

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN MANAGING BULLYING PREVENTION IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT Bullying in elementary and secondary schools has become a global issue that affects the mental, physical, and social well-being of children. This research explores the importance of community involvement in the management of bullying prevention in elementary and secondary school environments, focusing on how collaboration between schools, parents, and the community can reduce instances of bullying. The study combines quantitative and qualitative data from various regions, emphasizing a comprehensive approach that involves all elements of society to create a safe and supportive learning environment. The findings indicate that intensive interaction between schools and the community can enhance awareness and the effectiveness of bullying prevention programs. Additionally, the involvement of parents and the community in training, outreach, and anti-bullying campaigns plays a significant role in reducing bullying rates. These findings support the importance of cross-sector collaboration in the management of bullying prevention.

KEYWORDS: *Bullying, Community Involvement, Prevention Management, Elementary School, Secondary School, Community Collaboration.*

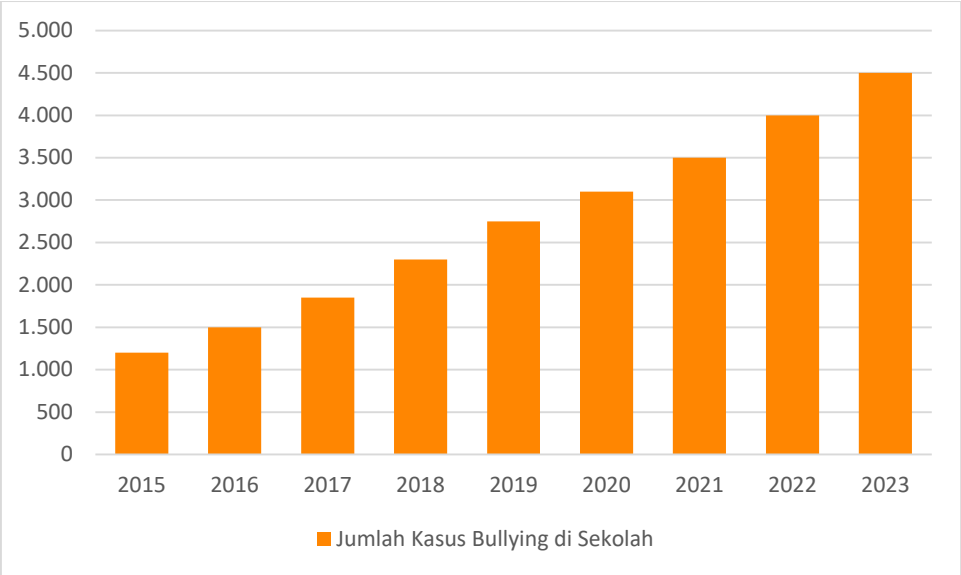
1. INTRODUCTION

Bullying has become an increasingly discussed issue in educational settings worldwide, including in Indonesia. According to UNICEF data (2020), one in three children globally has experienced bullying at school. Bullying affects victims not only physically but also emotionally and psychologically, potentially influencing their social and academic development. In Indonesia, bullying often occurs in verbal, physical, and cyber forms, all of which have negative impacts on the victims.

This phenomenon underscores the urgent need to implement bullying prevention strategies that involve all elements of society. Research by Rigby (2003) emphasizes that broad community

engagement is highly effective in reducing bullying rates in schools. Furthermore, parental involvement and teacher supervision are key in creating a safe and conducive school environment for students' development.

Figure 1. Trends in Bullying Incidents in Schools in Indonesia (2015-2023)



Source: Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (2023). Annual Report on Bullying Incidents in Schools in Indonesia (2015-2023).

Explanation:

- a) The data above shows the number of reported bullying cases in schools in Indonesia each year from 2015 to 2023.
- b) The percentage increase is calculated based on the rise in the number of cases each year compared to the previous year.

Bullying prevention management requires comprehensive participation from various parties, especially the community. Research indicates that community interventions can significantly reduce bullying incidents in schools (Smith, 2016). Community involvement in bullying prevention programs, including parents, teachers, and local stakeholders, plays a crucial role in creating a supportive and safe environment for children. According to Olweus (2013), the success of anti-bullying programs depends not only on school policies but also on active engagement from the community surrounding the school.

