Literacy as an Effort to Prevent Bullying in Elementary Schools : A Literature Study

Farinka Nurrahmah Azizah*, **Wasino Wasino, Mukh Doyin, Muzzaki Bashori**

Postgraduate School, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: farinkanurrahmahazizah@students.unnes.ac.id

Abstract. Bullying is a serious problem that can disrupt the academic and psychosocial development of students in elementary schools. This study aims to explore the role of literacy as an effort to prevent bullying in elementary schools. Literacy in this context includes reading and writing skills, as well as emotional and social literacy that is important for understanding the feelings of others and communicating effectively. This article uses the literature review method or library research, with data collection through the documentation method. Data analysis was conducted using content analysis techniques, which involved repeated reading of the literature and cross-checking between literature to ensure the accuracy of the discussion and prevent misinformation in data analysis. In this discussion, empirical research results and case examples from various countries that demonstrate the effectiveness of literacy programs in reducing bullying incidents in primary schools are presented. The practical implications of these research findings for the development of holistic and integrated literacy programs are also discussed, including prevention and intervention strategies involving teachers, parents and the whole school community.

Keywords: keywords; keywords; keywords

INTRODUCTION

Bullying is a complex and serious problem that occurs in various parts of the world, including in Indonesia. Bullying behavior in elementary schools often not only affects the psychological well-being of victims, but can also have a long-term impact on their social and academic development (Ula, 2024). Children who are victims of bullying tend to experience various problems such as low self-confidence, anxiety, depression, and in extreme cases, suicidal ideation. These negative impacts are not only felt by the victim, but can also affect the school environment as a whole, creating an atmosphere that is unsafe and not conducive to learning (Tanjung et al, 2024). In addition, bullying perpetrators can also experience behavioral problems and difficulties in establishing healthy social relationships in the future. Therefore, addressing bullying in primary schools is a crucial issue and requires a comprehensive approach that involves teachers, students and parents in prevention and intervention efforts.

As awareness of the negative impact of bullying increases, various strategies have been implemented to prevent and address this issue. One approach that is gaining increasing attention is literacy. Literacy, in this context, not only refers to the ability to read and write, but also includes social and emotional literacy which involves understanding, managing emotions, empathy and other social skills (Swandewi et al, 2024). Social and emotional literacy is important because through a deep understanding of their own and others' emotions, children can develop the skills to resolve conflicts and form healthier and more harmonious relationships with their peers (Nadia & Suhaili, 2023). Literacy is considered an important tool in bullying prevention as it can help children understand and manage their emotions, increase empathy towards others, and build positive social relationships. With good social and emotional literacy, children can also learn to better appreciate differences and work together in creating an inclusive school environment free from bullying (Husnunnadia & Slam, 2024).

In Indonesia, literacy improvement efforts in primary schools have become part of the national curriculum. These literacy programs are designed to improve students' reading and writing skills, but their potential is much broader (Nurlaili, 2022). However, the application of literacy as a bullying prevention strategy still requires further research and development. Literacy in the context of bullying prevention includes teaching effective communication skills, developing empathy, as well as a deep understanding of the importance of respecting diversity and avoiding behaviors that harm others (Sariani et al, 2023). Social and emotional literacy provides children with the ability to manage conflict in constructive ways, better recognize and respond to their own emotions as well as those of others. By integrating literacy as part of a holistic approach to bullying prevention, schools can help students build strong interpersonal skills and create safer and more inclusive learning environments. This effort also

requires active involvement from teachers, parents and the school community as a whole to ensure that the literacy taught can be effectively applied in students' daily lives (Fadilah et al, 2024).

Bullying in elementary schools often occurs in verbal, physical, and social forms. Verbal bullying involves insults, teasing, or the use of harsh words to hurt the victim (Dachi & Telaumbanua, 2022). Physical bullying includes acts of violence such as hitting, kicking or pushing. Meanwhile, social bullying can take the form of exclusion, spreading rumors, or other actions aimed at damaging the victim's social reputation (Novriyansah et al, 2024). Children at primary school age are at a developmental stage where they begin to build a social identity and learn to interact with peers. At this stage, they are particularly vulnerable to peer influence and begin to develop ways to express and manage emotions and build social relationships. Therefore, appropriate intervention at this stage is crucial to prevent the development of more severe bullying behaviors in the future. By teaching social and emotional literacy, children can learn to recognize and manage their emotions, develop empathy, and build effective communication skills (Nuraeni et al, 2023). This not only helps prevent bullying, but also supports healthy social and emotional development, forming a strong foundation for positive social interactions throughout their lives.

Literacy can be an effective tool in bullying prevention in several ways (Jusnita & Ali, 2022). First, emotional literacy helps children identify and manage their own emotions and understand the emotions of others. When children are able to manage negative emotions such as anger or frustration, they are less likely to express these emotions through bullying behavior. Secondly, social literacy teaches children important social skills, such as communicating well, cooperating and resolving conflicts constructively. These skills are essential in building a positive and supportive school environment where bullying behavior is not tolerated. Children who have good social skills are better able to build positive relationships with their peers and are more likely to be upstanders, i.e. individuals who stand up against bullying and support victims.

