

TEACHER AND SCHOOL RESPONSES TO ANTI-BULLYING POLICIES AND RELIGIOUS MINORITY STUDENTS IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

Bullying remains prevalent because many teachers and schools have not fully adopted perspectives of tolerance and diversity. This lack of approach is a major factor in the high incidence of bullying against religious minority students in Indonesia. In this context, it is important to understand how anti-bullying policies are implemented in schools, particularly in relation to the treatment of students from religious minority groups. The purpose of this study is to conduct an in-depth analysis of how schools and teachers in Indonesia respond to existing anti-bullying regulations, with a specific focus on how they treat children from religious minority groups. This study employs a qualitative approach with in-depth interview methods to explore the responses and experiences of teachers, schools, and students themselves. By deeply analyzing the responses from educators and schools, as well as the experiences of students, this study aims to identify gaps in policy implementation and provide methods to enhance the effectiveness of anti-bullying measures. The potential impact of this research is to ensure that religious minority children are provided with an environment that supports their identities, so they can feel safe and valued in their educational environment. Additionally, this research is expected to serve as a foundation for formulating more inclusive and effective policies in preventing bullying in the future.

Keywords: bullying, religious minorities, Anti-Bullying Policies

INTRODUCTION

Background

This article aims to understand how teachers and schools respond to anti-bullying regulations. Bullying continues to be prevalent in schools, particularly because many teachers and schools have not fully integrated perspectives on tolerance and diversity (Xu et al., 2020). This has become one of the primary factors behind the frequent bullying experienced by religious minority students, particularly students who adhere to the Belief in One Almighty God.

The importance of adopting a perspective of tolerance and diversity in education not only plays a role in preventing bullying but also contributes to achieving the goals of sustainable development. When schools and teachers successfully implement inclusive values, they create a safe and supportive learning environment for all students, including those who follow the Belief in One Almighty God, and advance the global agenda highlighted in SDG 4.7. Education that emphasizes diversity and respect for differences becomes a crucial foundation for building a more just and harmonious society.

In Indonesia, the government is currently working on improving regulations and policies regarding bullying in schools, including establishing it as a serious disciplinary offense, as outlined in the Regulation of the Ministry of Education and Culture (*Permendikbud_Tahun2015_Nomor082*, n.d.) on the Prevention and Handling of Violence in Educational Institutions. This regulation aims to create a safe, comfortable, and violence-free educational environment. The regulation emphasizes the importance of preventive measures and handling violence by all stakeholders, including students, educators, education personnel, parents/guardians, school committees, the community, local governments, and the central government.

This regulation outlines the steps to form a violence prevention and handling team, socialize standard operating procedures (SOP), collaborate with relevant institutions, and impose sanctions on perpetrators of violence. It also regulates reporting mechanisms and follow-up actions for violence cases and ensures the protection of students' rights, both as victims and perpetrators.

Additionally, training and capacity building are provided for those involved in preventing and handling violence in education. This training program is called Roots, which involves students and teachers as anti-bullying agents at the school level. The program also includes campaigns and virtual exhibitions aimed at raising public awareness.

The government has also established a special anti-violence working group in education tasked with monitoring, receiving reports, and assisting victims during handling. Integration of bullying education into the school curriculum has also been implemented, along with the launch of reporting channels for bullying cases through the websites merdekadarikekerasan.kemdikbud.go.id and kemdikbud.lapor.go.id, where students and teachers who have received training are appointed as the officers in charge.

Although the government has enacted various regulations and programs, without effective implementation at the grassroots level, these regulations and programs will remain mere rhetoric without real effectiveness in preventing bullying in schools. Additionally, regarding these regulations and programs, extensive socialization is still needed at the community level, particularly among teachers and schools in rural areas. In fact, many are still unaware of the existence of these regulations, and many schools still lack mechanisms and dedicated task forces to handle bullying cases.

