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Factors Underlying Aggressive Behavior Among Grade IX F Students at UPTD SMPN 16 Kota Kupang

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Abstract: *Aggressive behavior among students is a concern because it can disrupt relationships between students and the learning atmosphere. This study aims to describe the factors underlying aggressive behavior among Grade IX F students at UPTD SMPN 16 Kota Kupang. The study used a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews involving ten purposively selected informants: four Guidance and Counseling teachers, one homeroom teacher who also teaches a subject, and five students. Data were analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The results show that aggressive behavior appeared mostly in verbal forms, such as mocking, using harsh words, cursing, shouting, and snapping at peers. This behavior was related to peer interaction, the environment and conditions surrounding the students, limited parental attention and guidance, and jokes that escalated into conflict. These findings indicate that aggressive behavior needs to be understood within the students' social context, so guidance and counseling services and school–parent cooperation need to be strengthened.*

Keywords: *aggressive behavior; peer interaction; environmental factors*

Abstrak: *Perilaku agresif pada siswa menjadi perhatian karena dapat mengganggu hubungan antarsiswa dan suasana pembelajaran. Penelitian ini bertujuan mendeskripsikan faktor-faktor yang melatarbelakangi munculnya perilaku agresif siswa kelas IX F UPTD SMPN 16 Kota Kupang. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain deskriptif. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan melibatkan sepuluh informan yang dipilih secara purposive, terdiri atas empat guru Bimbingan dan Konseling (BK), satu wali kelas yang sekaligus berperan sebagai guru mata pelajaran, serta lima siswa. Analisis data dilakukan melalui reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perilaku agresif lebih dominan muncul dalam bentuk verbal, seperti mengejek, berkata kasar, menggunakan makian, berteriak, dan membentak teman. Perilaku tersebut berkaitan dengan interaksi teman sebaya, lingkungan dan keadaan di sekitar siswa, kurangnya perhatian dan pendampingan orang tua, serta candaan yang berkembang menjadi konflik. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa perilaku agresif perlu dipahami berdasarkan konteks pergaulan dan kondisi sosial siswa, sehingga layanan BK serta kerja sama sekolah dan orang tua perlu diperkuat.*

Kata kunci: *Perilaku agresif; interaksi teman sebaya; faktor lingkungan*

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Introduction

Aggressive behavior among adolescents is an issue that requires attention in educational settings because it can disrupt social relationships among students and create a less conducive learning environment. Adolescence is a developmental period characterized by increasingly intensive interactions with peers, as well as changes in the ability to regulate emotions and respond to various social situations. During this process, students may encounter differences of opinion, conflicts, environmental pressures, and difficulties in interpersonal relationships. When these situations are not addressed adaptively, students' responses may develop into aggressive behavior. Aggressive behavior may be manifested through physical actions, such as hitting or pushing, as well as verbal actions, including the use of offensive language, insults, teasing, shouting, threats, and other forms of communication that may hurt or demean others. Alhadi et al. (2019) classified aggressive behavior among junior high school students in Yogyakarta into physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger, and hostility, while the World Health Organization (WHO, 2026; https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/youth-violence) identifies bullying and physical fighting as forms of violence among young people aged 10–29 years.

Aggressive behavior among students does not arise without underlying factors. Various studies have shown that adolescent aggression is associated with conditions both within and outside the individual. The social environment, peer relationships, family circumstances, and patterns of parental supervision and support are among the aspects that have received attention in research on adolescent aggression. Purnama et al. (2024) demonstrated that peer interactions and school conditions are associated with aggressive behavior among adolescents, whereas secure attachment to parents is associated with lower levels of aggression. These findings indicate that aggressive behavior needs to be understood by considering the social environments in which adolescents carry out their daily activities.

Peers occupy an important position in adolescents' social lives because much of their interaction takes place within peer groups. Such relationships can provide positive support, but under certain circumstances, they may also become settings in which maladaptive behavioral patterns develop. Saputra et al. (2025) found that peer behavioral deviance was directly associated with aggression among Indonesian adolescents experiencing conduct problems. Repeated interactions allow students to be exposed to communication patterns, habits, and behaviors that develop within their friendship groups. This condition makes peer relationships an important context to consider when examining the factors underlying aggressive behavior among students.

