

Social Relationships and Violence in Higher Education: Narrative Studies of Bullying Victims

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Abstract

This research addresses the escalating bullying epidemic within Indonesian higher education during the 2024-2025 period. While universities are theoretically intellectual sanctuaries, systemic violence has increasingly eroded student dignity. Utilizing a qualitative narrative inquiry approach, the study analyzes lived experiences from survivors, including high-profile cases at Diponegoro and Udayana universities. Theoretical frameworks include Social Control Theory and Ecological Systems Theory to examine how academic hierarchies normalize abuse. Findings indicate that violence is not merely interpersonal but a structural phenomenon rooted in a "predatory hierarchy" and rigid seniority culture. These dynamics systematically dismantle prosocial bonds, leading to severe mental health crises and academic disengagement. Although recent legal reforms provide a framework for prevention, true institutional resilience requires dismantling the academic "caste system". Ultimately, prioritizing victim-centered accountability over institutional reputation is essential for ensuring that student safety remains a fundamental right. Higher education governance must proactively defend victims to restore educational integrity nationwide.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini membahas epidemi perundungan yang meningkat di pendidikan tinggi Indonesia selama periode 2024-2025. Meskipun universitas secara teoretis merupakan tempat perlindungan intelektual, kekerasan sistemik telah semakin mengikis martabat mahasiswa. Menggunakan pendekatan inkuiri naratif kualitatif, studi ini menganalisis pengalaman hidup penyintas, termasuk kasus profil tinggi di universitas Diponegoro dan Udayana. Kerangka teori mencakup Teori Kontrol Sosial dan Teori Sistem Ekologi untuk memeriksa bagaimana hierarki akademik menormalisasi pelecehan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa kekerasan bukan sekadar interpersonal melainkan fenomena struktural yang berakar pada "hierarki predator" dan budaya senioritas kaku. Dinamika ini secara sistematis merusak ikatan prososial, menyebabkan krisis kesehatan mental parah dan ketidakterlibatan akademik. Walaupun reformasi hukum terbaru menyediakan kerangka pencegahan, resiliensi institusional sejati memerlukan pembongkaran "sistem kasta" akademik. Akhirnya, memprioritaskan akuntabilitas berpusat pada korban di atas reputasi lembaga sangat penting guna memastikan keamanan mahasiswa tetap menjadi hak dasar. Tata kelola pendidikan tinggi wajib membela korban secara proaktif demi memulihkan integritas pendidikan nasional seutuhnya.



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A. INTRODUCTION

1. Background

The landscape of higher education in Indonesia throughout 2024 and 2025 has been characterized by a profound paradox: while universities are envisioned as sanctuaries of intellectual progress and character building, they have increasingly become arenas for systemic violence and the erosion of human dignity. The phenomenon of bullying, long dismissed as a trivial "rite of passage" or standard student behavior, has escalated into a documented epidemic that threatens the mental health, academic continuity, and physical safety of the academic community.¹ By late 2025, the Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology (Kemendiktisaintek), officially recognized violence in educational settings specifically sexual violence, bullying (perundungan), and intolerance as the "three major sins of education" that require urgent, top-tier governance intervention.²

The statistical reality of this crisis is stark. Data from the Federation of Indonesian Teachers' Unions (FSGI) reveals a sharp upward trajectory in reported cases of violence within the education sector, rising from 15 cases in 2023 to 36 in 2024, and peaking at 60 major reported cases by December 2025.³ While early assessments often focused on primary and secondary schools, the higher education sector has emerged as a particularly high-risk environment due to its complex hierarchical structures and the lingering influence of unregulated seniority culture. National Assessment surveys indicate that approximately 36.31% of students are potentially vulnerable to bullying, yet only a small fraction estimated at 13.54% possess the courage to report these incidents to institutional authorities.⁴ This discrepancy highlights a "culture of silence" and a systemic failure in the protective mechanisms intended to safeguard students.

Recent high-profile tragedies have served as catalysts for this research. The death of Timothy Anugerah Saputra, a student at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (FISIP) at Udayana University, and the widely publicized suicide of Dr. Aulia Risma Lestari at Diponegoro University (UNDIP), have exposed the lethal potential of systemic bullying

¹ Indonesia Youth Foundation, "The Bullying Epidemic in 2025," Indonesia Youth Foundation, 2025.

² Trisna Wulandari, "Isu Kekerasan-Perundungan Di Pendidikan Tinggi Akan Dibahas Di KPPTI 2025," Detik Edu, 2025.