Information from teachers of the Belief in One Almighty God indicates that bullying against students who follow this belief frequently occurs, especially at the elementary and junior high school levels, with the Bandung Raya region being one of the most affected areas. These experiences were reinforced through interviews conducted by the researcher in early April 2024, where several students of the Belief in One Almighty God shared their stories. These facts highlight the urgency of understanding more deeply how anti-bullying policies are implemented in schools and how inclusive education can play a role in protecting the rights of religious minority students, as emphasized in SDG 4.7.

One incident involved a first-grade student, referred to as A, who was often teased by classmates with labels like "different religion" or "Christian" during Arabic Writing Class. When A asked the Islamic education teacher the meaning of the word "terbit" (rise), the teacher replied briefly, "I don't know," indicating a lack of support and care from the school.

Another case involved two fourth-grade students, referred to as B and C, who, on the first day of outside class activity, were asked to wear a hijab out of respect for their Muslim classmates. This reflects the imposition of religious symbols on students who do not adhere to the majority religion, creating discomfort and a sense of alienation for students with indigenous religions.

A sixth-grade student, referred to as D, experienced particularly hurtful bullying. On Thursdays, when all students were required to wear kebaya, D was mocked by the teacher because her hair tie broke, and she was advised to wear a hijab to look neater. Additionally, during Quran recitation sessions, D was asked

to recite Al-Fatihah, despite not being Muslim. The situation escalated during a Maulid Nabi (Prophet's Birthday) event when D felt targeted by the preacher's remarks about the obligation for women to wear a hijab while the preacher looked directly at her.

Another case in 2019 involved a student, referred to as E, who, while serving as a ceremony officer, was praised by the homeroom teacher for looking more beautiful with a hijab. However, after the ceremony, when E removed the hijab, the teacher frequently made sarcastic remarks about sin and appearance, often glancing in E's direction. E also felt unfairly treated when first rank was given to a student with lower grades than hers, further undermining her confidence.

All those occurrences showed how students with indigenous religions experience bullying from both teachers and peers. Bullying violates the Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 2, paragraph 1, which guarantees the rights of all children without discrimination, including religion-based discrimination. Further, Article 19, paragraph 1, establishes the right of children to be protected from physical, mental, or emotional violence. Article 28, paragraph 2, ensures that school discipline respects children's dignity. Articles 29, paragraphs 1, and 30 emphasize children's rights to develop their potential and practice their culture and religion without discrimination. All these rights are violated when bullying occurs (KONVENSI HAK ANAK Mukadimah, n.d.). The violation of these articles means that students with Indigenous religions are not only lose their sense of security and dignity (Silviyati et al., 2022), but also face obstacles to their right to education and freedom of religion (Elamé, 2013)

This study is highly relevant to supporting the development of educational policies, particularly regarding bullying and the treatment of students from religious minority groups. The findings of this research are expected to provide deeper insights into how current anti-bullying policies are implemented in schools and to identify gaps in their implementation. Thus, this study can serve as a solid foundation for more effective and inclusive policy-making in the future.

Furthermore, this study has important implications for improving the safety and inclusivity of students in educational settings. By exploring the experiences of students who are vulnerable to bullying, particularly those from religious minority groups, this research can offer practical recommendations for enhancing the protection and security of all students. The suggestions arising from this study are expected to help schools and educators create a learning environment that values diversity and supports the development of students without discrimination. Therefore, this research not only supports the

development of better policies but also contributes to the creation of safer and more inclusive schools for all students.

Literature Review

Anti-Bullying Policies in Indonesia: Historical Development

Bullying in educational settings has been a serious issue in Indonesia for many years. Awareness of this problem increased as more cases of violence in schools gained media and public attention. Initially, bullying incidents were often viewed as internal school issues that did not require public policy intervention. However, as awareness grew regarding the long-term impacts of bullying on students' mental and physical well-being, the government began to take more serious steps to address the issue (Rizal, 2021).

In the early 2000s, there was growing pressure from various non-governmental organizations and educational communities urging the government to take a more proactive stance on addressing bullying in schools. This support came from various stakeholders, including parents, teachers, and education experts, all advocating for clearer and stronger policies to handle bullying.

