



Implications of child-friendly school policies in reducing cases of violence against children in elementary schools

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to analyze the impact of implementing child-friendly school policies in elementary schools. This research is quantitative research with survey design. Observations on the implementation of the policy were made to several schools in the Kulon Progo area. Analysis of field data regarding cases of child violence was carried out through descriptive statistics and literature review as a description of the condition of child-friendly schools in Indonesia. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of child-friendly school policies in the Kulon Progo Region is in the quite appropriate category. It is necessary to take steps in optimizing the applicable child-friendly school policy model. The constraint factors in implementing child-friendly school policies still need special attention, especially for education providers and the government.

Keywords: child-friendly school, child violence

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Introduction

The shift in social institutions that has resulted in rampant immoral acts and violence against children in the current era still needs special attention, especially in the world of education. Whereas ideally education should develop all things about the positive potential of children including the spirit of mutual understanding, peace, tolerance, gender equality, and friendship between all nations, ethnicities, religions, including the children of the community (Haris & Al-Fatih, 2020). Therefore, it is an object that must be guarded and protected for the achievement of educational goals as well as to guarantee their rights as citizens.

Children are the next generation of the nation who need legal protection in all areas of their lives. Every child has rights in all aspects of life, including the right to live, grow and participate according to their dignity and worth, as well as obtain protection from all forms of violence and discrimination (Erdianti & Al-Fatih, 2020; Yulianto, 2016). On the other hand, children often become an outlet for violence against the problems experienced by adults, both at home, at school, and in the community. For example, acts of violence that often occur in schools, for example by providing a deterrent effect to students who are considered naughty by the teacher through speech or verbal actions, and sometimes punishment is given by pinching, twisting, or kicking. Of course, this has also violated human rights and applicable laws and regulations.

The thing that needs to be emphasized in education in schools today is that schools are not only a means of transferring knowledge, but also used to produce outputs that are able to adapt to the social environment. Schools must have wisdom in responding to how to discipline children by sticking to the concept of child protection for the child's future (Erdianti & Al-Fatih, 2019). Schools are institutions that are expected to prevent negative behaviors that may threaten children (Schaps & Solomon, 2003). School is a public facility for most children around the world that can provide experience as a provision to prepare the younger generation to face the world of society in the future.

By 2021, more than 689 million children in elementary schools and 513 million children in secondary schools will every day be able to develop their potential and enrich their lives. School is an important place for children to develop their potential (Barth et al., 2004; Obaki, 2017). But the fact is that according to UNICEF, schools do not always provide positive experiences for children. Various



negative treatments such as threats of punishment, humiliation, intimidation or even violence from teachers and fellow students occur in schools. Children who face these negative conditions do not only happen at school. The home and community environment can also pose challenges that make it difficult for children to enroll in school, attend regularly, complete or reach a predetermined level of learning.

The fulfillment of education that is in line with development goals in the millennial era is not only imposed on schools, but requires special attention from all parties involved, both the government and parents of students. This means providing safe and protective schools with the support of trained staff and teachers, equipped with appropriate facilities and infrastructure for learning. Since children in each area face different conditions and have different needs, the school should involve the active role of parents and the surrounding community in covering up existing deficiencies. The position of parents cannot be separated from the interests of their children's education (Sujarwo et al., 2021). Good interactions in the family environment will provide a sense of security and comfort for children (Pangestu et al., 2020). In addition, the community also has an important role in the success of educational goals. Child-friendly schools need to be developed to achieve minimum standards of knowledge, social and religious attitudes, and skills in the applicable curriculum. Child-friendly schools are needed to create a multidimensional concept of quality and meet the needs of children as learners.

