

**CHAPTER 2**

**GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE MEANING OF RACIAL-BASED  
BULLYING MESSAGES OF BIRACIAL ADOLESCENT**

**1.1 The Phenomenon of Racial-Based Bullying**

Racial-based bullying refers to any form of hostile or aggressive behaviour, harassment, or intimidation aimed at an individual or group due to their race, ethnicity, or skin colour. This form of bullying encompasses verbal, physical, and psychological abuse, often targeting physical traits like skin tone, hair texture, or facial features, as well as cultural traditions associated with a particular racial group. This type of bullying also include racial slurs, exclusion, stereotyping, and mocking of cultural differences as it is typically driven by power imbalances, where the bully seeks to assert dominance or degrade the victim based on a perceived sense of racial inferiority. Such bullying inflicts significant emotional and psychological harm on victims, reinforcing stereotypes and perpetuating societal discrimination. Victims often experience a decline in self-esteem, identity struggles, social alienation, and a range of mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and trauma.

Racial-based bullying involves several critical components. The first component of racial-based bullying is verbal harassment where individuals use offensive language, such as racial slurs or derogatory jokes that target someone's ethnicity or physical traits, including skin colour or facial features. The second component is physical aggression, which refers to violent actions

driven by racial biases. The third component is social exclusion which refers to the action someone deliberately do to isolate or exclude someone from groups or activities because of their racial background. The last component entails cyberbullying where the phenomenon of aggression in a form of online abuse or racist remarks aimed at a particular individual or group through digital platforms.

Racial-based bullying is a significant global problem, manifesting in various forms such as physical violence, verbal insults, social exclusion, and online harassment, all targeting individuals due to their race or ethnicity. This form of bullying perpetuates racial stereotypes and has long-lasting psychological and emotional consequences, including heightened anxiety, depression, and identity confusion. Cases have been recorded globally regarding racial-based bullying, particularly affecting students in educational settings. In the United States, Black, Asian, and Latin students are disproportionately affected, experiencing higher rates of absenteeism, anxiety, and poor academic performance. In the UK, racial bullying is a prominent issue in schools, particularly targeting students from minority ethnic backgrounds. Similar patterns are observed in Australia, where Indigenous and immigrant students face racial harassment, and in South Africa, where the lingering effects of apartheid contribute to the isolation and discrimination of students of colour.

On the other hand, racial-based bullying in Indonesia is a complex issue influenced by the country's cultural, social, and historical landscape. Indonesia's rich diversity of ethnicities, languages, and religions creates a context where racial and ethnic discrimination often takes the form of bullying.

This bullying is frequently tied to stereotypes and prejudices against specific groups. The example of racial-based bullying can be seen from the Chinese-Indonesia community, which has historically faced discrimination. Similarly, individuals from Papua endure racial slurs and derogatory comments, largely based on their physical appearance, such as skin tone and facial features. These social markers of race and ethnicity become the basis for harassment, leading victims to internalize these negative stereotype, which can significantly harm their self-esteem and emotional well-being.

On a larger scale, bullying in Indonesia is reflective of deeper power imbalances and societal structures. Tackling racial-based bullying in Indonesia requires both targeted school interventions and broader efforts to dismantle racial biases within society. Implementing educational initiatives that promote inclusivity and respect for diversity, coupled with fostering open conversations in schools and communities, are essential in reducing racial-based bullying and building a more tolerant and inclusive social environment.

## **1.2 Biracial Adolescent as Victim of Racial-Based Bullying**

Biracial adolescents frequently encounter judgment from both ethnic groups that contribute to their identity. Often, they are viewed as "not fully" belonging to either group, or as outsiders by both. This social pressure makes them susceptible to harassment, both verbal and physical, which targets their racial traits like skin colour, hair texture, or facial features. Due to their biracial identity, these individuals may face stereotypical or negative remarks from multiple sides. For example, while being insulted based on one racial identity,

they may simultaneously be treated differently by another, leading to more intricate experiences than those of monoracial bullying victims.

The process of interpreting racial-based bullying messages for biracial adolescents is complex. Their identity and social dynamics force them to navigate conflicting perceptions about their appearance or cultural background. Racial bullying can manifest through slurs about their physical features or discriminatory comments targeting their culture. For biracial individuals, such bullying attacks not just their character, but their racial identity. They often struggle with acceptance from both racial communities they are connected to, leading to feelings of alienation and confusion about their identity.

The emotional and psychological toll of racial bullying creates challenges for biracial youth. It can lead to a negative self-concept, especially when the bullying focuses on their distinct physical characteristics. Furthermore, their social relationships often suffer, as trust issues and fears of repeated discrimination make them wary of others. This can result in increased social withdrawal and insecurity in interacting with peers or authority figures.

Effective communication with key figures, such as friends, family, and educators, is crucial for biracial youth to process these bullying experiences. Through dialogue, they can release emotional tension, gain social support, and reinterpret the negative messages they receive. Supportive communication also helps them challenge harmful stereotypes and build emotional resilience, fostering a sense of validation and understanding from those familiar with their struggles.

Understanding how biracial adolescents interpret racial-based bullying provides insight into their psychological, emotional, and social challenges. It underscores the importance of creating inclusive environments that celebrate racial and identity diversity. Schools, families, and communities must work to establish safe, supportive spaces where biracial youth can confront discrimination. This understanding also lays the groundwork for more targeted interventions in anti-bullying programs and encourages open discussions about the significance of diversity and acceptance.