The first significant step in Indonesia's anti-bullying policy came in 2015, when the Ministry of Education and Culture issued Regulation No. 82 of 2015 (*Permendikbud Tahun 2015 Nomor 82*, n.d.). This regulation marked the government's commitment to addressing bullying in schools through a more systematic and comprehensive approach.

Key Regulations and Guidelines

Regulation No. 82 of 2015, issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Permendikbud No. 82 Tahun 2015), is the cornerstone of Indonesia's anti-bullying policy. This regulation aims to prevent and address acts of violence in educational environments, including bullying, by involving all stakeholders, such as students, teachers, parents, and the community.

Some key points from this regulation (*Permendikbud Tahun 2015 Nomor 82*, n.d.) include:

- Prevention of Violence: The regulation emphasizes prevention as the first step in handling bullying. Schools are expected to create a safe and comfortable environment free from all forms of violence.
- Prevention efforts include raising awareness among students and parents about the dangers of bullying, as well as providing training for teachers to recognize and handle bullying cases.

- Handling Acts of Violence: In addition to prevention, the regulation outlines how schools should address cases of violence. Schools are required to follow up on every report of violence with appropriate actions, including providing protection to the victims and imposing proper sanctions on the perpetrators in accordance with the applicable regulations.
- Formation of Violence Prevention and Handling Teams: Every school is required to form a special team responsible for preventing and handling violence. This team consists of the principal, teachers, student representatives, and parent representatives. The team is tasked with overseeing the implementation of anti-violence policies, investigating reports of violence, and developing and disseminating standard operating procedures (SOP) used to handle cases of violence.
- Violence Reporting Services: The regulation also mandates the provision of reporting services accessible to students, parents, and the community to report cases of violence in schools. These services include online platforms, SMS, phone calls, and email, managed by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Every report of violence must be promptly followed up by the school and local education authorities.
- Sanctions for Perpetrators and Negligent Parties: The regulation sets out strict sanctions for perpetrators of violence in schools, whether they are students, teachers, or education personnel. Additionally, sanctions may be imposed on schools or local governments that fail to fulfill their responsibilities in preventing and addressing violence. These sanctions can range from reprimands and reduction of rights to temporary or permanent dismissal from their position.
- Monitoring and Evaluation: Central and regional governments are required to conduct regular monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of this policy in schools. The purpose of this oversight is to ensure that schools effectively implement the anti-violence policies and in accordance with established standards.

Beside (*Permendikbud Tahun 2015 Nomor 082*, n.d.), there are several other policies and guidelines that support the prevention and handling of bullying in schools. For example, (*Permendiknas Nomor 39 Tahun 2008 Tentang Pembinaan Kesiswaan*, n.d.), regulates student behavior in schools, and Regulation (*Permendikbud 23 2015*, n.d.) on Character Development, which promotes strengthening student character through values education.

Religious Minority Students' Experiences

The experiences of students from religious minority groups in schools often involve different and complex challenges. They may face discrimination and bullying because their beliefs do not align with the majority of other students. This situation can lead to feelings of alienation and lack of support in an environment that should be safe for learning and growth. The lack of understanding and tolerance from peers and educators often exacerbates the situation, making religious minority students feel undervalued or even targeted by acts of intolerance. These experiences highlight the importance of inclusive educational policies and the application of tolerance values to ensure that all students, regardless of their religious background, feel safe, respected, and supported in their educational journey.

Common Forms of Bullying Faced

Bullying can be divided into several types. First, verbal bullying (Silviyati et al., 2022) includes actions such as threats, teasing, name-calling, making derogatory comments, and verbal insults. Second, physical bullying (Nabila & Vinayastri, 2022) involves actions that cause physical harm to the victim, such as slapping, pushing, pinching, hair-pulling, kicking, punching, and similar behaviors. Third, social bullying (Nwanosike et al., 2022) includes actions such as publicly humiliating someone, ostracizing, and spreading gossip. Lastly, cyberbullying (Johansson & Englund, 2021) involves bullying through digital technology, such as social media, chat platforms, gaming platforms, and mobile phones.