³ Voi, "Cases Of Violence In Schools Soar, FSGI Records 60 Cases Throughout 2025," Voi, 2025.

⁴ Wisnu Sri Hertinjung, "The Shadow of Bullying in Indonesia Education System," Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, 2024.

within specialized academic programs.⁵ In the case of Dr. Aulia Risma Lestari, narratives from voice recordings and police statements revealed a "caste system" among anesthesia residents where juniors were subjected to systematic intimidation, psychological pressure, and hidden extortion by seniors and structural officials.⁶ These cases demonstrate that bullying in higher education is often not a series of isolated interpersonal conflicts but a structural phenomenon embedded in the social relationships of the academic environment.

The theoretical imperative for this study is grounded in the intersection of Social Control Theory and Ecological Systems Theory. Social Control Theory, popularized by Travis Hirschi, suggests that individuals are restrained from deviant behavior by their bonds to society specifically through attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief.⁷ In the university context, the weakening of these bonds, often caused by the very violence the institution fails to prevent, leaves victims isolated and vulnerable to prolonged trauma.⁸ Simultaneously, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory provides a framework for understanding how violence ripples through various layers of the student's environment, from the immediate "microsystem" of peer interactions to the "macrosystem" of cultural norms that prioritize seniority over safety.⁹

Key Statistics of Educational Violence in Indonesia (2025)	Data Point
Total Reported Cases of Violence (FSGI)	60 Cases ¹⁰
Students Potential for Bullying (National Assessment)	36.31% ¹¹
Students Reporting Sexual Violence Risk	34.51% ¹²

⁵ Muhammad Nasir et al., "Fenomena Gunung Es Kasus Kekerasan Di Kampus, Satgas PPKPT Di Mana?," New Indonesia, 2025.

⁶ Fifi Safreni et al., "Semantic Analysis on the Bullying Case in PPDS Undip: A Forensic Linguistic Study," *Jurnal Onoma: Pendidikan, Bahasa, Dan Sastra* 11, no. 4 (September 2025): 4079–4101, <https://doi.org/10.30605/onoma.v11i4.6885>.

⁷ Emily M. Homer, Benjamin W. Fisher, and Thomas J. Mowen, "Examining the Moderating Role of Social Bonds in the Relationship between School Victimization and Educational Attainment," *Victims & Offenders* 15, no. 5 (July 2020): 663–83, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15564886.2020.1771494>.

⁸ Ann Marie Popp and Anthony A. Peguero, "Social Bonds and the Role of School-Based Victimization," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 27, no. 17 (November 2012): 3366–88, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260512445386>.

⁹ Olivia Guy-Evans, "Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory," *Simply Psychology*, 2025.

¹⁰ Voi, "Cases Of Violence In Schools Soar, FSGI Records 60 Cases Throughout 2025."

¹¹ Cpiet, "36 Percent of Student Vulnerable to Bullying: National Assessment Reports," Inp.polri.go.id, 2023.

¹² Cabinet Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia, "Gov't Issues Regulation on Violence Prevention, Handling in Education Units," Cabinet Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia, 2023.

Reporting Rate for Bullying Victims	13.54% ¹³
Primary Type of Violence (Physical)	55.5% ¹⁴
Secondary Type of Violence (Verbal)	29.3% ¹⁵

Literature indexed in Scopus from 2022 to 2025 reveals a distinct research gap regarding bullying in the university setting. While school-based bullying is extensively documented, higher education is often overlooked due to the erroneous belief that bullying decreases with age.¹⁶ Recent Scopus-indexed studies from the UK and Spain suggest that university bullying is often more nuanced and covert than school bullying, frequently taking the form of "relational aggression," such as active exclusion from group projects, social ostracism, and the weaponization of professional status.¹⁷ Furthermore, power relations (PR) and the intersection of gender and disability are cited as critical but under-researched factors that facilitate sexual violence and harassment on campuses.¹⁸

This research distinguishes itself from previous studies by utilizing a narrative inquiry approach to capture the lived experiences of victims within the specific socio-political context of Indonesia's 2025 educational reforms. While traditional quantitative research focuses on prevalence rates, this study seeks to understand the "mechanisms of power" that normalize abuse within academic hierarchies. The novelty of this research lies in its synthesis of current Indonesian legal updates specifically the implementation of Permendikdisaintek No. 55 of 2025 with narrative data from survivors of specialized residency programs and orientation-related violence.¹⁹ The findings of this study reveal that social relationships in Indonesian higher education are frequently defined by a "predatory hierarchy" where institutional prestige is often used to mask systemic exploitation, leading to severe mental health crises and academic disengagement.

