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THE ROLE OF TEACHERS IN PREVENTING BULLYING IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: ACHIEVING QUALITY EDUCATION IN ALIGNMENT WITH SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 4

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Abstract

Bullying in elementary schools is a widespread issue that significantly impacts students' mental health, social development, and academic performance. This study examines the crucial role of teachers in preventing bullying and explores its implications for achieving quality education in line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 4. Using a qualitative descriptive methodology, data were collected through questionnaires administered to students, supported by secondary data analysis from relevant literature and legal frameworks. The findings indicate that students' understanding of bullying makes them vulnerable to this practice. Proactive involvement of teachers in creating a safe and inclusive learning



environment is essential to reducing incidents of bullying. Furthermore, this study highlights the importance of legal regulations, such as the Child Protection Law, in providing a framework for teachers to effectively fulfill their responsibilities. In this community service activity, students from SD 12 Lubuk Garam, Siak Kecil, were provided with knowledge about bullying and its effects on mental health. The research results show that teachers must transform from traditional educators into active agents of social change, promoting a culture of respect and safety within schools. This study encourages the enhancement of legal literacy among educators and the implementation of ongoing professional development programs focused on bullying prevention strategies. By equipping teachers with the necessary tools and knowledge, schools can create a more supportive atmosphere conducive to quality education and the overall well-being of students. **Keywords:** *Bullying, Elementary School, Role of The Teachers, Sustainable Development Goal*

A. Introduction

Bullying, particularly in educational settings, has become a significant concern for parents worldwide, especially as incidents of this nature are increasingly prevalent at the elementary school level. Children in elementary school should be in a joyful phase of learning with peers, rather than engaging in violence against their classmates. This issue has impacted millions of children globally, affecting their mental health, academic performance, and overall well-being significantly.

Understanding and defining bullying within schools and communities greatly influences how they respond to this issue

(Safe and Supportive School Communities Working Group, 2015). Although a universally accepted definition of bullying is lacking, many researchers agree that bullying possesses several characteristics, including its repetitive nature, intent to cause suffering or harm, and an imbalance of power dynamics (Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs, 2011; Olweus, 1993; Smith, 2005). According to the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, bullying refers to actions that cause harm, whether verbally, physically, or socially, in both real-life environments and cyberspace. Such actions can lead to individuals feeling



uncomfortable, hurt, and stressed and can be perpetrated by individuals or groups (Kemdikbudristek, 2021).

Bullying can involve individuals or groups abusing their power over one or more persons. Acts of bullying may occur directly or online and can be overt or covert. All forms of bullying, regardless of the motives behind them, can have long-term effects on everyone involved, including witnesses. A single incident or conflict between individuals of equal standing, whether in-person or online, is not classified as bullying, but it still requires appropriate handling and resolution (Australian Government Department of Education and Training, 2016).

According to UNICEF, three main characteristics can be used to identify bullying: intent, repetition, and power dynamics. Bullying perpetrators intend to cause harm, whether through physical actions

or hurtful words, and they do so repeatedly.

Overall, bullying constitutes a pattern of recurring behavior rather than isolated incidents. Children who bully often come from higher social standings or possess greater power, such as being older, stronger, or more popular.

A report by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) indicates that approximately 20% of students aged 12 to 18 reported experiencing bullying at school during the 2017-2018 academic year (NCES, 2024). A recent study in England estimates that around 1,544,000 children aged 10 to 15 (34.9%) experienced bullying behaviors directly, while 847,000 children (19.1%) experienced online bullying in the past year (Office for National Statistics, 2023). Other research suggests that between 10% and 30% of children and adolescents are involved in bullying, although prevalence rates significantly vary depending on the methods



used to measure bullying (Nansel et al., 2001; Solberg & Olweus, 2003; Cook et al., 2010). The rise in bullying incidents is especially concerning, indicating that this issue can persist continuously and adversely affect children's mental health. Victims of bullying often experience anxiety, depression, and long-term consequences such as low self-esteem and difficulties in forming social relationships (Holt, 2021).