Psychological and Educational Impact

Bullying in educational settings has highly detrimental effects, both for the victims and the perpetrators, and its impact extends beyond physical or psychological harm, affecting the entire learning atmosphere. In schools, bullying disrupts the environment that should be conducive to academic and social growth (Schacter et al., 2023). Often, victims of bullying experience a decline in academic performance, loss of motivation to learn, and, in extreme cases, choose to avoid school altogether due to trauma or fear (Silviyati et al., 2022). This demonstrates that bullying can directly hinder students' rights to receive a safe and adequate education (Zahra & Lubis, 2023).

Moreover, bullying creates an unhealthy school environment where fear and discomfort become the norm, inhibiting healthy social interactions and exacerbating mental health issues among students. This impact is not only felt by

the victims but also by other students who witness bullying or fear becoming the next target, which can lead to stress and anxiety.

Education is meant to foster character, morals, and social skills among students. However, bullying undermines this goal by instilling negative behaviors in both victims and perpetrators. For perpetrators, involvement in bullying can reinforce negative behavior patterns such as aggression, manipulation, and a lack of empathy, which may persist into adulthood. Therefore, it is crucial for schools to take active preventive and responsive measures against bullying so that all students can learn in a safe, supportive, and violence-free environment.

In summary, bullying not only hinders individual learning processes but also disrupts the function of the education system as a whole. Thus, effectively addressing bullying is key to creating an educational environment that fosters learning and healthy moral development, ensuring that every student can access education in a positive and safe atmosphere (AMALIA, 2022). Proper prevention and intervention efforts will help reduce the negative impacts of bullying, support students' mental health, and build a more inclusive school culture that values diversity.

The Role of Teachers and Schools in Policy Implementation

Teachers and schools play a critical role in implementing policies, particularly those related to the prevention and handling of bullying in educational settings (Wójcik & Mondry, 2020). As the primary policy enforcers, teachers and schools bear significant responsibility in ensuring that policies designed to create a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment are effectively applied (Samsul, 2020).

Teachers are vital figures in the education process and in shaping students' character (Waruwu & Silaen, 2024). They act as educators, guides, and role models for students. In the context of anti-bullying policies, teachers must deeply understand the relevant policies and practical strategies to prevent and address bullying (Junindra et al., n.d.). A teacher's primary responsibility is to create a safe and inclusive classroom environment where every student feels valued and protected from the threat of bullying.

Teachers also must recognize early signs of bullying among their students. (Junindra et al., n.d.). This requires sensitivity to behavioral changes, open communication with students, and the ability to detect unhealthy social dynamics in the classroom. When bullying is detected, teachers must take swift and appropriate action, following the established procedures outlined in school

policies. (Nuraeni et al., 2023). They must also support the victims by providing protection and emotional assistance and ensuring they feel safe and heard.

Additionally, teachers play an essential role in teaching students values of tolerance, empathy, and diversity. Character education integrated into the curriculum can be an effective tool for preventing bullying by building a school culture that respects differences and rejects violence. Teachers can also engage students in discussions and activities that raise awareness of the harmful effects of bullying, both for the victims and the perpetrators, and the importance of creating a supportive learning environment.

As institutions, schools are critical in ensuring that anti-bullying policies are implemented consistently and effectively. (Efianingrum et al., 2023). School leadership, including principals and management teams, is responsible for developing and overseeing the implementation of policies, including drafting standard operating procedures (SOPs) and forming teams to prevent and address bullying. (Rahmawati, 2016).

Schools must ensure that all staff, including teachers, education personnel, and counselors, are trained to recognize and handle bullying. This training includes understanding bullying dynamics, conflict mediation techniques, and effective intervention strategies. Schools also need to conduct policy awareness campaigns for the entire school community, including students, parents, and the surrounding community, to create a shared understanding of the importance of bullying prevention.

Furthermore, schools should provide clear and accessible communication channels for reporting bullying cases. These may include suggestion boxes, hotlines, or online platforms that allow students or parents to report bullying safely and anonymously. Schools must take every report seriously, conduct thorough investigations, and impose appropriate sanctions on the perpetrators while providing support to the victims.