¹³ Hertinjung, "The Shadow of Bullying in Indonesia Education System."

¹⁴ Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, "Psikolog UMS Soroti Meningkatnya Kasus Perundungan: Lingkungan Pendidikan Dan Keluarga Belum Jadi Tempat Aman," Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, 2025.

¹⁵ Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta.

¹⁶ Emma D. Harrison, Julie A. Hulme, and Claire L. Fox, "A Thematic Analysis of Students' Perceptions and Experiences of Bullying in UK Higher Education," *Europe's Journal of Psychology* 18, no. 1 (February 2022): 53–69, <https://doi.org/10.5964/ejop.3669>.

¹⁷ Harrison, Hulme, and Fox.

¹⁸ Suardi, "Discussion of Power Relations, Disability Perspectives, Anti-Violence, and Human Rights to Prevent Sexual Violence Against Students," *Journal of Social Studies Education Research* 1 (2025): 217–42.

¹⁹ Wulandari, "Isu Kekerasan-Perundungan Di Pendidikan Tinggi Akan Dibahas Di KPPTI 2025."

2. Research Questions

Based on the background described above, the central focus of this research is organized around the following questions:

- a. How do hierarchical social relationships and the "culture of seniority" in Indonesian universities manifest as systemic violence and bullying against students?
- b. What are the core themes and lived experiences identified in the narratives of bullying victims, and how do these experiences reflect a breakdown of social bonds?
- c. To what extent does the current institutional framework, including the Satgas PPKPT (Violence Prevention and Handling Task Force), address the nuanced needs of victims in the 2024-2025 period?

3. Research Methods

This study adopts a qualitative research approach centered on the methodology of narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry is particularly suited for studying sensitive topics like bullying as it allows participants to reconstruct their experiences through storytelling, providing a temporal and social context that quantitative surveys cannot capture.¹⁵ By focusing on the "chronotopes" of the victims' lives, the research examines how past interactions, current academic settings, and future professional aspirations influence the experience of violence.²⁰

The data collection process involved multiple techniques to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. Primary data was gathered through semi-structured, in-depth interviews with victims of bullying from various Indonesian universities, including students from medical, social science, and technical programs.²¹ Additionally, the research utilized "archival narrative data," which included voice recordings, suicide notes, and official police statements from high-profile cases such as the UNDIP and Udayana incidents.²² Secondary data was obtained through a systematic review of Scopus-

²⁰ Liaqat Iqbal, Irfan Ullah, and Farooq Shah, "Labovian Model and Analysis of The Bully as Representation of the USA," *Global Regional Review* IV, no. II (June 2019): 78–84, [https://doi.org/10.31703/grr.2019\(IV-II\).09](https://doi.org/10.31703/grr.2019(IV-II).09).

²¹ Fifi Safreni et al., "Semantic Analysis on the Bullying Case in PPDS Undip: A Forensic Linguistic Study."

²² Nasir et al., "Fenomena Gunung Es Kasus Kekerasan Di Kampus, Satgas PPKPT Di Mana?"

indexed literature published between 2022 and 2025, using keywords such as "higher education bullying," "power relations," and "social control theory".²³

For data analysis, the study employed a thematic analysis technique combined with "transitivity and language appraisal".²⁴ Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring patterns such as "Weaponized Isolation," "Seniority-Based Intimidation," and "Institutional Betrayal".²⁵ The language appraisal technique allowed the researcher to detect semantic nuances in how victims described their perpetrators, uncovering hidden power dynamics embedded in academic discourse.²⁶ The research adhered to strict ethical protocols, including participant anonymity, informed consent, and the provision of professional psychological support for participants who experienced emotional distress during the interview process.²⁷

B. DISCUSSION

1. The Typology of Violence in the Academic Hierarchy

The findings of this study indicate that violence in Indonesian higher education is not a monolithic occurrence but a multi-dimensional phenomenon that adapts to the specific constraints of the academic environment. Unlike the physical aggression often seen in younger age groups, university-level bullying utilizes the structural dependencies inherent in higher education to inflict harm. Data from the 2025 FSGI report and Kemendikisaintek surveys highlight that while physical violence persists during high-stress periods like orientation, psychological and relational violence represent the most pervasive and hardest-to-track forms of abuse.²⁸

²³ Arvind Nain Et al., "Persistent Bullying in Higher Education Institutions: A Comprehensive Research Study," *Tuijin Jishu/Journal of Propulsion Technology* 44, no. 3 (September 2023): 385–413, <https://doi.org/10.52783/tjjpt.v44.i3.293>.