The situation in Indonesia reflects a similar trend. Reports indicate that between January and August 2023, there were 2,355 reported cases of violations of child protection, with 837 incidents occurring in educational settings. Among these, there were 87 cases related to bullying or harassment, 27 cases linked to poor educational policies, 236 cases of physical and/or psychological violence, and 487 alarming cases of sexual violence (Sekolah Relawan, 2024). These findings underscore

the urgent need for effective interventions and a comprehensive educational framework to address bullying and ensure student safety and well-being.

Bullying not only negatively affects individual victims but also creates adverse effects on the entire educational environment. Research has shown that students who are victims of bullying exhibit lower academic achievement and are more likely to drop out of school. A longitudinal study found that bullying victims are 2.5 times more likely to face academic difficulties compared to their peers (Cook et al., 2010). Furthermore, a meta-analysis revealed that bullying is associated with an increasing likelihood of school dropout (Muzammil et al., 2023). These statistics highlight the importance of effective interventions to tackle bullying in schools.

A tragic case that reflects this reality occurred in Indonesia in January 2022 when



an 11-year-old student from a school in Tasik Malaya unfortunately took his own life after being persistently bullied by his peers. This incident sparked national outrage and prompted in-depth discussions regarding the effectiveness of existing anti-bullying policies and the urgent responsibilities of educators to ensure student safety and well-being (Ariwandono, 2022). Such tragic events not only illustrate the life-altering impact of bullying but also underscore the necessity for a comprehensive educational framework prioritizing student mental health and well-being.

The implications of bullying are closely tied to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) established by the United Nations, particularly Goal 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. To achieve this goal, it is essential to create safe and supportive

learning environments where students can thrive without fear of bullying. When students feel threatened, their ability to engage in educational processes diminishes, obstructing their access to learning opportunities and equitable development. In this context, teachers play a critical role; they are often the first responders to bullying incidents and possess a unique capacity to instill a culture of respect, inclusivity, and support. Research indicates that schools with robust anti-bullying policies and positive teacher-student relationships experience a significant decline in bullying cases (Rawana, 2009).

In Indonesia, there are laws and regulations governing bullying issues, including the Child Protection Law (Law No. 35 of 2014) and Ministerial Regulation No. 82 of 2015, aimed at preventing and addressing violence in educational settings. Both legal frameworks emphasize the



importance of educational institutions in creating safe environments for students and outline educators' responsibilities in preventing and addressing bullying incidents. Additionally, Ministerial Regulation No. 82 of 2015 provides guidelines for preventing and responding to violence in educational environments, further strengthening the existing legal framework and demonstrating a commitment to fostering a safe learning atmosphere. However, this regulation was later suspended.

Despite the presence of a relatively solid legal framework, many students are reluctant to involve teachers in addressing the bullying incidents they experience. This reflects a gap between existing regulations and actual practices in the field. One underlying cause may be the lack of training and outreach regarding applicable regulations. Many teachers feel they lack the

skills or sufficient knowledge to effectively handle bullying situations.

The enforcement of anti-bullying policies often encounters various challenges. A study published by UNICEF in 2021 indicated that while many schools have implemented anti-bullying programs, the efficacy of these programs frequently depends on the level of commitment and understanding among teachers regarding the existing policies (UNICEF, 2021). Additionally, a lack of integrated strategies that encompass legal aspects, teacher training, as well as student and parent involvement further exacerbates this situation.

Often, bullying cases go unreported, with victims feeling alienated and unsupported, while perpetrators face minimal consequences (Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation). The culture of silence that develops within school



environments can reinforce bullying behaviors, making it crucial for schools to create open channels of communication and provide effective support systems for their students.

This article aims to explore the role of teachers in preventing bullying in elementary schools, analyzing how their interventions align with the principles of SDG 4 and existing legal frameworks. By providing insights into the current conditions of bullying in Indonesian elementary schools and assessing the effectiveness of teacher-led initiatives, this research will contribute to a deeper understanding of empowering educators to create safer and more inclusive learning environments. Ultimately, these findings will enhance our understanding of the intersections between education, law, and social responsibility in combating bullying, thereby supporting broader goals of achieving quality education for all.