UNICEF in 2005 has created a prototype child-friendly school that serves as the basis for developing national-scale policies in designing and implementing child-friendly schools in every country. The objectives of UNICEF in developing the child-friendly school model are (UNICEF, 2005); 1) provide an introduction to the concept of child-friendly schools, the underlying ideology, and the main principles that form the basis for the main characteristics of child-friendly schools so that they can be adapted to different contexts and circumstances in each country; 2) outline, with supporting arguments, the ways in which child-friendly school models can consistently contribute to quality education in various national contexts; 3) provide practical guidance on the design, construction and maintenance of safe, environmentally friendly child-friendly schools where children can learn, emphasizing community relations, influence pedagogical considerations, cost-effectiveness and sustainability; 4) provide practical guidance on the operation and management of child-friendly schools, outlining the roles of principals, teachers, non-teacher staff, students, parents, communities and local and national education authorities; 5) provide practical guidance on the learning process in child-friendly schools; 6) emphasize the attitude of fostering a sense of togetherness in child-friendly schools; and 7) offer guidance and tools to address environmental risks and vulnerabilities to climate change in schools and surrounding communities.

Education policies in Indonesia, especially child-friendly school policies, are not only discussed in the national context, but have become the policy agenda at the provincial, district/city, sub-district and at least the education unit level. Policies at the school level are closely related to Regional Autonomy, school-based management and community-based management (Hajaroh et al., 2017). The goal of developing a child-friendly school model is to move schools and education systems progressively towards quality standards, address all elements that affect the welfare and rights of children as learners and elementary beneficiaries of teaching, and improve other school functions. In addition, of course, children hope to get comfort and safety during the education process at school. However, is the current child-friendly school policy able to reduce cases of violence against children in Indonesia, especially in elementary schools?

Methods

This study uses a type of quantitative research. The design of this study was carried out using a survey. Observations were made to 19 schools implementing child-friendly school policies in the Kulon Progo Region to find out how far the implementation of the policies followed UNICEF standards. A literacy study was conducted to compare the results of observations on cases of violence against children in the Kulon Progo area and in Indonesia to conclude whether the goal of child-friendly schools has been achieved or the current model needs to be improved. The data obtained from the field were analyzed using descriptive analysis. The dimensions measured in observations regarding the implementation of child-friendly school policies are described in Table 1.

Table 1. Dimensions of child-friendly school policy

No.	Indicators	Criteria
1.	Minimum service standards in education units	
2.	Anti-violence policy (fellow students, educators and education staff, including other school employees)	
3.	Code of ethics for the organization of education units	
4.	Health programs and facilities in education units	Very suitable
5.	Safe, comfortable, healthy, and clean, and accessible environment and infrastructure that meet SNI for construction and buildings	Suitable Quite appropriate
6.	Child participation	Not suitable
7.	Cultivating noble values and cultural arts	Need improvement
8.	Educators and education personnel trained in the Convention on the Rights of the Child	
9.	Safety program from home and/or to school	
10.	Community and business participation in schools	

Results and Discussion

This research was conducted based on the objective of analyzing the impact of implementing child-friendly school policies in elementary schools. The results of observations made by researchers managed to collect data from 19 schools in the Kulon Progo area with the status of child-friendly schools. Of the 10 indicators for child-friendly schools, 98 questions were formed. The average assessment of the quality of the implementation of child-friendly school policies in 19 schools against the appropriate child-friendly school indicators is shown in Table 2 as follows.

Table 2. Results of observations of child-friendly schools in Kulon Progo

No.	Indicators	Criteria				
		Very suitable	Suitable	Quite appropriate	Not suitable	Need improvement
1.	Minimum service standards in education units	3	2	7	4	3
2.	Anti-violence policy (fellow students, educators and education staff, including other school employees)	1	3	8	4	3
3.	Code of ethics for the organization of education units	2	3	5	8	1
4.	Health programs and facilities in education units	2	4	6	6	1
5.	Safe, comfortable, healthy, and clean, and accessible environment and infrastructure that meet SNI for construction and buildings	2	3	4	8	2
6.	Child participation	1	4	6	4	4
7.	Cultivating noble values and cultural arts	2	4	6	5	2
8.	Educators and education personnel trained in the Convention on the Rights of the Child	2	3	7	4	3
9.	Safety program from home and/or to school	1	2	7	4	5
10.	Community and business participation in schools	2	4	4	4	5
Average		1,8	3,2	6	5,1	2,9
%		9,47	16,84	31,58	26,84	15,26