Family circumstances are also an inseparable part of adolescent behavioral development. Parental attention, guidance, communication, and supervision can help students develop the ability to deal with social difficulties and understand the boundaries of acceptable behavior. Yang et al. (2024) found that parental monitoring was associated with fewer aggressive behavior problems among adolescents who exhibited high and increasing levels of aggression. Meanwhile, Sutomo et al. (2022) demonstrated that difficulties in family relationships were associated with psychosocial and behavioral problems among adolescents, whereas stronger family cohesion was associated with more positive psychosocial outcomes. These findings suggest that family circumstances constitute an important environment to consider when examining aggressive behavior among students.

In addition to family and peers, the school environment provides a setting in which students experience various forms of social interaction. Relationships with teachers and classmates, school rules, and learning situations may shape different experiences for individual students. An unsupportive environment may create conditions in which conflicts and maladaptive behaviors emerge, whereas an environment that provides supervision and support can help students develop more appropriate social behaviors. Purnama et al. (2024) associated school conditions with aggressive behavior among adolescents. Therefore, investigations into aggressive behavior need to consider the broader environments surrounding students' daily lives.

Aggressive behavior may also develop from interactions that are initially perceived as joking. Jokes directed at peers may escalate into conflict when the targeted individuals feel offended or reject the treatment they receive. Responses intended as self-defense or retaliation may subsequently prolong conflicts among students. This pattern indicates that aggressive behavior can emerge through a gradual and repeated process of social interaction. Accordingly, understanding the underlying factors of aggressive behavior requires an exploration of students' experiences and the social conditions accompanying its occurrence.

An initial understanding of this issue was obtained through a preliminary study conducted by interviewing a guidance and counseling (GC) teacher at UPTD SMPN 16 Kota Kupang on September 29, 2026. The GC teacher reported the occurrence of aggressive behavior among Grade IX F students that warranted attention. According to the information provided, the students' aggressive behavior was

associated with interactions among classmates and, in some situations, originated from joking that escalated into a problem when one party responded in a manner that the other party found unacceptable. The GC teacher also indicated that environmental conditions and circumstances surrounding the students played an important role in the emergence of aggressive behavior. In addition, insufficient parental attention or guidance was considered one of the conditions associated with this problem.

The preliminary study suggests that aggressive behavior among Grade IX F students should not be examined solely in terms of its observable manifestations but also in relation to the conditions underlying its occurrence. The GC teacher's account indicates a connection between students' behavior, their social environment, and family circumstances. However, this initial information does not yet provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors underlying aggressive behavior from the perspectives of students and other individuals who interact directly with them in the school environment. This limitation highlights the need for research that explores these factors in greater depth.

Previous studies have provided insights into the relationships between adolescent aggression and family, peer, and school environments. However, each educational setting has distinct social characteristics, meaning that the factors underlying aggressive behavior in one group of students may not follow the same pattern in another. Further research is therefore needed to specifically explore the factors underlying aggressive behavior among Grade IX F students at UPTD SMPN 16 Kota Kupang, drawing on the experiences and perspectives of various individuals within the students' environment. Such an investigation is important for developing a more context-specific understanding of the conditions that contribute to the emergence of aggressive behavior.

Understanding the factors underlying aggressive behavior is important for the implementation of guidance and counseling (GC) services. Information obtained through an exploration of these factors can help GC teachers understand students' difficulties more comprehensively and determine forms of support that correspond to their needs. This understanding can also serve as a basis for schools and families to develop intervention strategies that address not only observable behaviors but also the accompanying social environments and family circumstances.

Based on this discussion, this study aims to describe the factors underlying aggressive behavior among Grade IX F students at UPTD SMPN 16 Kota Kupang. The study is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the conditions that contribute to the emergence of aggressive behavior, allowing its findings to inform the development of guidance and counseling services that are responsive to students' needs.

