

The role of teachers in handling and preventing bullying at the elementary school level

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Abstract

Background - Bullying in elementary schools is an issue that is gaining increasing attention worldwide, given its damaging effects on children's physical, mental and emotional development. Bullying can appear in various forms, such as physical violence, verbal teasing, and even social exclusion, which can disrupt the learning process and create an unsafe atmosphere for children. Children at elementary school age who are forming their identity and social skills are very easy to become targets for bullying, which can have negative long-term impacts. Teachers have a very crucial role in preventing and handling bullying cases in elementary schools. As an authority figure and often the starting point for students, teachers have the opportunity to recognize the symptoms of bullying, provide assistance to victims, and implement strict disciplinary policies against perpetrators. Apart from that, educators function in shaping students' character by teaching empathy, mutual respect, and the importance of diversity in social interactions in the school environment. Even though the role of teachers is very important, dealing with bullying in elementary schools is not easy. Teachers often face difficulties in recognizing and dealing with bullying, especially when it occurs outside their direct supervision. Therefore, a comprehensive strategy is needed, including special training for teachers, strengthening school regulations, as well as collaboration with parents and communities, to create a safe and supportive atmosphere for children's growth. Bullying behavior itself can actually be prevented by directing or coaching from a teacher, because the teacher's function is not only to teach students but also to develop the morals and behavior of students. Teachers have an inseparable role and function, including the ability to educate, guide, teach, and train. These four abilities are integrative abilities, which cannot be separated from each other (Firmansyah, 2021). Proses Pendidikan di sekolah diajarkan oleh guru merupakan salah satu faktor penentu keberhasilan setiap Upaya Pendidikan. Sebagai pengajar dan pendidik, guru harus memiliki kompetensi atau kemampuan yang sesuai dalam pembelajaran untuk meningkatkan kualitas pembelajaran. Guru sangat berperan dalam membantu perkembangan peserta didik untuk dapat mewujudkan tujuan hidupnya secara optimal (Fadil, 2023). Therefore, the role of teachers in the school environment is needed in a comprehensive manner to explain further about right and wrong and as a preventive measure to prevent bullying. Cooperation is needed from various parties, including teachers as implementers of character education for students, so that this character education produces results. Character education aims to help students understand themselves so that they can provide benefits to society. One important aspect of character education is familiarizing students with the concept of good and bad in various things in everyday life. Character education carries responsibility for shaping students' personalities. With character education, students will not only have broad knowledge, but will also have emotional intelligence. This will help them deal with problems wisely without causing offense to each other (Andryawan, 2023)

Purpose - This research aims to analyze the role of teachers in preventing and handling bullying cases in elementary schools. Using qualitative case study research methods, this research was conducted in 12 child-friendly schools in Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Bekasi and Bandung. Data collection techniques include interviews, observation and documentation. The research results show that teachers play an important role through preventive policies such as providing positive role models, guidance regarding bullying, creating a safe classroom environment, and conducting behavioral counseling. Apart from that, bullying is handled by implementing SOPs, analyzing the causes of behavior, and coordinating with parents. This strategy aims to shape student character, increase emotional intelligence, and create a school culture that is inclusive and free of bullying.

methodology - The method used in this research is qualitative research with a case study type of research. Case study research is a type of research that focuses on deepening or analyzing one or several cases that occur in a certain context, in this case qualitative case study research combines an in-depth qualitative approach with case studies that examine phenomena holistically and contextually (Sugiyono, 2017) . The research was carried out in 12 child-friendly schools in five areas, namely Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Bekasi and Bandung. Elementary School (SD) level is 6 (six) schools, Junior High School (SMP) level is 4 (four) schools. There are 2 (two) schools at the Senior High School (SMA) level. Data collection techniques use interview, observation and documentation techniques. The sources in this research are all parties who are directly related to bullying cases, including school principals, teachers, education staff and students. The data analysis technique uses the Miles and Huberman model (1994). The analysis process is carried out through three main stages, namely: (1) data reduction, where the data collected is selected, summarized, and simplified to obtain relevant data; (2) presenting data (data display), by arranging data in the form of tables, diagrams or matrices to facilitate interpretation and identification of patterns; and (3) conclusion drawing and verification, which involves the process of interpreting findings to answer research questions. and also use the NVivo application. The validity of the data uses source triangulation and engineering triangulation techniques.