Based on Table 2, it can be concluded that the implementation of child-friendly school policies in the Kulon Progo Region is in the quite appropriate category. It is necessary to take steps in optimizing the applicable child-friendly school policy model. The constraint factors in implementing child-friendly school policies in Indonesia still need special attention, especially for education providers and the government. The results of the literacy study on the implementation of child-friendly schools indicate that the constraining factors in implementing child-friendly schools in schools include; 1) the optimal fulfillment of child-friendly learning; 2) hampering the development of facilities and infrastructure as a component of child-friendly schools; 3) not according to standards and procedures in implementing child-friendly schools; and 4) the absence of harmonious social relations between the school and some parents (Putri & Akmal, 2019). Meanwhile, other research shows that the obstacles faced by schools in implementing child-friendly schools include the limited school budget to support the development of school facilities and infrastructure towards ideal child-friendly school conditions, and the limited number of teachers and the density of teacher activities in schools (Rangkuti & Maksum, 2019).

Cases of children dropping out of school in the Kulon Progo Regency, D.I. Yogyakarta from 2018-2020 also experienced an increase at all levels of education. For the level of education in elementary schools, the highest number of cases of children dropping out of school was found in the Sentolo and Galur sub-districts. Some of this information is presented in Figure 1 below.

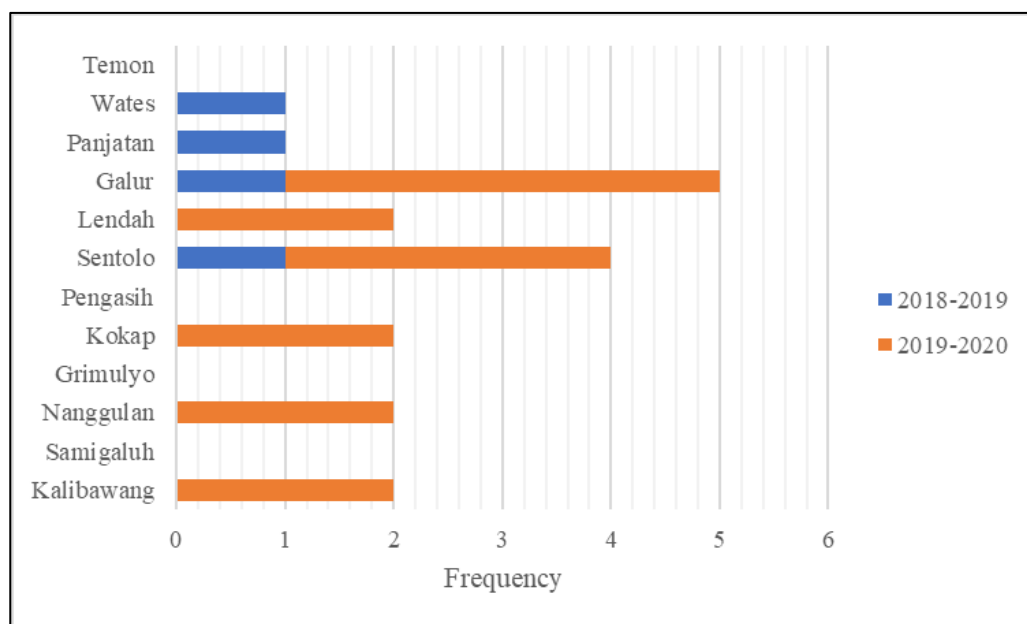


Figure 1. Number of children dropping out of school in Kulon Progo Regency in 2018-2020

The amount of violence against children that occurs in the Kulon Progo Regency has also increased every year. The highest increase occurred in the Pengasih and Panjatan sub-districts, namely 33% and 12% of recorded cases. Although cases of a decrease in the amount of violence against children were found, especially in the Galur area, for other areas there were at least 5 cases of increase in reports each year. The results of the presentation of this data indicate that the expected situation has not yet been fully achieved. The findings of the study still found cases of dropouts in elementary school age children.