²⁴ Irma Irayanti et al., "A Narrative Inquiry of International Students' Experiences in Indonesia," *Journal of International Students* 15, no. 2 (February 2025): 87–107, <https://doi.org/10.32674/v6nmpj51>.

²⁵ Harrison, Hulme, and Fox, "A Thematic Analysis of Students' Perceptions and Experiences of Bullying in UK Higher Education."

²⁶ Irayanti et al., "A Narrative Inquiry of International Students' Experiences in Indonesia."

²⁷ Clare Bradford and Lara Hedberg, "Bullies, the Bullied and Bullying Narratives in Contemporary Fiction," in *Cruel Children in Popular Texts and Cultures* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 105–25, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-72275-7_6.

²⁸ Voi, "Cases Of Violence In Schools Soar, FSGI Records 60 Cases Throughout 2025."

Dimension of Violence	Frequency in HE	Typical Manifestations in Indonesia
Physical Violence	~55% of reported cases	Forced physical tasks during orientation (MPLS), beatings in residency programs, "punishment" for perceived disrespect. ²⁹
Verbal Aggression	~29% of reported cases	Public humiliation by faculty or seniors, derogatory comments regarding intelligence or social status, constant criticism disguised as "academic rigor". ³⁰
Psychological/Relational	~15% (under-reported)	Intentional exclusion from group projects, social isolation in labs, spreading rumors via WhatsApp groups, information manipulation. ³¹
Sexual Violence	~49% of all campus reports	Unwanted physical contact, verbal harassment, discriminatory gender-based comments, and extortion for academic favors. ³²

The narratives of victims reveal that "Seniority Culture" acts as the primary vehicle for these various forms of violence. In medical and vocational faculties, the senior-junior relationship is often described as a "caste system" where the senior holds absolute power over the junior's academic progression and mental well-being.³³ This dynamic is particularly evident in the 2024 UNDIP residency case, where the narrative of Dr. Aulia Risma Lestari highlighted how "systematic bullying" and "hidden extortion" were treated as traditional components of the training program.³⁴ Such relationships are not merely interpersonal; they are institutionalized practices that provide a veneer of legitimacy to abusive behaviors.

²⁹ Indonesia Youth Foundation, "The Bullying Epidemic in 2025."

³⁰ Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, "Psikolog UMS Soroti Meningkatnya Kasus Perundungan: Lingkungan Pendidikan Dan Keluarga Belum Jadi Tempat Aman."

³¹ Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta.

³² Anna Fatchiya et al., "Combating Sexual Violence in Higher Education: An Analysis of Typology, Governance, and Strategic Interventions in Indonesian Universities," *Multidisciplinary Science Journal* 8, no. 1 (July 2025): 2026137, <https://doi.org/10.31893/multiscience.2026137>.

³³ Fifi Safreni et al., "Semantic Analysis on the Bullying Case in PPDS Undip: A Forensic Linguistic Study."

³⁴ Fifi Safreni et al.

2. Social Control Theory: The Erosion of Prosocial Bonds

The psychological impact of bullying in higher education can be profoundly analyzed through the lens of Social Control Theory. Hirschi’s framework posits that social bonds Attachment, Commitment, Involvement, and Belief prevent deviance.³⁵ However, the narratives of victims in this study demonstrate that persistent bullying acts as a corrosive force that systematically dismantles these four bonds, leading to what researchers call "bond-weakening victimization".³⁶

Attachment refers to the emotional connection a student feels toward peers and mentors. In cases of "vertical bullying" (lecturer to student), the student's attachment to the university is severed as the mentor becomes the predator.³⁷ Narrative data from a university in Sukabumi (2025) showed that students are the most vulnerable group, accounting for 8% of direct victims, yet they often feel unable to form secure attachments with faculty who may be complicit in or indifferent to the bullying.³⁸ Commitment is the investment in academic goals. Victims report a "spiraling" effect where the stress of being bullied leads to lower GPAs and class absenteeism, which in turn reduces their commitment to finishing their degrees.³⁹

Hirschi’s Social Bond	Narrative Impact of Bullying	Resultant Behavior
Attachment	Loss of trust in faculty and "prosocial" peers.	Social isolation, withdrawal from group work. ⁴⁰
Commitment	Fear of campus leads to skipping classes.	Decreased academic performance, higher dropout risk. ⁴¹

³⁵ Homer, Fisher, and Mowen, "Examining the Moderating Role of Social Bonds in the Relationship between School Victimization and Educational Attainment."