Findings - Based on research that has been carried out, bullying in elementary schools is a serious issue that can affect children's social and emotional growth. The role of teachers as educators and supervisors is very important in handling and preventing bullying. The results of the research obtained data, namely first regarding teacher policies and activities in creating child-friendly schools so that students avoid bullying. Second, the actions of schools and teachers when bullying occurs at school. These three factors cause bullying at school. The teacher's activities to create a school that is child-friendly and free from bullying include being good role models, providing understanding and direction regarding bullying, creating a safe and comfortable classroom atmosphere, carrying out behavior counseling. Exemplary means that teachers must demonstrate attitudes, behavior and communication that are full of empathy, respect and inclusion towards all students. This role model is very important because the teacher acts as a facilitator by being a role model, and the teacher's attitude will influence the way students interact with each other (Nurlela, N., Suryana, D., & Nugraha, F., 2024; Aditya, M. F. (2023). In this way, teachers indirectly educate and teach positive things so that they can act as a trigger to prevent bullying. Furthermore, another finding is that teachers provide understanding and direction regarding bullying to students so that children can recognize forms of bullying, understand the negative impacts, and are moved to support each other and report if bullying occurs in the school environment (Adiyono, A., Irvan, I., & Rusanti, R., 2022); Perdana, Y.D., et al 2023). This is a concrete manifestation of the teacher's role as a facilitator, not only teaching lessons, but the teacher plays an indirect role as a preventer of bullying (Natalia Bete, M., & Arifin, A. (2023). The next finding is creating a safe and comfortable classroom atmosphere, this step is important for teachers in supporting an effective learning process and students' psychological development. This atmosphere can be achieved by maintaining positive discipline, respecting each student, and creating an environment that is free from physical or emotional threats. Teachers need to pay attention to physical comfort (such as spatial arrangement) as well as emotional comfort (such as building a relationship of mutual respect between students and teachers). These steps can be carried out with effective classroom management by the teacher. As stated by Victorynie (2017), effective classroom management can be a solution in overcoming bullying. Finally, teachers carry out behavior counseling, simply put, teachers can become counselors of student behavior so that students will be given better attention so that students who have problematic behavior can learn to change their behavior to be in accordance with applicable rules and norms (Laia, B., et al., 2021) Based on research that has been carried out, school and teacher actions when bullying or bullying occurs at school include stopping, breaking up and following up according to the SOP for handling bullying, analyzing the reasons why the perpetrator is bullying, contacting the student's parents, reporting to officers entrusted by the school regarding matters bullying. Stopping, breaking up and following up according to the SOPs that apply at school are the first steps taken by schools and teachers in handling bullying cases. When bullying occurs, teachers and school officials must immediately stop the bullying to prevent further physical and psychological harm to the victim. After that, the teacher and the school managed to separate the perpetrator and victim and deal with them further so that there would be no further conflict. This action is direct handling when bullying occurs (Harahap, R. S., & Toni 2023). Teachers and school officials then take action in accordance with the applicable SOP. One example of an SOP for handling bullying is divided into five stages. The first stage is identification of bullying, the second stage is reporting, the third is investigation, the fourth is case handling, the fifth is follow-up (Ertnawati, Y., Nurjamilah, A.S., & Rachman, I.F., 2023). Analyzing the reasons why perpetrators carry out bullying is the next step in identifying cases of bullying that occur. Analysis of bullying can be carried out in various ways, including using in-depth interviews with victims, perpetrators and witnesses. This can search for information in depth, openly and freely (Moleong, 2017). Apart from that, it can look at background and psychological conditions. So that it can be studied and then become a recommendation for schools to prevent bullying in the future. Contacting the parents of students, both perpetrators and victims, is a step for the school to provide information about what happened and how the school is handling it. In line with research (Fathurahman, R. R., 2024) that teachers' actions in dealing with bullying. This step is expected to be a communication link between schools and parents. So that parents can play a role in supporting and providing guidance to victims and perpetrators because the role of parents in their children's education is very large, starting from the role of parenting patterns, approaches to children, and especially communication both with children and with schools (Sigalingging, O. P., & Gultom, M. 2023). In this way, both parties, both victims and perpetrators, are expected to care for and respect each other. The next action is to report the bullying incident to the school. The party handling the bullying case must report the incident from the handling to the party, officer or special team entrusted by the school to handle bullying cases. This special officer or team will continue and monitor the progress of the case, ensure follow-up is in accordance with the SOP or applicable regulations, and evaluate to prevent further cases in the future. Therefore, teachers must act as effective communicators in relation to handling bullying (Nasution, U. A. (2024). In addition, a teacher ideally has a sense of responsibility, discipline, full of love, morals, authority, and can understand the condition of students (Prihartini et al., 2019).

Originality - This research has its own uniqueness and value because it provides an empirical contribution regarding the role of teachers in preventing and handling bullying cases in elementary schools through a case study approach in child-friendly schools. By focusing on five densely populated areas (Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Bekasi, and Bandung), this research shows how school policies and teachers' teaching practices actually create safe and inclusive learning environments. The advantage of this research is the use of Miles and Huberman's qualitative data analysis techniques supported by the NVivo application, enabling in-depth and systematic data analysis. Apart from that, this research not only discusses the role of teachers as educators but also as facilitators of character formation, behavior counselors, and communicators with parents and special treatment teams at schools. These findings offer practical solutions in the form of comprehensive strategies that can be implemented to increase students' emotional intelligence and build a school culture that respects diversity. This research enriches the literature on handling bullying by providing a real picture of the implementation of SOPs for handling bullying and how collaboration between teachers, schools and parents can reduce bullying incidents. Thus, this research becomes an important reference for educators, policy makers and researchers in efforts to create safe and child-friendly schools.

Keywords: teachers, elementary schools, handling bullying,