Schools are also responsible for fostering a positive and inclusive school culture. (Vargas-Madriz et al., 2023). This can be achieved through programs promoting cooperation, respect for differences, and student engagement in solidarity activities. Schools should encourage students to actively participate in creating a bullying-free environment through mentoring programs, anti-bullying campaigns, and establishing support groups.

Strong collaboration between teachers, schools, and the community is critical to successfully implementing anti-bullying policies. Teachers and schools cannot work alone; they need support from parents, community organizations,

and local governments. They can build a strong support network to prevent and address bullying effectively by working together.

Teachers and schools can collaborate with parents through regular meetings and parent involvement programs in school activities. They can also partner with external agencies such as professional counselors, psychologists, and child protection organizations to provide more comprehensive assistance to students in need. Local governments also provide support, such as offering additional training and resources for schools.

The role of teachers and schools in implementing anti-bullying policies is crucial. Teachers are the primary drivers in creating a safe and inclusive classroom environment, while schools as institutions are responsible for ensuring that policies are consistently and effectively implemented. Collaboration between teachers, schools, and the community is also an essential element in preventing and addressing bullying so that all students can learn in a supportive, safe, and violence-free environment.

Teachers, schools, and the community play significant roles in efforts to build a safe and inclusive educational environment. Teachers are expected to teach and be role models who support and protect every student, creating a classroom atmosphere that values diversity and rejects bullying. Schools bear a great responsibility in consistently enforcing anti-bullying policies, ensuring that every incident is taken seriously, and providing assistance to the victims.

This responsibility does not rest solely in the hands of teachers and schools but also involves the entire community, including parents and community organizations. They are expected to collaborate with schools to support the implementation of these policies and actively participate in monitoring and reporting bullying incidents. The government is also responsible for providing the resources, training, and support needed to ensure these policies are well implemented.

With cooperation from all parties, a violence-free educational environment can be created where every student can learn and grow with a sense of safety, respect, and support. This collective effort is essential in shaping a generation that is more tolerant, empathetic, and appreciative of differences.

In dealing with bullying in schools, there are responses that can be considered successful, and there are also problematic ones. Successful responses are usually characterized by quick and appropriate reactions from teachers and schools to bullying reports. For example, when a teacher immediately recognizes signs of bullying and takes steps to mediate conflicts, provide emotional support

to the victim, and involve relevant parties such as counselors or parents. Schools that are effective in handling bullying usually have clear policies, consistently enforced, and provide a safe environment for students to report incidents without fear.

Conversely, problematic responses occur when bullying reports are ignored or not taken seriously by teachers or schools. For instance, there are situations where reports are trivialized and not thoroughly investigated, allowing bullying to continue or even worsen. Problematic responses also arise when the sanctions imposed on the perpetrator are not strict enough, which ultimately can lead students to lose confidence in the school's protection system.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study uses a qualitative approach through in-depth interviews to identify gaps in implementation and recommend policy improvements to create an inclusive educational environment. A qualitative approach is a research method used to deeply understand social phenomena, especially when the studied topic is complex and involves many subjective aspects. In the context of education, particularly in studies focusing on bullying and the treatment of religious minority students, a qualitative approach is highly appropriate. This method allows researchers to explore in detail the experiences, perceptions, and views of the participants (Afrizal, 2016). Unlike the quantitative approach, which relies on numerical data and statistical analysis, the qualitative approach emphasizes a comprehensive understanding of the context, background, and dynamics influencing a particular issue.

In this study, the qualitative approach was chosen because bullying in schools is a complex issue that requires a deep understanding of individual experiences, particularly for students with indigenous religion. This approach allows researchers to uncover aspects that may not be detected through quantitative data, such as social interactions, interpersonal dynamics, and the emotions experienced by participants.

The in-depth interview method was chosen because it has the main advantage of uncovering information that cannot be obtained through other methods. In-depth interviews allow participants to share their experiences in detail and reflectively, which is crucial in research on sensitive social issues such as bullying. Moreover, this method enables researchers to build closer

relationships with participants, which can increase trust and openness in sharing information.