³⁶ Popp and Peguero, "Social Bonds and the Role of School-Based Victimization."

³⁷ Onieqie Ayu Dhea Manto, Paul Joae Brett Nito, and Dewi Wulandari, "Bullying in Higher Education: Presdiposisi Bully-Victim Terhadap Kejadian Perilaku Bullying Pada Mahasiswa," *Dinamika Kesehatan: Jurnal Kebidanan Dan Keperawatan* 12, no. 2 (October 2021): 406–15, <https://doi.org/10.33859/dksm.v12i2.738>.

³⁸ Puspita Handayani, Rizki Hegia Sampurna, and Dine Meigawati, "Implementation of Policies for the Prevention and Handling of Sexual Violence at University XYZ Sukabumi," *Proceedings of The International Indonesia Conference on Interdisciplinary Studies (IICIS)* 1 (2025).

³⁹ Homer, Fisher, and Mowen, "Examining the Moderating Role of Social Bonds in the Relationship between School Victimization and Educational Attainment."

⁴⁰ Popp and Peguero, "Social Bonds and the Role of School-Based Victimization."

⁴¹ Homer, Fisher, and Mowen, "Examining the Moderating Role of Social Bonds in the Relationship between School Victimization and Educational Attainment."

Involvement	Withdrawal from campus organizations/extracurriculars.	Lack of social support network, increased depression. ⁴²
Belief	Loss of faith in institutional rules and meritocracy.	Cynicism toward campus authorities, reluctance to report. ⁴³

The breakdown of the **Belief** bond is perhaps the most critical for institutional health. When victims witness perpetrators receiving no meaningful sanctions or when victims themselves are sued for "defamation" after coming forward their belief in the university's governance collapses.⁴⁴ This creates an environment of "learned helplessness," where the victim accepts the abuse as an unchangeable part of the academic ecosystem.

3. Ecological Systems and the "Ripple Effect" of Violence

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory allows us to see how the bullying epidemic is sustained by factors far beyond individual behavior. The 2025 "bullying epidemic" in Indonesia is a product of interactions between multiple systems.⁴⁵

In the Microsystem level, the immediate settings of the classroom and student orientation (MPLS) serve as the primary sites of aggression. Narrative evidence from July 2025 in Blitar and Garut shows that orientation, which should help students adapt, instead becomes a "stage for abuse" where seniors use their physical proximity to beat and humiliate juniors.⁴⁶ At the Mesosystem level, the lack of communication between university administration and parents often leaves victims without a safety net. Only 39% of parents in some studies were found to play an open role in discussing topics of violence and sexuality with their children, leaving the students to navigate the trauma alone.⁴⁷

The Exosystem involves institutional policies such as Permendiktisaintek No. 55 of 2025. While the government has mandated the creation of Satgas PPKPT, the narratives of victims suggest these task forces often exist only on paper or lack the "structural

⁴² Homer, Fisher, and Mowen.

⁴³ Popp and Peguero, "Social Bonds and the Role of School-Based Victimization."

⁴⁴ DEMA UIN SAIZU Purwokerto, "Kampus Gagal Lindungi Mahasiswa: Kekerasan Seksual Terulang, Birokrat Bungkam," DEMA UIN SAIZU Purwokerto, 2025.

⁴⁵ Indonesia Youth Foundation, "The Bullying Epidemic in 2025."

⁴⁶ Indonesia Youth Foundation.

