Vaillancourt, Faris, & Mishna, 2017). Cyberbullying is an act of intimidating others through the world of cyber or information and communication technology. Based on research results from the Pew Research Center, some forms of cyberbullying that are often experienced by adolescents are those who are called by names that are offensive or harassing, receive false news about them, receive inappropriate and unwanted images, always asked about where they are, with whom and what they do, and the distribution of their photos without their permission, all of which occur in online media (Anderson, 2018). Also, cyberbullying is usually related to discrimination, whether it is discrimination of gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, etc. (NSW Board of Studies, 2011).

Some studies show the existence of cyberbullying in children and adolescents. A study shows that about 10% of young people have experienced cyberbullying (NSW Board of Studies, 2011). Another study showed that in girls, 16% had witnessed cyberbullying, 11% had been bullied and 9% had been bullied, while in boys, on average about 10% had witnessed cyberbullying, had been a bully and had been a victim of bullying (Lindfors, Kaltiala-Heino,

& Rimpelä, 2012). The Pew Research Center even reports that 59% of US households have experienced cyberbullying (Anderson, 2018).

Cyberbullying will harm mental health, both for bullies, bullied and for those who witness bullying. Cyberbullying in children can even cause trauma in a very long period of time, make children inferior, have problems with family, have academic problems, experience violence at school, make the child's behavior more aggressive and naughty and in the toughest conditions may cause a person to experience depression then commit suicide (NSW Board of Studies, 2011) (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008).

To be able to overcome the problem of cyberbullying, especially in children, a collaboration of all components of society is needed, including approaches through schools. NSW Board of Studies mentions key elements to overcome cyberbullying, namely a good understanding and awareness not to facilitate cyberbullying, integrating cyberbullying prevention into relevant policies and evaluating policies, reporting channels that are open and accessible, campaigns to use information technology positively, and preventive measures through the curriculum (NSW Board of Studies, 2011).

This study aims to formulate media literacy in children in primary schools on several research focuses, namely on how students' understanding of cyberbullying, efforts of students and schools to overcome cyberbullying and media literacy to overcome cyberbullying in elementary school students.

2. Literature Review

Cyberbullying is an act of harassing, threatening, humiliating, or disturbing others through technology (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008). The results of Moshfegh and Ebrahimi's research (2018) emphasize the importance of the relationship between parents, schools, and children in overcoming cyberbullying. The results of this study indicate that parenting patterns play an important role in the causality structure of the emergence of cyberbullying. Therefore schools must assist parents in providing good parenting (Moshfegh & Ebrahimi, 2018). The results of this study, have also previously been found in the results of research Carmosimo (2016). Carmosimo recommends steps that need to be done are to increase collaboration between parents and schools, keep children safe from cyberbullying and promote the wise use of the internet (Carmosino, 2016).

The results of research from Sezer, Sahin, Akturk (2013) show that most students in primary schools experience cyberbullying. The students find fake accounts on social media, then their data is stolen and misused on the internet. Faced with this, some students report what they experienced to the administrator of the site, there are complaints to parents and friends, there are students who respond directly to the negative treatment they receive on the internet. Most of the students stated that they were psychologically disturbed, felt harassed, so they were angry and upset, while a small number of students chose to remain relaxed (Sezer, Sahin, & Akturk, 2013). Based on the summary of literature reviews conducted by Myers and Cowie (2019), the steps to help victims of cyberbullying in elementary and secondary schools include developing emotional social learning, emotional rehabilitation and emphasizing moral aspects (Myers & Cowie, 2019).

3. Research Method

The method used in this study is a qualitative research method with a case study approach. Case studies are an approach that is considered effective for understanding and investigating

complex problems in natural settings (Crowe et al., 2011; Harrison, Birks, Franklin, & Mills, 2017). The case study starts from the planning step, then continues with the formulation of the research design, preparation, collection and analysis of data, and ends with the sharing of research results (Yin, 2018). In this study, planning begins by identifying the phenomenon of cyberbullying. The cyberbullying phenomenon is very broad, therefore in this study, we take the example of cyberbullying cases in children, especially in students of elementary schools.