B. Problem Statement

Despite the increasing awareness of bullying as a significant issue in educational environments, the prevalence of bullying in elementary schools remains alarmingly high. In Indonesia, recent reports indicate that thousands of cases of bullying and violations of child protection laws continue to emerge, highlighting a critical gap in effective intervention strategies. The lack of comprehensive training for educators in managing and preventing bullying exacerbates the situation, leaving many teachers unprepared to adequately address these incidents.

Furthermore, existing policies and frameworks to combat bullying often lack the necessary enforcement mechanisms and support, resulting in inadequate protection for vulnerable students. This situation raises urgent questions about the effectiveness of current anti-bullying initiatives and the role



of educators in creating a safe and inclusive learning environment.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the role of teachers in preventing bullying in elementary schools, in accordance with legal frameworks as an effort to prevent the recurrence of such actions. This research seeks to provide valuable insights that can inform policy improvements and enhance the overall educational experience for children.

C. Research Objectives

The primary objective of this research is to explore and analyze the role of teachers in preventing bullying in elementary schools, focusing on identifying effective strategies as well as the challenges faced. To achieve this goal, the study aims to assess the prevalence and forms of bullying occurring in elementary school environments. This research seeks to gather data on the types of bullying behaviors that emerge, as well as the

frequency of these incidents. Understanding the context of bullying is crucial for developing targeted interventions.

Finally, this study aims to provide recommendations to enhance teacher training and existing support systems. Based on the findings obtained, the study will propose actionable recommendations to improve educators' capacity to effectively address bullying in their classrooms. By achieving these objectives, this research is expected to contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of bullying in elementary schools and the important role that teachers play in addressing this widespread issue.

D. Research Methods

This research is part of community service activities through outreach to elementary school students on the topic of bullying. It is hoped that students will understand what actions fall into the category of bullying and will be willing to involve



teachers in prevention and resolution efforts.

This study employs an empirical approach, focusing on the collection and analysis of data derived from observations and real-world experiences related to bullying in elementary schools. The empirical nature of this study allows for a comprehensive understanding of the current state of bullying, the effectiveness of existing interventions, and teachers' experiences in addressing this issue.

The data sources for this research will include both primary and secondary data. Primary data will be collected through observations and questionnaires conducted in selected elementary schools. Secondary data will be gathered from existing literature, reports from educational institutions, and relevant laws regarding bullying and child protection. This combination of data sources will provide a comprehensive perspective on the issue.

E. Research Results and Discussion

The community service is conducted with the hope of providing implications for studies on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in international relations, particularly concerning SDG number 4, which focuses on inclusive and equitable quality education in the context of bullying at the elementary school level. All students participating in this activity are expected to gain an understanding of bullying actions, their impacts, and how to address them.

To achieve the objectives of this community service, the team conducted outreach and administered questionnaires to measure students' understanding of bullying. Several questions were designed to elicit responses regarding students' comprehension of bullying behaviors in the school environment. The questionnaire was given to students in grades 4, 5, and 6, as this age group is particularly vulnerable to



experiencing bullying due to the transitional phase toward adolescence. The results of the questionnaire showed a range of responses, as illustrated in the following table.

Table 1. Questionnaire on Understanding Bullying Actions

No	Questions	Answers	
		Yes /Have	No/Never
Grade Four (4)			
Total Students : 18 students			
1.	Do you know about bullying?	15 students	3 students
2.	Have you ever bullied someone?	12 students	6 students
3.	Have you ever seen your friends bullying someone?	18 students	0 students
4.	Have you ever been a victim of bullying?	15 students	3 students
5	Have you ever reported a bullying incident to a teacher?	12 students	6 students
6.	Do you feel safe at school?	8 students	10 students
7.	Do you regret bullying after doing it?	13 students	5 students
8.	Have you ever been punished for bullying?	2 students	16 students
9.	Do you agree that bullying perpetrators should be punished?	18 students	0 students
10.	What forms of bullying have you committed?	12 students reported bullying through mocking and hitting friends.	
	What forms of bullying have you experienced?	15 students reported being bullied through mocking, pinching, kicking, hitting, slapping, and being locked in class by friends.	