In the context of this study, in-depth interviews are highly effective in revealing the complex experiences of students with indigenous religions and understanding how anti-bullying policies are implemented and perceived in the school environment. The results of these interviews are expected to provide deep and contextual insights into the challenges faced in creating an inclusive and safe educational environment for all students.

Data Collection

The in-depth interview process in this study began with developing an interview guide consisting of open-ended questions. These questions were designed to facilitate in-depth discussions about bullying, implementing anti-bullying policies, and treating students with indigenous religions God. This guide is flexible, allowing the researcher to adjust questions according to the direction of the conversation and participants' responses.

Interviews were conducted individually to ensure that participants felt comfortable and safe sharing their experiences. Additionally, the interviews were conducted in a quiet, distraction-free environment to maximize the quality of interaction and the data collected.

This study's data sources were collected through various methods designed to obtain in-depth information. In-depth interviews with teachers, students, and school administrators were the primary sources, providing direct insights into bullying experiences and policy implementation in schools. In addition, analysis of school policy documents and related reports was used to understand the context of anti-bullying policies. Additional data were also obtained through field observations and case studies, allowing researchers to identify social dynamics and factors influencing policy implementation in the educational environment.

This research involved three main groups: students, teachers, and school administrators. Each group provided unique perspectives on implementing anti-bullying policies in schools.

- a. Students: This study's participants came from various educational levels, ranging from elementary to high school. They were selected because they had direct experiences with bullying, either as victims or witnesses. These students provided deep insights into how bullying occurs in their schools, its impact on emotional well-being and academic performance, and their views on the effectiveness of existing policies and interventions. Students' experiences and

perspectives are crucial for understanding the real impact of bullying and how school policies can be improved to protect them.

- b. Teachers: The participating teachers came from diverse backgrounds and had varying teaching experiences. They offered professional views on implementing anti-bullying policies in the classroom and school. As policy implementers and educators who directly interact with students, teachers provide insights into the challenges they face in recognizing, preventing, and handling bullying and how they support the involved students. Teachers' perspectives and experiences are essential for assessing the effectiveness of policies and identifying areas that need improvement.
- c. School Administrators: School administrators, including principals and vice-principals, provided views from a managerial and policy perspective. They are responsible for implementing anti-bullying policies throughout the school, ensuring compliance with standard operating procedures (SOPs), and ensuring that all school staff adhere to the guidelines. Administrators also play a role in designing and socializing policies to the school community, including students and parents. Their perspective is crucial for understanding how policies are formulated, implemented, and evaluated at the institutional level.

The combination of perspectives from students, teachers, and school administrators provides a comprehensive view of how bullying occurs and how anti-bullying policies are implemented in schools. This combination allows researchers to gain deeper insights into the strengths and weaknesses of current policies and offer recommendations for future improvements

Data Analysis from Interviews

After the interviews were completed, the collected data were analyzed using qualitative processes. The first step in this analysis was transcribing the interviews, where the interview recordings were converted into written text. These transcripts were then read multiple times to identify relevant themes, patterns, and categories related to the research focus.

Data analysis was conducted using a thematic approach. The researcher looked for specific patterns in the participants' responses that could provide insights into the issue of bullying and the implementation of anti-bullying policies. The researcher also considered each participant's social and cultural contexts to understand how their backgrounds influenced their views and experiences.

The procedure for identifying gaps and patterns in policy implementation involved several key steps. First, data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and policy document analysis. The collected data were then

analyzed using a thematic approach to find recurring patterns and gaps in policy implementation. The results of this analysis were compared with existing policy standards to assess effectiveness and identify areas that require improvement. This procedure helps uncover dynamics that may have been overlooked and provides recommendations for improving future policy implementation.

RESULTS

Teachers' Responses to the Anti-Bullying Policy

The interviews revealed that both teachers and school administrators were unaware of the existence of the anti-bullying policy in their schools. This was evident from the absence of formal mechanisms to address bullying cases, such as standard operating procedures (SOPs) or a dedicated team tasked with handling bullying issues. One school administrator stated in their interview, "In our school, we do not have a mechanism for handling bullying or a special team to address the issue." Another teacher also mentioned, "Due to the heavy workload of teachers, there is a bit of a loss of control over issues related to bullying."