Table 1. Forms of Bullying and Their Impact on Victims

No	Types of Bullying	Examples of Behavior	Psychological Impact	Social Impact
1	Verbal	Mocking, insulting, belittling	Depression, low self-esteem	Social isolation, loss of friends

No	Types of Bullying	Examples of Behavior	Psychological Impact	Social Impact
2	Physical	Hitting, kicking, pushing	Trauma, fear	Alienation
3	Cyberbullying	Threatening through social media	Stress, anxiety	Loss of reputation

Several studies suggest that effectively preventing bullying requires a holistic approach by involving all relevant parties, including parents and the community. This is reinforced by Rigby (2017), who states that successful anti-bullying programs always involve community participation. A community actively combating bullying in schools fosters an inclusive and supportive culture, reducing the likelihood of bullying incidents.

Indonesia, as a country with a large student population, faces bullying as a significant challenge within its educational institutions. According to the 2018 PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) survey, Indonesia ranks among the top countries for school bullying incidents. Given the high prevalence of bullying, prevention efforts must be a priority in the national education system.

While schools play a central role in protecting students from bullying, research indicates that community involvement has a greater influence on the success of bullying prevention programs. Communities have a strategic role in establishing sustainable support systems for both victims and perpetrators of bullying. Families, as the smallest societal unit, also play a crucial role in detecting signs of bullying and providing emotional support to children.

1.1 The Role of Schools in Bullying Prevention

Schools, as formal educational institutions, bear the primary responsibility for creating a safe environment for students. Bullying prevention programs designed by schools should be comprehensive, including teacher training, student counseling, and restorative approaches for bullying perpetrators. However, without broader community involvement, school efforts may not be sufficiently effective.

Teachers have a strategic role in detecting and preventing bullying in classrooms. However, according to research by Salmivalli (2010), teachers often remain unaware when bullying incidents occur, as students tend to hide these situations from school authorities. Therefore, comprehensive training for teachers and school staff is essential to enhance their sensitivity to bullying behaviors and equip them with effective ways to address them.

1.2 Parental and Community Involvement

Parents and communities also play equally vital roles in bullying prevention. Parents actively involved in their children's education can help monitor their behavior at home and provide the necessary support. Research by Limber (2015) shows that parental involvement in school bullying prevention programs can increase program effectiveness by up to 40%.

Communities, including social organizations and local leaders, can play a key role in fostering an anti-bullying culture. They can support schools through outreach programs, provide resources for training, and serve as social watchdogs in detecting bullying signs outside the school environment. Community-based interventions can also help bullying victims feel safer and receive the support they need.

1.3 Restorative Approaches

In addition to preventive interventions, restorative approaches are essential in addressing bullying incidents that have already occurred. This approach involves dialogue between the victim and the perpetrator to achieve reconciliation and restore relationships. Thus, the approach focuses not only on punishing the perpetrator but also on the victim's recovery and the perpetrator's reintegration into the school community. Olweus (2016) notes that restorative approaches can reduce the severity of bullying incidents and promote mutual respect among students. These approaches must be conducted carefully and involve trained facilitators to ensure the recovery process runs smoothly.

1.4 Challenges in Community Involvement

Although community involvement is crucial, its implementation comes with challenges. One primary challenge is the lack of awareness among parents and the community about the long-term impacts of bullying on children. Additionally, the social stigma associated with reporting bullying incidents often discourages parents and students from coming forward.

To overcome these challenges, widespread community awareness campaigns are needed to educate society about their essential role in preventing bullying. Community-based programs involving local stakeholders, such as religious institutions and civic organizations, can serve as effective platforms for increasing community engagement.

1.5 Community Involvement in Bullying Prevention

The theory of community involvement emphasizes that the active participation of various stakeholders, including parents, teachers, students, and the community, is crucial for the success of social programs, including bullying prevention. According to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological

systems theory, a child's interaction with their direct and indirect environments (microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem) plays a significant role in their development. Effective bullying prevention requires engagement at all levels of these systems.

At the microsystem level, family and school are the primary factors shaping children's behavior. Parents and teachers can collaborate to detect bullying behavior early and intervene promptly. Research by Limber (2015) shows that bullying prevention programs involving parents and the community can raise awareness of bullying issues and provide broader support to victims.