We selected 5th-grade students and teachers from a Private Elementary School in Bandung Indonesia to become research informants. The primary data collection technique was carried out through a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with all 27th-grade students totaling 27 students, interviews with 3 teachers and observations there. Meanwhile, triangulation is done through triangulation between researchers and literature studies. Analysis of the research data was done by categorizing the answers from the informants then analyzed and interpreted by the researchers.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Students' Understanding of Bullying and Cyberbullying

At the beginning of this study, we tried to find out students' understanding of bullying. Students argue that bullying is an act of mocking, insulting and demeaning others. They also gave examples of acts of insulting others as short, fat, thin or black people as an act of bullying. For cyberbullying, all students who became informants in this study mentioned that cyberbullying is bullying that occurs in the cyber world or internet, have understood what is meant by cyberbullying.

We further asked, did they ever bully their friends? They compactly replied that they sometimes called their friends thin, fat or black, but that they did in the context of joking. They explained that they needed to joke with their friends so they could look funny, there was entertainment, could be closer and not be awkward in friendships. All students agreed that the joke was not serious so it did not make them feel offended or become inferior. They even say that they usually respond with similar jokes. However, sometimes they find outrageous jokes, for example by naming animals. For this reason, they usually immediately reprimand their friend that the joke is very outrageous and inappropriate, then the friend apologizes. If there are cases that cannot be resolved among them, students usually report the incident to their teacher. They choose to report to the teacher rather than their parents because the problem solving by the teacher will be faster and simpler, while if they report it to their parents, they worry that the problem will get bigger.

This shows that students realize that not all negative words are intended for negative purposes, because they realize that there are local values, such as joking habits or humor in friendships. However, parents and teachers need to remind that the humor created by them does not embarrass or harass others, such as body shaming. Students need to be educated that body shaming can make others insecure. Education of legislation also needs to be given early on, such as the existence of Law Number 19 Year 2016 concerning Information and Electronic Transactions in which there is a revision of Article 27 Paragraph 3 jo Article 45 Paragraph 3 of Law Number 11 the Year 2008 which contains offenses if there is someone who feels insulted (Presiden Republik Indonesia, 2008; Presiden RI, 2016).

4.2. Utilization of the Internet by Elementary School Students

From the 27 students who became informants in this study, 26 students have used the internet. Among the 26 students, some have used the internet since kindergarten, some have used it since

grade 1 elementary school and some have only used it since grade 4 or 5 elementary school. Only one student who has not used the internet. The reason the student does not use the internet is that he does not want to waste a lot of time and become stupid.

The use of the internet by informants in this study includes the use of online games, watching YouTube for learning purposes such as how to edit videos and learn programming, create video blogs on YouTube, interact on social media like Instagram and Facebook, communicate through instant messages like Whatsapp and LINE, as well as Google's search engine to search for study material, download songs, prank against Google Assistant.

Students have realized that when they do status updates or post photos and videos, they will get both positive and negative comments. Positive comments that they usually get in the form of words of praise or encouragement, while negative comments they have ever gotten in the form of ridicule or insults such as "you can't edit videos", "you frequently update status", "bad", etc.

According to students, both positive and negative comments make them more enthusiastic. Even negative comments do not make them inferior, but rather add better motivation. In the face of negative comments on social media, sometimes they choose to remain silent, but sometimes they reply with the same comment, for example, when they get the comment "You are ugly", then they will reply with the comment "you are also ugly" or "you are worse". There was something funny when we asked the students, "Why would anyone like to bully?" They answered because there was a whisper of Satan and people liked to ridicule.

Looking at the answers of the students at the interview, we concluded that the students who were informants in this study were those who had positive self-concepts. Positive self-concept can accept criticism and criticize to improve themselves. Maintaining positive affection is a way to maintain a positive self-concept (Bracken, 2015).