Grade Five (5)

Total Students: 17 students

1.	Do you know about bullying?	16 students	1 students
2.	Have you ever bullied someone?	9 students	8 students
3.	Have you ever seen your friends bullying someone?	15 students	2 students
4.	Have you ever been a victim of bullying?	11 students	6 students
5	Have you ever reported a bullying incident to a teacher?	8 students	9 students
6.	Do you feel safe at school?	12 students	5 students
7.	Do you regret bullying after doing it?	12 students	5 students
8.	Have you ever been punished for bullying?	3 students	14 students
9.	Do you agree that bullying perpetrators should be punished?	11 students	6 students
10.	What forms of bullying have you committed?	9 students reported bullying through mocking, hitting, and kicking friends.	
	What forms of bullying have you experienced?	4 students reported being bullied through mocking and hitting by friends.	

Grade Six (6)

Total students: 21 students

1.	Do you know about bullying?	16 students	5 students
2.	Have you ever bullied someone?	1 students	20 students
3.	Have you ever seen your friends bullying someone?	12 students	9 students
4.	Have you ever been a victim of bullying?	4 students	17 siswa Tidak Pernah
5	Have you ever reported a bullying incident to a teacher?	4 students	17 students



6.	Do you feel safe at school?	17 students	4 students
7.	Do you regret bullying after doing it?	16 students	5 students
8.	Have you ever been punished for bullying?	1 students	20 students
9.	Do you agree that bullying perpetrators should be punished?	17 students	4 students
10.	What forms of bullying have you committed?	1 students reported bullying through mocking, hitting, and kicking friends.	
	What forms of bullying have you experienced?	4 students reported being bullied through mocking and hitting by friends.	

Based on the data obtained from three classes (Grade Four, Grade Five, and Grade Six), several important findings relate to students' understanding, experiences, and views regarding bullying. The majority of students in all classes are aware of bullying, with Grade Four showing that 15 out of 18 students (83%) know about it, Grade Five having 16 out of 17 students (94%), and Grade Six having 16 out of 21 students (76%). This indicates a high level of awareness across all student groups regarding the issue of bullying. However, when asked

about their experiences with bullying, there is significant variation. In Grade Four, 12 out of 18 students (67%) admitted to having bullied someone, whereas in Grade Five, only 9 out of 17 students (53%) reported the same. Interestingly, in Grade Six, only 1 student (5%) claimed to have been involved in bullying, reflecting a significant decrease in the higher grade, which may suggest an increased awareness of the consequences of bullying as students age.

In terms of experiencing bullying, 15 students in Grade Four (83%) and 11 students in Grade Five (65%) reported having been



victims, while in Grade Six, the number of victims decreased to 4 out of 21 students (19%). Despite the decline, the percentage of victims in Grades Four and Five remains high, indicating the need for more concrete actions to protect students from bullying. Regarding the reporting of bullying incidents to teachers, there are differences in this behavior. In Grade Four, 12 out of 18 students (67%) have reported bullying behaviors, but in Grade Five, this number dropped to 8 out of 17 students (47%), and in Grade Six, only 4 out of 21 students (19%) reported such incidents. This demonstrates that, although many students are aware of bullying and have experienced it, not all feel safe or confident enough to report incidents to teachers.

The level of perceived safety at school also shows variation; in Grade Four, only 8 out of 18 students (44%) feel safe, whereas in Grade Five, this figure improves slightly with

12 out of 17 students (71%) feeling safe. In Grade Six, nearly all students (17 out of 21 or 81%) feel safe at school. These results indicate that students' feelings of safety may vary based on their grade level and social interactions within the classroom. When asked to evaluate their feelings after engaging in bullying, 13 out of 18 students in Grade Four (72%) expressed regret, while in Grade Five, 12 out of 17 students (71%) felt remorse, and in Grade Six, this number was higher with 16 out of 21 students (76%) feeling regretful. This suggests that most students are aware of the negative impacts of bullying behavior and may indicate room for further education on empathy and the effects of their actions.