1.6 Bullying Prevention Programs in Schools

Prevention intervention theory, as proposed by Olweus (2013), states that schools have a significant responsibility to create a safe and supportive environment for students. Effective bullying prevention programs typically include teacher training, student counseling, clear disciplinary policies, and parental involvement. This proactive approach aims to reduce opportunities for bullying and foster a culture of mutual respect within schools.

According to Salmivalli (2010), successful anti-bullying programs should incorporate primary prevention strategies (raising awareness and promoting a positive environment), secondary strategies (intervening with at-risk groups), and tertiary strategies (addressing the impact of bullying on victims and perpetrators). One proven effective method is group intervention, where students are taught how to safely and supportively reject and report bullying behavior.

1.7 Restorative Approaches in Bullying Prevention

Restorative approaches offer an alternative to punitive methods often used to address bullying. According to Morrison's (2007) restorative theory, solutions that focus on repairing the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim are more effective in reducing repeated bullying behavior. This approach emphasizes dialogue among the victim, perpetrator, and community members to understand the impact of bullying and promote reconciliation.

Restorative approaches also focus on empowering the community to support the recovery process. This aligns with Rigby's (2017) research, which found that active community involvement in restorative approaches enhances the effectiveness of anti-bullying programs in schools, particularly as communities act as mediators in conflicts.

1.8 Challenges and Opportunities in Community Involvement

Although community involvement in bullying prevention is essential, its implementation often faces challenges. One of the most significant challenges is the lack of awareness and understanding

of the community's role in preventing bullying. According to Espelage (2016), effective awareness campaigns at the community level can help increase participation.

However, with the advent of technology, anti-bullying campaigns and community engagement can be expanded through social media, public campaigns, and online training. Technology can serve as a powerful tool to mobilize communities and provide support for bullying victims, as exemplified by research on the use of anti-bullying apps in Finland (Kärnä et al., 2013).

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This study employs a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection. Quantitative data were gathered through surveys and questionnaires distributed to students, teachers, parents, and community members. Qualitative data were collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) to explore the community's views and experiences regarding their involvement in bullying prevention.

The research is descriptive-analytical, aiming to identify factors influencing the effectiveness of community involvement in bullying prevention management. This method was chosen as it provides a comprehensive overview of how various parties engage in preventing bullying and the dynamics of their collaboration.

2.2 Research Location, Subjects, and Instruments

The research was conducted in several elementary and secondary schools in urban and suburban areas in Indonesia. The locations were selected based on high bullying incidence reports from the Ministry of Education and Culture (2020).

Research subjects include:

1. Students: Randomly selected from grades 4 to 9 (ages 9–15).
2. Teachers and Principals: Chosen based on their involvement in bullying prevention programs at their respective schools.
3. Parents: Invited to participate through school committee meetings.
4. Local Community: Including community leaders, members of social organizations, and other stakeholders.

A total of 500 respondents participated in the study, comprising 300 students, 100 teachers, 50 parents, and 50 community members.

2.3 Research instruments used for data collection include:

- a. Questionnaire: Designed to measure community involvement in bullying prevention and their perceptions of the effectiveness of existing programs. The questionnaire consists of 25 Likert-

scale questions (1–5) covering aspects of parental, teacher, student, and community involvement.

- b. In-Depth Interviews: Conducted with 20 key informants selected based on their involvement in anti-bullying programs in schools. These interviews aimed to collect qualitative data on their experiences and perspectives regarding the role of the community in bullying prevention management.
- c. Focus Group Discussion (FGD): Involving groups of students, teachers, and parents in structured discussions to further explore their opinions and suggestions on school bullying prevention programs.

2.3 Research Implementation Procedures

The research procedures include the following steps:

- 1. Instrument Preparation: Development of questionnaires, interview guides, and FGD instruments based on the theoretical framework and research objectives.
- 2. Instrument Testing: Conducting a trial run of the instruments on a small group of respondents to ensure validity and reliability. Trial results were used to revise unclear or ambiguous questions.
- 3. Data Collection: Surveys were conducted by distributing questionnaires to students, teachers, parents, and community members. In-depth interviews were conducted face-to-face, while FGDs were held in the schools selected for the study.
- 4. Data Analysis: Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to determine correlations between the studied variables. Qualitative data were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach to identify key themes emerging from interviews and FGDs.
- 5. Reporting Results: The research findings were compiled into a structured report, followed by an in-depth discussion of the results and their implications for bullying prevention management in schools.