Furthermore, the interviews revealed a lack of literacy among teachers and school principals regarding the existence of indigenous religions in Indonesia. This lack of knowledge raises concerns about how students who follow this belief are treated in the school environment, especially concerning protection from bullying. This concern was highlighted by a state school teacher who asked, "What is this belief? Is it Hinduism, Buddhism, or something else?" Additionally, A teacher for indigenous religion at the elementary school level added, "It would be fine if the task given was just drawing during Islamic studies, but assigning the task of writing Arabic letters, which is not suitable for students with indigenous belief, is something I object to." A school administrator also mentioned, "Quranic lessons are intended for Muslim students." Still, in reality, students with Indigenous religion were also included in these lessons, as noted by a teacher who joked, "When the child wanted to keep attending Islamic classes, I jokingly offered, you can join my class. " This illustrates a lack of teacher literacy regarding education regulations in Indonesia.

Another finding revealed that the lack of understanding of diversity, tolerance, and inclusivity contributes to the high incidence of bullying in schools. For example, students with indigenous religions are still required to participate in Quranic lessons, even though this conflicts with their beliefs. This was further supported by a school administrator who stated, "Our young teachers, especially

the Quran teachers, are still very fanatical and do not know much about the existence of the indigenous religions in Indonesia."

These findings indicate a significant gap in the implementation of policies aimed at protecting students from bullying (Kenny et al., 2023). This lack of knowledge can lead to insufficient protection for students, especially those from minority groups such as students with indigenous religions.

Additionally, the lack of awareness about the existence of these belief systems in Indonesia highlights an urgent need to increase awareness and understanding of diversity in schools. This is crucial to prevent discrimination and bullying based on differences in belief or religion. Based on these findings, it is recommended that more intensive training and socialization of anti-bullying policies and religious diversity be provided to all teachers and school principals. The government and local education departments must also ensure that each school has a clear mechanism for addressing bullying, including establishing a dedicated task force. These steps are important for creating a safe and inclusive school environment for all students, regardless of their religious or belief backgrounds.

School Responses to the Anti-Bullying Policy

The school's responses to the anti-bullying policy varied, but many reflected a lack of understanding and awareness. This was evident from a young teacher's statement, "I am not aware of the bullying policy." Some schools did not fully understand or implement the policy, with many teachers unaware of the regulations. Moreover, some schools lacked formal mechanisms for handling bullying cases, such as standard operating procedures (SOPs) or forming a dedicated team. This lack of knowledge indicates the need for more intensive socialization and training to ensure the anti-bullying policy is effectively implemented, creating a safe and inclusive environment for all students.

The anti-bullying policy in schools plays an important role, but its effectiveness varies. In some schools, the policy has helped reduce bullying incidents and create a safer student environment. For example, an administrator in a school near Bandung stated, "Our school has implemented diversity principles, so minority students are treated equally and have never experienced bullying based on their beliefs."

While the anti-bullying policy has shown positive results in some schools, significant weaknesses remain, particularly in terms of socialization and consistent implementation. The lack of training and support from educational institutions has been a major obstacle to the effective implementation of this policy in all

schools. This highlights the need for further efforts to ensure the policy is implemented properly and uniformly.

Experiences of Religious Minority Students

Students of indigenous religions often face unique challenges in schools, such as bullying and discrimination due to their beliefs. Some students shared their experiences of feeling marginalized and unsupported, even by teachers and classmates. The impact of this was significant, including a decrease in self-confidence, the emergence of anxiety, and disruption to the learning process. These stories highlight the importance of inclusive anti-bullying policies and the application of diversity values in schools to protect and support students from minority belief groups so that they can learn in a safe environment that respects differences.

Non-minority students generally do not face the same challenges as students of the indigenous belief regarding bullying and discrimination in schools. They are typically more accepted in the school's social environment and rarely experience unfair treatment due to their beliefs. As a result, non-minority students tend to have higher self-confidence and feel more supported by teachers and classmates. This difference underscores the importance of more inclusive and proactive anti-bullying policies to ensure that all students, regardless of their religious or cultural backgrounds, can learn in a safe and equitable environment.