The decision to leave school without graduating is not instantaneous, but a process that occurs. Dropouts are preceded by withdrawal indicators such as poor attendance or unsuccessful school experiences such as differences in academic achievement that often begin in elementary school. Indicators of the release of all instability are accompanied by feelings of alienation, a low sense of belonging, and a dislike of school (Christenson et al., 2001). Children dropping out of school is an event that does not appear suddenly without any symptoms that trigger the event. This is in accordance with what Sheldon (2007) explained that the problem of absenteeism is an early symptom of dropping out of school in students. This means that the absence of children at school is a concrete trigger that can be observed by the school in preventing the risk of dropping out of school in children. If attendance can be maintained properly then the risk of dropping out of school can certainly be prevented optimally.

Various findings and previous studies have described the importance of maintaining children's attendance at school. Absenteeism not only affects students' academic progress, but also affects teacher planning in the classroom and at the same time the motivation of other students at school (Thornton et al., 2013). Chronic absenteeism has a significant relationship with behavior, one of which is violence against children and eventually dropping out of school (Ferrell et al., 2014; Gage et al., 2013; Kearney & Graczyk, 2014; Nolan et al., 2013). Furthermore, the data is data recorded at the Office of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection. Information related to these findings is presented in Figure 2 below.

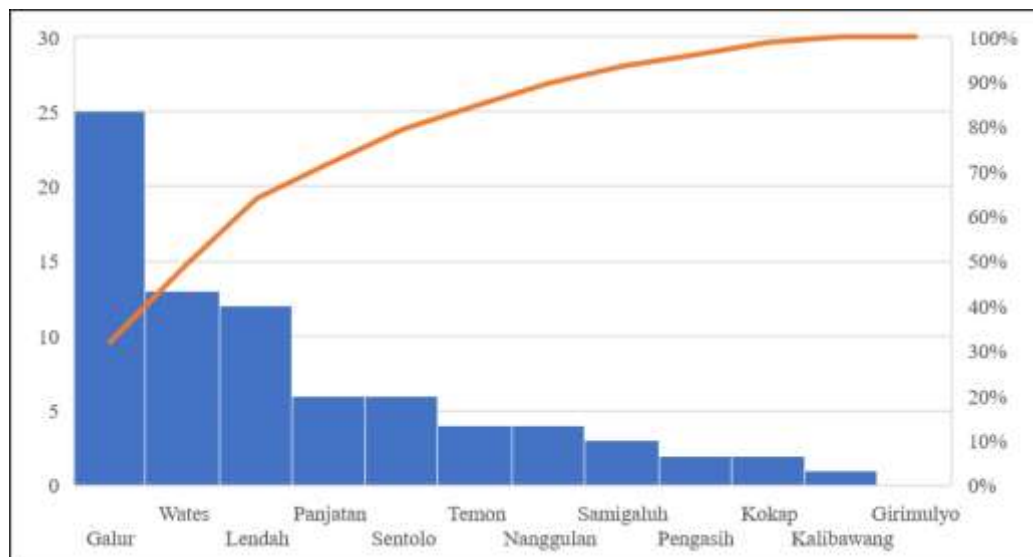


Figure 2. Increase in cases of child violence 2019-2020 Kulon Progo Regency

The data presented in Figure 2 shows that cases of violence against children are still relatively high. This is an unexpected situation. The high number of violence that occurs among these students has shown that the rights of children in articles 3 and 4 of Law no. 23 of 2002 concerning child protection has not yet been optimally fulfilled. Schools that are supposed to be safe and comfortable places for children to learn have yet to meet these needs. Schools with infrastructure that are not in accordance with the needs of children often make children unsafe and comfortable at school. Teachers as educators who should provide protection to children often become perpetrators of violence against children.

The fulfillment of children's rights requires educators to provide the maximum possible service and education patterns that focus on students (Abdullahi et al., 2017). Schools, which are essentially agents of implementing the educational process, must have a friendly culture in carrying out their functions to achieve educational goals. The problem of violence against women and children does not only occur in Indonesia. Data from the Center for Global Development shows that cases of violence against children and women in almost all countries have increased, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic (Bourgault et al., 2021). Of course, this is a global issue that needs to be handled further and quickly and efficiently together so that cases of violence against women and children which continue to increase every year can be suppressed. Education here has a very crucial role in anticipating cases of violence in society. Various education and counseling programs regarding the causes and impacts of violence on children and women must be one of the knowledge competitions that can be applied from an early age.