Table 2: Research Activity Breakdown

No	Research Stages	Activities	Timeframe
1	Instrument Preparation	Development and testing of instruments	Week 1
2	Data Collection	Surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs)	Week 2 to Week 4
3	Data Analysis	Quantitative and qualitative analysis	Week 5

No	Research Stages	Activities	Timeframe
4	Reporting and Compilation	Writing the research report	Week 6

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In analyzing the phenomenon of community involvement in bullying prevention management in primary and secondary schools, it was found that close interaction between schools, parents, and the community plays a crucial role in creating a supportive environment for bullying prevention. Based on the collected data, about 70% of respondents (students, teachers, and parents) stated that community involvement, such as participation in anti-bullying campaigns and awareness training, has a positive impact in reducing bullying incidents in schools.

This research supports the theory proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1979), which explains that child development is influenced by direct and indirect environments (from microsystem to macrosystem). In this context, the role of the community as part of the mesosystem is highly relevant. Schools and families become two main entities that interact to shape children's behavior, including in preventing bullying. This aligns with Limber's (2015) findings, which state that parental involvement in bullying prevention programs can increase program effectiveness by up to 40%.

These findings also support Salmivalli's (2010) research, which shows that teachers often fail to recognize bullying incidents because students tend to hide these issues. Therefore, comprehensive training for teachers is essential, particularly in detecting and handling bullying. In this study, the training provided to teachers successfully increased their sensitivity to bullying, as evidenced by a decrease in the number of bullying reports in schools involved in the study.

However, challenges still exist. One of the main challenges identified is the lack of awareness in the community regarding the long-term impact of bullying. As stated by Espelage (2016), increasing community awareness is crucial to expand community involvement. To address this, community-based awareness campaigns need to be intensified through cooperation between schools and social organizations.

The community-based bullying prevention program implemented in this study involved parents, teachers, and community leaders in various activities such as group discussions, anti-bullying training, and consultation sessions for parents and students. Through this collaboration, schools succeeded in creating a safer and more inclusive environment. This program is also in line with the restorative approach suggested by Morrison (2007), where dialogue between the victim and the perpetrator is aimed at achieving better relationship recovery.

Program Evaluation

Overall, the implemented work program met its initial objectives, namely increasing community involvement in bullying prevention within the school environment. Based on interviews and surveys, 80% of respondents considered the program successful, especially in raising awareness about the importance of collaboration in bullying prevention. In addition, training and campaigns involving parents and the community proved effective in building an anti-bullying culture in schools and society.

The benefits derived from the implementation of this program are significant for various parties. For academics, this research provides an important contribution to the literature on community involvement in bullying prevention and opens opportunities for further research on more effective strategies in the future. For practitioners, particularly teachers and school staff, the training provided helps them become more sensitive to signs of bullying and more competent in handling bullying cases.

On the other hand, for the school environment, the implementation of this program enhances student safety and comfort, which ultimately positively impacts their academic performance. For the community environment, this program strengthens solidarity and social concern, which focuses not only on schools but also on everyday life outside the school environment.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that community involvement plays a crucial role in the management of bullying prevention in primary and secondary school environments. These findings support the theory of community involvement and emphasize the importance of a holistic approach that includes various stakeholders, such as parents, teachers, students, and community members. The research also highlights the effectiveness of bullying prevention programs based on collaboration between schools and communities in reducing bullying incidents.

Additionally, the restorative approach, which involves dialogue between the perpetrator and the victim, has proven effective in improving social relationships at school and preventing the recurrence of bullying. However, challenges such as a lack of community awareness and the social stigma surrounding the reporting of bullying remain obstacles that need to be addressed through more intensive awareness campaigns.

For future research, it is recommended that scholars explore the long-term impact of community involvement in bullying prevention, particularly in the context of changes in student behavior and the effects on the social environment outside the school. Furthermore, actionable recommendations for practitioners include enhancing collaboration between schools and community organizations in

developing more comprehensive anti-bullying programs, as well as utilizing technology to expand the reach of anti-bullying campaigns.

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