Method

Research Design and Setting

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to describe the factors underlying aggressive behavior among Grade IX F students at UPTD SMPN 16 Kota Kupang. The research was conducted from September to October 2026 at UPTD SMPN 16 Kota Kupang, Indonesia.

Participants, Sample, or Data Sources

The study involved 10 informants selected through purposive sampling, comprising four guidance and counseling (GC) teachers, one homeroom teacher who also taught a subject, and five Grade IX F students. The informants were selected because they had direct interactions with Grade IX F students within the school environment and were therefore considered capable of providing relevant information regarding the factors underlying aggressive behavior. To maintain confidentiality, the informants' identities were withheld, and they were referred to according to their respective groups: GC teachers, the homeroom teacher and subject teacher, and students.

Instruments and Measures

Data were collected using semi-structured interviews guided by an interview protocol developed in accordance with the research focus. The interview protocol covered the forms of aggressive behavior, the conditions underlying its occurrence, interactions among students, the surrounding environment, and parental attention and guidance. These aspects served as the main topics for exploring the factors underlying aggressive behavior among Grade IX F students. The qualitative data were examined by considering the consistency and relevance of the information provided by the different informant groups.

Procedure and Research Ethics

Data collection was carried out through interviews with the selected informants. An interview with a GC teacher was conducted on September 29, 2026, and also served as the basis for the preliminary study. The interviews explored the forms of aggressive behavior observed among Grade IX F students and the social and family conditions associated with its occurrence. Confidentiality was maintained by withholding informants' identities and referring to them according to their respective groups. Information regarding formal ethical approval and informed consent procedures was not specified in the available research description.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the three stages proposed by Miles et al. (2014);data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data condensation involved selecting, focusing on, and organizing relevant information from the interview findings. Data display involved presenting the information systematically to identify patterns related to the factors underlying aggressive behavior. Conclusion drawing and verification involved interpreting the findings and examining their consistency with the collected data. Data trustworthiness was assessed through source triangulation by comparing information obtained from GC teachers, the homeroom teacher and subject teacher, and students. This comparison was intended to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the factors underlying aggressive behavior among Grade IX F students at UPTD SMPN 16 Kota Kupang.

Results and Discussion

Results

The analysis of interviews with 10 informants yielded findings regarding the forms of aggressive behavior, four underlying conditions, and an overview of how such behavior is addressed at school. A summary of the findings is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Research Findings

Findings	Summary	Informant Sources
Forms of aggressive behavior	Primarily verbal, including teasing, offensive language, swearing, shouting, and yelling, which were classified as bullying; physical violence was very limited. According to students, these behaviors occurred almost every day.	Guidance and counseling (GC) teachers, homeroom teacher and subject teacher, students
Peer interactions	Students felt annoyed when they bothered one another, which led to the use of offensive language, swearing, and teasing.	Students
Students' environment and surrounding circumstances	Identified as a contributing factor by all three informant groups and considered the most dominant factor by GC teachers. Aggressive behavior was more evident when teachers were absent or during break times, while shouting occurred during lessons that students disliked.	Guidance and counseling (GC) teachers, homeroom teacher and subject teacher, students
Lack of parental attention and guidance	Insufficient attention and guidance at home, along with limited cooperation between parents and GC teachers.	Guidance and counseling (GC) teachers, homeroom teacher and subject teacher
Joking that escalates into conflict	Conflicts began with joking and became serious when a retaliatory response was not accepted by the other party.	Guidance and counseling (GC) teachers, students

Informant sources are organized according to informant groups.

Forms of Aggressive Behavior Among Students

Aggressive behavior among students occurred primarily in verbal forms, such as teasing, using offensive language, swearing, shouting, and yelling at peers. The guidance and counseling (GC) teachers, as well as the homeroom teacher and subject teacher, classified these demeaning verbal expressions as bullying, whereas physical violence was reported to be very limited. The GC teachers stated that this assessment represented the views of all GC teachers at the school. According to the students, such behavior occurred almost every day, both inside and outside the classroom, and students frequently shouted at or mocked their peers in front of others. In the classroom, the homeroom teacher and subject teacher reported that students sometimes shouted, particularly during certain lessons they disliked, especially Natural Sciences and Physical Education, Sports, and Health (PJOK).