DISCUSSION

Analysis of Gaps in Policy Implementation

A lack of understanding and awareness of anti-bullying policies among teachers and school staff often causes systemic barriers to addressing bullying in schools. (Junindra et al., n.d.; Nuraeni et al., 2023; Samsul, 2020). Uneven dissemination of information and insufficient training have resulted in suboptimal policy implementation. Moreover, the absence of formal mechanisms such as standard operating procedures (SOPs) and dedicated teams has led to inconsistent handling of bullying cases. (Kusmiati et al., 2024). Other barriers include insufficient institutional support and a lack of understanding of diversity. (Sya'bani & Kuncorowati, 2020), which exacerbates the situation for students from minority groups. Systemic reforms are urgently needed to create a safer and more inclusive environment (Mayasaroh, 2020).

Teachers and school administrators, often unconsciously, may prolong bullying issues if they fail to act decisively or do not recognize the early signs

(Nuraeni et al., 2023). Their lack of understanding of anti-bullying policies and the importance of diversity and inclusion can make bullies feel secure from consequences. In addition, the absence of SOPs and adequate institutional support for handling bullying cases worsens the situation. Therefore, a more proactive and comprehensive intervention is needed to prevent bullying from becoming ingrained in school culture.

Implications for Policy and Practice

To enhance anti-bullying efforts in schools, a more proactive approach is required. First, anti-bullying policies need to be widely disseminated to all teachers, staff, and students through regular training and open discussions. (Parapat & Royanto, 2018). Second, schools should establish dedicated teams or task forces responsible for monitoring and addressing bullying cases quickly and effectively. (Kenny et al., 2023). Third, character education that emphasizes the values of diversity, empathy, and inclusion must be prioritized. (SASIKOME, 2022). Lastly, it is essential to provide a safe and accessible reporting mechanism for students so they can report bullying without fear. ("<https://itjen.kemdikbud.go.id/web/mencegah-perundungan-di-lingkungan-pendidikan/>," 2023).

Schools should implement several strategies to better support religious minority students. First, teachers and staff should be socialized and trained on religious diversity to enhance their awareness and understanding. Second, creating support groups or mentoring programs specifically for religious minority students can help them feel more valued and cared for. Third, strict enforcement of anti-discrimination policies and safe reporting mechanisms should be ensured for students. Finally, involving parents and the community in school activities can strengthen social support and encourage inclusivity.

Potential Impact on the Educational Environment

The effective implementation of anti-bullying policies can significantly improve safety and inclusivity in schools. (Kusmiati et al., 2024; Parapat & Royanto, 2018). When these policies are adequately enforced, students from various backgrounds, including religious minority groups, will feel safer and more valued. This creates a positive learning environment where every student can thrive without fear of bullying. Additionally, policies that support diversity and inclusion will help build a more harmonious school culture where differences are respected and cooperation among students is encouraged, fostering a fairer and more supportive environment for all (Mumin, 2018; Sya'bani & Kuncorowati, 2020).

The effective implementation of anti-bullying policies offers essential long-term benefits for students' well-being. By creating a safe and inclusive school environment, students can grow emotionally, socially, and academically without the hindrance of bullying. This sense of security helps boost confidence, build positive social relationships, and foster mutual respect among students. Furthermore, by promoting a culture that supports and values differences, students will be better prepared to face challenges outside of school, bringing these positive values into their lives and becoming more tolerant and empathetic.

CONCLUSION

The responses of teachers and schools to anti-bullying policies remain varied and are often suboptimal due to a lack of understanding, socialization, and training. The absence of formal mechanisms such as standard operating procedures (SOPs) and insufficient institutional support has resulted in inconsistent policy implementation, allowing bullying to persist, particularly among minority students. To create a safe and inclusive school environment, intensive socialization, regular training, and the formation of dedicated teams to effectively handle bullying are necessary. By doing so, schools can promote a culture that values diversity and sustainably prevents bullying.

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