Finally, all students in Grade Four agree that bullying perpetrators should be punished, while in Grade Five, 11 out of 17 students (65%) agree, and in Grade Six, 17 out of 21 students (81%) agree that



bullying perpetrators need to be sanctioned. This indicates students' awareness of the importance of justice and enforcing rules to protect bullying victims.

1. Legal Perspective on Bullying Cases

In this context, the role of teachers is crucial in accordance with the provisions of the Child Protection Law and the National Education System Law. Teachers have the responsibility to create a safe and supportive learning environment and to educate students about the consequences of bullying. With a high level of understanding of bullying among students, teachers can take this opportunity to educate students about the values of empathy and mutual respect. Additionally, teachers must actively listen to and respond to reports of bullying, ensuring that students feel safe to report incidents they experience or witness.

Law No. 35 of 2014 amends Law No. 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection,

specifically Article 76 C, which states that "Every individual is prohibited from organizing, allowing, committing, requesting, or participating in acts of violence against children." Furthermore, Article 9 Paragraph (1a) of Law No. 35 of 2014 states that every child has the right to protection in the educational environment from acts of sexual crimes and violence committed by educators, educational staff, fellow students, and other parties. Ministerial Regulation No. 82 of 2015 also emphasizes the importance of preventing and addressing violence in schools.

Teachers play a very important role in implementing child protection policies in schools. They are responsible for creating a safe and supportive learning environment and must detect and report incidents of bullying or violence occurring among students. In addition to reporting, teachers should provide emotional support to bullying victims,



helping them feel safe and heard. Moreover, teachers play a role in educating students about their rights and the consequences of bullying actions, including teaching the values of empathy, tolerance, and mutual respect. Teachers must also understand and apply existing policies, including Ministerial Regulation No. 82 of 2015, to prevent and address violence in the educational environment (Kemdikbudristek, 2021).

In the context of Law No. 35 of 2014, which is an amendment to Law No. 23 of 2002, Article 80 regulates sanctions for violations of child protection. Article 80 Paragraph (1) stipulates that anyone who violates the provisions in Article 76 C will be subject to a maximum prison sentence of 3 years and 6 months and/or a fine of no more than IDR 72,000,000.00. Article 80 Paragraph (2) states that if the act causes serious injury to a child, the perpetrator may be imprisoned for up to 5 years and/or fined

up to IDR 100,000,000.00. Article 80 Paragraph (3) states that if the act of violence results in the death of a child, the perpetrator may be sentenced to a maximum of 15 years in prison and/or fined up to IDR 3,000,000,000.00. Additionally, the penalty may be increased by one-third of the existing provisions if the perpetrator is the parent of the victimized child (Kemdikbudristek, 2021).

Thus, the child protection policies enshrined in the law provide a strong legal foundation for the prevention and handling of bullying cases and other forms of violence in the educational environment, where teachers serve as the frontline in its implementation. Efforts to address bullying should focus on raising awareness, providing a safe environment for students to feel comfortable reporting incidents, and delivering education that emphasizes the values of empathy and responsibility. These steps are essential for



creating a school environment free from bullying and supporting the overall development of students. Therefore, the role of teachers in preventing and addressing bullying is crucial and must be supported by clear policies and adequate training to ensure they can effectively fulfill this responsibility.

2. Prevention Efforts for Educational Institutions

Meanwhile, from the educational institutions, the Ministry of Education and Culture has provided guidelines for preventive actions against bullying that can be undertaken by educational units. One of these steps is to provide a complaint service that allows students to report bullying cases safely while maintaining the confidentiality of their identities. Additionally, there are active efforts to build effective communication between students, parents, and teachers, known as the three pillars of

SRA (Students, Community, and Association).

Educational institutions also take the initiative to involve students in formulating anti-bullying policies, so they feel a sense of ownership in the rule-making process. Support and assistance are also provided to students who are victims of bullying to ensure they can recover and feel safe in the school environment.