4.3. Student Efforts to Minimize Cyberbullying Actions

To ensure students' understanding of media literacy, we ask about literacy understanding. The students answered that literacy means opening eyes, being able to see what is good and what is bad. They mentioned that cyberbullying or negative comments were more frequent on YouTube than on Instagram, Line and Whatsapp. They set their Instagram account to be private to minimize cyberbullying. They prefer Instagram than Facebook because they think Facebook looks out of date. Regarding privacy, some students said that they did not follow their parents' accounts, while some other students followed each other's accounts with their parents. However, almost all students follow their teacher and school accounts. Furthermore, students also mentioned that they usually post their photos on Instagram without asking parents first, but for YouTube content, they usually discuss it with their parents first.

4.4. School's Efforts in Overcoming Cyberbullying

The teachers who became informants in this study stated that their school had strict rules regarding student delinquency. To anticipate students who commit delinquency at school, such as a fight, then from the beginning students are declared accepted at school, parents must sign an agreement. The agreement, among others, do not speak harshly and do not hurt each other. In the first week of school, students attend an orientation period in the form of school behavior convergence. During this orientation period, students are introduced to the school environment, understand what is and is not allowed to be done. After that, every Monday for one hour and then every day for half an hour, students are reminded of the character building. If students

violate, then parents will be invited to school for a maximum of three times. Then, if after a tolerance limit of three times, students still violate, the school will return students to be educated by their parents.

This school apply the rule that all students are prohibited from using mobile phones at school. Teachers also communicate with parents regarding the use of mobile phones by students at home. Some students are more obedient to the teacher than to their parents. Therefore parents will communicate with the teacher if they worry about their children using mobile phones excessively. Then the teacher will reprimand and advise students to follow their parents. In addition, the school also provides counselors. Counselors look at how the behavior or character tendencies of each student.

Thus the relationship between parents, school, and children has run well in this school. These conditions will facilitate schools in minimizing cyberbullying for their students.

4.5. Media Literacy to Overcome Cyberbullying in Elementary School Students

Schools, parents, students, legal regulations and environmental conditions are key factors in minimizing cyberbullying in children, especially for elementary school-age children. Currently, almost all elementary schools in Indonesia do not allow students to bring mobile phones to school. However, the results of this study indicate that almost all the informants have used the internet either through computers or mobile phones in their homes. Therefore, media literacy to overcome cyberbullying is expected to start at home. Parents have provided devices and access to the internet for their children at home. Parents should introduce their children to the power of the internet and how they use the internet properly and safely, and pay attention to ethics and the rules that apply (Bhat, Chang, & Linscott, 2010).

Based on the data that has been presented in sections 4.1-4.4, the media literacy to overcome cyberbullying in elementary school children includes:

- a. Introduction to internet characteristics, such as introducing positive and negative impacts of the internet, what should be done and not done on the internet, etc..
- b. Privacy awareness, for example by guiding children to identify content that can be shared and not allowed to be shared on the internet, set privacy settings, select friend requests on social media, the importance of keeping passwords from being shared with others, etc.
- c. Be wise in using the internet by introducing legal consequences to an act of violation on the internet.
- d. Internal policies (agreement of parents and children) such as restrictions on access time and duration of using the internet for children, restrictions or blocking of certain sites, the openness of children to their parents, etc.

Schools can support by strengthening media literacy both through the curriculum and extracurricular activities as has been done by the school in this research. Furthermore, legal regulations must pay attention to child protection. In the end, it needs support from the environment both at school and outside of school.

5. Conclusion

Almost all elementary schools in Indonesia, do not allow students to bring mobile phones to school. Although many schools have provided information technology subjects at school, it seems that the use of gadgets for children mostly starts at home. Therefore, media literacy to overcome cyberbullying in elementary school children is expected to start at home. However,

support from schools, legal and environmental provisions are needed to prevent children from cyberbullying. The introduction of internet characteristics, privacy awareness, understanding the legal consequences and internal house policies are important to convey to children so that children can avoid cyberbullying.

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