Peer Interactions

The students explained that aggressive behavior generally arose because they felt annoyed with peers who frequently bothered one another. Within these social interactions, students often used

offensive language, swore at one another, and engaged in teasing.

Students' Environment and Surrounding Circumstances

All three informant groups identified the students' environment and surrounding circumstances as contributing factors to aggressive behavior. The GC teachers emphasized that this was the most dominant factor, while the homeroom teacher and subject teacher mentioned it alongside insufficient parental guidance at home. The students also attributed the behavior to their environment and surrounding circumstances. However, the informants did not elaborate further on what these environmental conditions specifically involved. Regarding the school situation, the homeroom teacher and subject teacher reported that aggressive behavior was more apparent when teachers were absent or during break times. They also considered students' shouting during lessons they disliked to indicate an unwillingness to accept the way teachers conducted their lessons.

Lack of Parental Attention and Guidance

The homeroom teacher and subject teacher identified insufficient parental guidance at home as one of the contributing factors, while the GC teachers stated that a lack of parental attention was also associated with the problem. Cooperation between parents and GC teachers remained limited, particularly in addressing this issue. When the school summoned the parents of students involved in behavioral problems, collaboration with the GC teachers was ineffective. According to the GC teachers, cooperation could only be established with some subject teachers, and no such collaboration had yet been established with the GC teachers.

Joking That Escalates into Conflict

The GC teachers and students provided consistent accounts that aggressive behavior began with joking among peers and subsequently escalated into serious conflict when a retaliatory response was not accepted by the other party.

School-Based Intervention

Subject teachers who observed aggressive behavior reported the incidents directly to the homeroom teacher. The homeroom teacher then called in the students involved and provided initial guidance before reporting the cases to the GC teachers. The homeroom teacher consistently collaborated with the GC teachers, who took action in response to the reported incidents.

The GC teachers first investigated the circumstances of each case to determine the category of aggressive behavior involved. For verbal aggression, they conducted individual counseling to identify the underlying causes and determine an appropriate counseling technique. For physical aggression, they summoned both parties and provided group counseling. If unexpected incidents occurred, such as bleeding, wounds, or bruises, the GC teachers involved the students' parents.

During individual counseling, the GC teachers encountered difficulties because some students were less cooperative. Students frequently appeared distracted and had difficulty concentrating on the questions, requiring the GC teachers to spend considerable time waiting for them to respond.

Discussion

The findings indicate that aggressive behavior among Grade IX F students at UPTD SMPN 16 Kota Kupang was manifested predominantly through verbal acts. This finding demonstrates that aggression is not limited to physical actions but may also occur through words that hurt or demean others. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2026) explains that youth violence is associated with various risk factors at the individual level, within close relationships such as family and peer groups, and at the community and societal levels. Accordingly, the verbal aggressive behavior identified in this study needs to be understood in relation to the social situations accompanying students' interactions rather than solely on the basis of observable behavioral manifestations.

Peer interactions constituted one of the conditions associated with the emergence of aggressive behavior among students. Such behavior frequently occurred when students bothered one another, made insulting remarks, or responded in ways that provoked annoyance. This finding is consistent with Saputra et al. (2025), who found that peer behavioral deviance was directly associated with aggression among Indonesian adolescents experiencing conduct problems, and with Purnama et al. (2024), who linked peer interactions to aggressive behavior among adolescents. The WHO (2026) also identifies association with deviant peers as a risk factor for youth violence. In the context of this study, peer interactions provided a setting in which aggressive behavior emerged and developed. Students' ability to understand their peers' feelings and regulate their responses may play a role in this process; however, these aspects were not measured in the present study and require further investigation.