Child-friendly schools were initiated by emphasizing safe, clean, healthy, caring and cultured education for the environment to fulfill rights and ensure protection for children from criminal acts, discrimination, and other mistreatment, both in formal, non-formal and informal education. informal (Yosada & Kurniati, 2019). Full participation of children starting from planning, policies, learning, supervision, and complaint mechanisms related to the fulfillment of children's rights is needed in education with a child-friendly school concept.

Referring to the policy issued by UNICEF, child-friendly schools emphasize the aspects: inclusive education, effective education, safe and protected education for children, equality of rights, status, opportunities, and circumstances, and health is the main form of promotion of education, partnership relations between schools and the community (Wright et al., 2009). The importance of

creating a school environment that is child-friendly and free from violence, as well as problems in inculcating character values in elementary schools has so far been one of the important indicators in child-friendly school policies. The education process in schools must instill good moral character values in children (Wuryandani & Herwin, 2021). Schools should not only produce children who are intelligent in thinking, but also have a strong self-character. The internalization of these character values needs to be developed through the form of links and matches between local content of learning through cultural habituation in schools (Mannathoko, 2007). Of course, this is also the main foundation of educational units with developed characteristics such as Adiwiyata schools, healthy schools, inclusive schools, schools that are safe from disasters, and so on.

The concept of a child-friendly school is a program to create safe, clean, healthy, caring and cultured environmental conditions, which are able to guarantee the fulfillment of children's rights and protection from violence, discrimination, and other mistreatment, as long as the child is in the education unit and supports participation. children especially in planning, policy, learning and supervision (Orkodashvili, 2013). One of the problems that has caught the attention of today's world of education is violence in schools, whether perpetrated by teachers against students or by students against other students. The rise of brawls and violence (bullying) carried out by students in schools increasingly decorates news stories on the pages of print and electronic media, as evidence of the uprooting of human values. It is hoped that various parties, such as: families, communities, including schools which are the tricerter of education, play a role in restoring children's rights, because through laws and regulations on child protection, the state has guaranteed children's human rights. Every educational institution needs to reflect so that violence in schools will no longer take root. Education for character building is a priority. In addition, the government also needs to provide security, safety and welfare guarantees for the community by creating conditions conducive to the growth of the values of solidarity, tolerance, and peace.

Child-friendly schools are not building new schools, but making a school comfortable for children, and ensuring that schools fulfill children's rights and protect them, because schools become a second home for children, after their own homes. The child-friendly school model is flexible and can be adapted to different contexts in its implementation (Hajaroh et al., 2021). Child-friendly schools are not a blueprint and can be implemented in different ways with different levels of support depending on local needs for example child-friendly schools in coastal areas, child-friendly schools in rural/urban areas, child-friendly schools in border areas, and so on. If the findings in the field are still found in some cases that make children feel uncomfortable in school such as violence and bullying problems, then this is where child-friendly schools are expected to play a role not only as a concept but as an action to provide a sense of security to all school residents, especially children as students. This is not impossible, because ideally school is a place for planting good character values (Saputri & Herwin, 2020) so that it will indirectly have an impact on minimizing everything that can disturb children at school.

Conclusion

The description of the problems with children's rights that have been described is based on the findings of this study. The findings of this study have shown that the implementation of child-friendly school policies in elementary schools is still not optimal. The direct impact of implementing child-friendly schools on children has not been felt well. Some findings still show that children's problems in the educational process are related to their safety in staying in school. This finding is supported by the finding of out-of-school children, children who experience verbal and non-verbal bullying, to cases of violence that are still found in elementary schools.

A more in-depth study of the child-friendly school model that applies in Indonesia is needed. This is very important to ensure the child remains on the path of education comfortably. Important components in realizing child-friendly schools still need to be developed according to the characteristics of each school area, such as; written commitment on child-friendly school policies, child-friendly teaching and learning processes, training for educators and education staff on children's rights, child-friendly facilities and infrastructure, direct involvement of children and the community and, social capital needed to minimize the negative impact of existing technological developments.

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