⁴⁷ Lutfi Agus Salim et al., "Factors Associated with Sexual Violence Prevention Behavior among Female Students in Indonesia," *The Open Public Health Journal* 18, no. 1 (November 2025), <https://doi.org/10.2174/0118749445409923251027185405>.

commitment" needed to be effective.⁴⁸ Finally, the Macrosystem of Indonesian culture specifically the glorification of "seniority" and the normalization of "mental toughening" through abuse provides the ideological justification for these behaviors.⁴⁹ This cultural lens makes it difficult for bystanders to intervene, as they often view the bullying as a "normal part of growing up".⁵⁰

4. Power Relations and Sexual Violence: The 2025 Crisis

Data from the 2021-2024 period highlights that sexual violence (SV) is the most prevalent form of reported violence in Indonesian higher education, accounting for 49.7% of all reports.⁵¹ The intersection of **Power Relations (PR)** and sexual aggression is a dominant theme in the Scopus literature, where patterns of "domination and subordination" are used to facilitate exploitation.⁵² Narrative studies of students at three public universities revealed that SV is fueled by entrenched patriarchal norms and "inconsistent enforcement of policies".⁵³

Most Prevalent SV Forms in HE (2024-2025)	Percentage of Cases (Approx.)	Identified Drivers
Verbal Harassment	~40%	Discriminatory comments, demeaning gender-based jokes. ⁵⁴
Unwanted Physical Contact	~35%	Groping, physical intimidation during lab work or supervision. ⁵⁵
Coerced/Hidden Extortion	~15%	Exchanging academic favors for sexual or financial tributes. ⁵⁶

⁴⁸ Wulandari, "Isu Kekerasan-Perundungan Di Pendidikan Tinggi Akan Dibahas Di KPPTI 2025."

⁴⁹ Indonesia Youth Foundation, "The Bullying Epidemic in 2025."

⁵⁰ Indonesia Youth Foundation.

⁵¹ Handayani, Sampurna, and Meigawati, "Implementation of Policies for the Prevention and Handling of Sexual Violence at University XYZ Sukabumi."

⁵² Iqbal, Ullah, and Shah, "Labovian Model and Analysis of The Bully as Representation of the USA."

⁵³ Fatchiya et al., "Combating Sexual Violence in Higher Education: An Analysis of Typology, Governance, and Strategic Interventions in Indonesian Universities."

⁵⁴ Fatchiya et al.

⁵⁵ Suardi, "Discussion of Power Relations, Disability Perspectives, Anti-Violence, and Human Rights to Prevent Sexual Violence Against Students."

⁵⁶ Fifi Safreni et al., "Semantic Analysis on the Bullying Case in PPDS Undip: A Forensic Linguistic Study."

Cyber Harassment	~10%	Leaking private photos, harassment via social media/DMs. ⁵⁷
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A significant finding in the narrative data is the "Weaponization of Reputation." Universities often hesitate to transparently handle SV or bullying cases because they fear damaging the institution's accreditation or public image.⁵⁸ This leads to "procedural approaches" that protect the status quo rather than the victim. For instance, in the case of a lecturer at UIN Saizu, even after an internal ethics commission was formed, the sanctions were not disclosed transparently, and the perpetrator was allowed to continue teaching while the victim faced counter-reports for defamation.⁵⁹ This illustrates the "fragility" of the current Satgas PPKS/PPKPT system when it encounters a high-status perpetrator.

5. Institutional Resilience and the Satgas PPKPT Implementation

The 2025 Indonesian Higher Education Summit (KPPTI) focused on "Transformational Leadership" as the key to building safer campuses.⁶⁰ The government's response to the bullying crisis has moved toward a "Campus Leadership Management Clinic" approach, where universities are assisted in strengthening their task forces.⁶¹ The effectiveness of these task forces is measured by their ability to provide "trauma-informed spaces" and "victim-centered support".⁶²

However, the transition from theory to practice remains fraught with challenges. Narrative data indicates that many students are still "uncertain about where to report" or choose to share their experiences on social media rather than formal channels because they do not trust the institution to be "independent and non-intervened".⁶³ A study of 398 respondents in 2025 concluded that the "Context of Implementation" is hindered by a weak organizational culture that prioritizes proceduralism over protection.⁶⁴ For the

⁵⁷ Luís Coutinho, José Alberto Lencastre, and Ana Maria Tomás, "Cyberbullying: A Comparative Analysis Between the Results of a Scoping Study and a Questionnaire Applied to Students," *Frontiers in Computer Science* 7 (September 2025), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomp.2025.1506046>.

⁵⁸ Fatchiya et al., "Combating Sexual Violence in Higher Education: An Analysis of Typology, Governance, and Strategic Interventions in Indonesian Universities."

⁵⁹ DEMA UIN SAIZU Purwokerto, "Kampus Gagal Lindungi Mahasiswa: Kekerasan Seksual Terulang, Birokrat Bungkam."