3. Mechanism for Handling Cases

In efforts to address bullying and violence in schools, there is a clear and structured mechanism in place. The process begins with the submission of complaints, which can come from various parties such as students (both victims and witnesses), teachers, educational staff, parents, and the community. Witnesses can include anyone who has observed the incident.

Incoming complaints will be received by a complaint team assigned to handle the



issue. At the elementary school level, the points of contact may include classroom teachers, school principals, or supervisors.

For junior high schools, guidance counselors and homeroom teachers are also involved. At the senior high school and vocational school levels, the roles of guidance counselors, homeroom teachers, and school principals remain part of the complaint team, which may also involve relevant networks.

In terms of the technical aspects of reporting, the reporter or witness will submit their report to the complaint team. This team is responsible for receiving, processing, and identifying the needs of the victim, such as assistance, physical care, and psychological support. The guidance counselor will then request an explanation regarding the chronology of the incident, noting that there must be witnesses who can support the report, in accordance with Ministerial Regulation No. 111 of 2014 concerning

Guidance and Counseling in Primary and Secondary Education (Kemdikbudristek, 2021).

After receiving the report, the complaint team will clarify to ensure the accuracy of the information received and document evidence related to the incident. Subsequently, a problem analysis will be conducted to determine the next steps. Actions that can be taken include internal resolution through mediation or termination, which requires specific expertise related to the case at hand. If necessary, the team may also refer the case to external parties, such as parents, community health centers, P2TP2A (Integrated Service Center for the Protection of Women and Children), or the police.

If the school is unable to resolve the issue, they may seek assistance from the District Education Office or the police. Finally, information regarding the actions to be taken will be communicated to the



applicant or the complainant, ensuring transparency and involvement of all parties.

This data highlights the importance of a structured mechanism in handling bullying and violence cases, as well as the collaboration among various parties involved to ensure the creation of a safe and supportive educational environment for all students.

The involvement of trained professionals, such as guidance counselors and school administrators, in the reporting process ensures that each case is handled with the necessary expertise and sensitivity. This aligns with SDG's focus on providing quality education, where educators are equipped to address issues that may disrupt students' learning experiences. The emphasis on psychological support and physical care for bullying victims also reflects a commitment to the holistic development of students, which is crucial for achieving quality education.

The existing legal framework, including the Child Protection Law, provides the necessary foundation for these mechanisms, reinforcing the responsibilities of educational institutions to protect students from violence and bullying. This legal support is essential to ensure that schools not only comply with national standards but also actively contribute to the global agenda of creating safe learning environments, as outlined in SDG 4.

These findings indicate that collaboration among various parties in the educational environment is crucial in creating a violence- and bullying-free atmosphere. The involvement of students and parents in policy formulation and preventive efforts can have a significant impact on maintaining the safety and well-being of children in schools.

F. Closing/Conclusion



In efforts to create a safe and violence-free educational environment, child protection policies regulated under Law No. 35 of 2014 provide a strong legal foundation. This policy emphasizes the importance of protecting children from various forms of violence, including bullying, and establishes strict sanctions for violators. The role of teachers as the frontline in implementing this policy is crucial, where they are not only responsible for detecting and reporting incidents of violence but also for providing emotional support to victims and educating students about their rights.

Additionally, proactive measures taken by schools to educate students about bullying and its impact on mental health are crucial in prevention efforts. By raising awareness and understanding among students, schools can reduce incidents of bullying, which in turn enhances the overall educational experience. This preventive approach aligns with SDG

4's goal of promoting lifelong learning opportunities, as it equips students with the knowledge and skills necessary for positive interactions within society.

Overall, the mechanisms for handling bullying cases in schools are vital for achieving the objectives of SDG 4. By creating a safe and supportive educational environment, schools can ensure that all students have the opportunity to thrive both academically and socially. Collaboration among educators, parents, and the community, along with a strong legal framework, is essential for building an inclusive and equitable educational landscape that supports the well-being of every student.

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