The students' environment and surrounding circumstances were also important aspects in understanding the aggressive behavior identified in this study. Behaviors such as shouting and teasing were more noticeable when teachers were absent from the classroom or when students were on break, suggesting that school supervision conditions were associated with the occurrence of aggressive behavior. This finding is consistent with Purnama et

al. (2024), who associated school conditions with aggressive behavior among adolescents. The homeroom teacher and subject teacher also interpreted students' shouting during lessons they disliked as a form of resistance to the way teachers conducted their lessons. This interpretation was based on the informants' accounts and had not been examined from the students' perspectives. Therefore, student–teacher relationships and classroom learning conditions warrant further investigation. The WHO (2026) also emphasizes the importance of social skills development programs and preventive approaches involving the school environment. Accordingly, these findings highlight the need to address peer dynamics and school supervision without assuming that reduced teacher presence is the sole cause of aggressive behavior.

Another identified factor was the lack of parental attention and guidance. Cooperation between parents and guidance and counseling (GC) teachers in addressing students' problems remained limited, even when parents were summoned by the school. This situation indicates the need to strengthen family–school partnerships in supporting students' behavioral development. This finding is consistent with Purnama et al. (2024), who associated secure parental attachment with lower levels of aggression, and with Sutomo et al (2022), who examined the role of family cohesion. Yang et al. (2024) also found that parental monitoring was associated with fewer aggressive behavior problems among certain groups of adolescents exhibiting high and increasing levels of aggression. The relationships identified in these studies do not mean that limited family guidance directly causes aggression in every student. In the present study, insufficient parental guidance is understood as one of the conditions associated with aggressive behavior, based on the informants' accounts.

Joking among peers that escalates into conflict is more appropriately understood as a trigger arising within peer interactions. Behavior initially perceived as a form of friendliness can become problematic when the remarks made offend another person. This situation suggests that students may not share the same understanding of the boundaries of acceptable joking. In this regard, skills in recognizing emotions, understanding peers' perspectives, regulating responses, and resolving disagreements are relevant areas for development. The WHO (2026) also identifies the development of anger management, conflict resolution, and social problem-solving skills as components of efforts to prevent youth violence.

In the context of guidance and counseling (GC) services, these findings indicate that interventions focusing solely on observable behavior may be insufficient. Student support needs to take into account peer dynamics, school supervision conditions, and family involvement. The GC teachers had implemented individual counseling for verbal aggression and group counseling for physical aggression. However, they encountered difficulties involving students' limited cooperation and insufficient parental collaboration. Therefore, greater involvement of families and peers in intervention efforts needs to be encouraged. This study has several limitations, including its focus on a single class, a limited number of informants, and the use of a qualitative approach. Consequently, the findings are not intended to be generalized to other groups of students. Furthermore, the informants did not elaborate on the specific environmental conditions they referred to, indicating that this factor requires further exploration.

Conclusion

The findings indicate that aggressive behavior among Grade IX F students at UPTD SMPN 16 Kota Kupang was predominantly verbal, including teasing, using offensive language, swearing, shouting, and yelling at peers, whereas physical violence was minimal. The behavior was associated with peer interactions, students' surrounding environment and circumstances, insufficient parental attention and guidance, and joking that escalated into conflict. The students' environment and surrounding circumstances were the factors most strongly emphasized by the informants, highlighting the importance of understanding aggressive behavior within the social contexts of students' daily interactions.

These findings suggest that guidance and counseling (GC) teachers should develop services that help students regulate their emotions, establish healthy interpersonal communication, and resolve conflicts appropriately, supported by stronger collaboration between schools and parents. Future research should involve more classes or schools and examine the roles of empathy and emotional regulation in greater depth to provide a broader understanding of the factors underlying aggressive behavior among students.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Author Contributions (Optional)

The author was responsible for conceptualization, methodology, investigation, data curation, formal analysis, and writing the original draft. The author also conducted the review and editing of the manuscript and approved the final version for publication.

Generative AI Disclosure

Generative AI tools were used to assist with language translation and refinement during manuscript preparation. The author remains fully responsible for the accuracy, originality, integrity, and final content of the article.

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