⁶⁰ STIKes Mitra Husada Medan, "Indonesian Higher Education Summit Conference (KPPTI) 2025," STIKes Mitra Husada Medan, 2025.

⁶¹ Wulandari, "Isu Kekerasan-Perundungan Di Pendidikan Tinggi Akan Dibahas Di KPPTI 2025."

⁶² Suardi, "Discussion of Power Relations, Disability Perspectives, Anti-Violence, and Human Rights to Prevent Sexual Violence Against Students."

⁶³ Wulandari, "Isu Kekerasan-Perundungan Di Pendidikan Tinggi Akan Dibahas Di KPPTI 2025."

⁶⁴ Handayani, Sampurna, and Meigawati, "Implementation of Policies for the Prevention and Handling of Sexual Violence at University XYZ Sukabumi."

Satgas PPKPT to be successful, it must move beyond being a "reporting channel" and become a proactive unit that engages in "survey-jemput-bola" (proactive identification) to find victims who are too traumatized to speak.⁶⁵

6. Narrative Synthesis: The Voice of the Survivor

The ultimate insight of this study comes from the voices of those who survived the system. Victims describe their experience not as a single event, but as a "prolonged psychological pressure" that leads to a "depression phase".⁶⁶ One narrative from a medical resident described the experience as being "buried alive in tradition," where the constant fear of social isolation and professional ruin forced them to endure months of unpaid labor and verbal abuse.⁷ This "relational violence" is often more damaging than physical harm because it attacks the victim's identity and sense of self-worth.⁶⁷

Narrative Theme	Description	Context/Source
Institutional Betrayal	The feeling that the university cares more about its logo than the student's life.	Found in reports of "birokrat bungkam" (silent bureaucrats). ⁶⁸
The "Caste" Shadow	The inescapable feeling of being at the bottom of a rigid, abusive hierarchy.	Dominant in medical residency and orientation narratives. ⁶⁹
Silent Resilience	The dangerous assumption that students should just "toughen up."	Perpetuated by cultural macrosystems and older faculty. ⁷⁰
Digital Ostracism	The modern reality of being bullied 24/7 through online platforms.	Highlighted as a growing concern in the 2025 "Cyberbullying epidemic". ⁷¹

The analysis of these narratives shows a strong correlation between the type of bullying experienced and the subsequent "normalcy perception." Victims of emotional and verbal aggression are more likely to view their experiences as "normal student

⁶⁵ Nasir et al., "Fenomena Gunung Es Kasus Kekerasan Di Kampus, Satgas PPKPT Di Mana?"

⁶⁶ Voi, "Cases Of Violence In Schools Soar, FSGI Records 60 Cases Throughout 2025."

⁶⁷ José Gómez-Galán, Cristina Lázaro-Pérez, and José Ángel Martínez-López, "Trajectories of Victimization and Bullying at University: Prevention for a Healthy and Sustainable Educational Environment," *Sustainability* 13, no. 6 (March 2021): 3426, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13063426>.

⁶⁸ DEMA UIN SAIZU Purwokerto, "Kampus Gagal Lindungi Mahasiswa: Kekerasan Seksual Terulang, Birokrat Bungkam."

⁶⁹ Indonesia Youth Foundation, "The Bullying Epidemic in 2025."

⁷⁰ Hertinjung, "The Shadow of Bullying in Indonesia Education System."

⁷¹ Coutinho, Lencastre, and Tomás, "Cyberbullying: A Comparative Analysis Between the Results of a Scoping Study and a Questionnaire Applied to Students."

behavior" even when it causes significant distress, a phenomenon that delays help-seeking behavior.⁷² This highlights the need for "Human Rights-based" education that teaches students to recognize the difference between "rigor" and "abuse".⁷³

C. CONCLUSIONS

Bullying and systemic violence in Indonesian higher education are deeply rooted in rigid hierarchical social relationships that weaponize seniority to normalize physical and psychological exploitation. The erosion of prosocial bonds through persistent victimization creates a cycle of academic disengagement and mental health crises that current institutional task forces are often inadequately equipped to break. While the 2025 regulatory reforms provide a necessary legal framework, true prevention requires a cultural shift that dismantles the "caste system" within academic disciplines and prioritizes transparent, victim-centered accountability over institutional reputation. Ultimately, the narratives of survivors indicate that the safety of the academic environment is not a privilege but a fundamental right that must be proactively defended by every level of university governance.

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