Third, literacy can also include education about diversity and inclusion. By understanding and appreciating differences between individuals, children can develop a more inclusive and tolerant attitude. Literacy education that covers topics such as cultural diversity, gender and ability can help reduce prejudice and discrimination that often fuel bullying.

Bullying is a serious problem that can disrupt the academic and psychosocial development of students in primary schools. This study aims to explore the role of literacy as an effort to prevent bullying in primary schools. Literacy in this context includes the ability to read and write, as well as emotional and social literacy which is important for understanding others' feelings and communicating effectively.

METHODS

In this study, researchers used the literature review method or library research. Data was collected through the documentation method. The references used include scientific literature related to theoretical studies. The steps in library research include (Ridwan et al, 2021): 1) introduction, 2) main part, and 3) conclusion. The data sources for this research are taken from relevant literature such as books, scientific articles, or journals related to the chosen topic. The data collection technique in this literature study method involves collecting research data based on various variables contained in articles, journals, notes, books, and so on (Aqil, 2020).

This research uses content analysis techniques, by reading and checking the literature repeatedly to ensure accurate research results and minimize errors caused by researcher limitations, such as errors in conveying information. The research report is organized based on the principles of simplicity and ease, considering that the researcher has limited abilities that prevent in-depth and detailed literature review. This simplicity and ease also aims to make it easier for readers to understand the essence of the literature on literacy as an effort to prevent bullying in elementary schools. With this approach, it is hoped that readers can easily capture the main points of the research conducted, even though researchers have not been able to conduct more complex analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Basic Concepts of Literacy

Literacy is fundamentally the ability of an individual to read, write, speak, and understand language effectively. Over time, this concept has evolved to encompass the ability to understand and use information from various texts and media. According to UNESCO, literacy includes the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create,

communicate, and compute using printed and written materials across different contexts. It is an ongoing learning process that empowers individuals to achieve their goals, expand their knowledge, and actively participate in their communities and broader society (Sitanggan et al, 2023).

Literacy goes beyond reading and writing; it is crucial in primary education as it lays the foundation for learning across all subjects. Key reasons for the importance of literacy in primary schools include:

1) The Basis of Lifelong Learning
2) Basic literacy is essential for lifelong learning. Strong reading and writing skills enable students to acquire new knowledge and skills relevant to the future.
3) Improving Critical Thinking Skills
4) Literacy fosters the development of critical and analytical thinking skills, helping students evaluate information, understand different perspectives, and make informed decisions.
5) Developing Communication Skills
6) Literacy enhances communication skills, allowing students to express their ideas and feelings clearly and effectively.
7) Supporting Academic Success
8) There is a direct link between strong literacy skills and academic success. Students with good literacy skills are typically more successful in various subjects as they can better comprehend instructions and texts.
9) Expanding Insight and Empathy
10) Literacy allows students to explore the world beyond their immediate surroundings. By reading diverse texts, they can broaden their horizons and develop empathy by understanding different perspectives and experiences (Muhaimin et al, 2023).

Literacy is not only fundamental for academic success but also plays a vital role in shaping student character, particularly in primary schools. Beyond its basic functions of reading, writing, and comprehension, literacy serves as a key tool in bullying prevention by fostering empathy, teaching positive values, and enhancing social and emotional skills (Pertami et al, 2024). Through engaging with diverse stories and literature, students can develop a deeper understanding of others' perspectives, which cultivates empathy and social awareness. Additionally, literacy provides a platform for teaching essential values such as honesty, respect, and cooperation, which are crucial for building a supportive and inclusive school environment. It also equips students with strong communication and conflict resolution skills, enabling them to handle and prevent bullying situations more effectively. Furthermore, literacy encourages reflective thinking, helping students consider the consequences of their actions and make informed, ethical decisions. Overall, literacy is a powerful tool for promoting both academic and character development, contributing to a more compassionate and socially aware student body.

Literacy is a powerful tool in bullying prevention in elementary schools. By understanding and implementing different types of literacy, schools can equip students with the skills they need to read, write, think critically and communicate effectively. Literacy not only supports academic success but also contributes to positive character development. Through integrated and comprehensive literacy programs, schools can create an inclusive and bullying-free environment where all students feel safe and valued (Nazmi, 2023). The implementation of effective strategies and the involvement of the entire school community in literacy efforts will ensure that literacy becomes a strong foundation for bullying prevention and the formation of good student character.

Bullying in Elementary School

Bullying in primary schools is a multifaceted issue that includes various forms, contributing factors, and significant impacts on student development. It is characterized by repeated aggressive behavior intended to harm or intimidate those perceived as weaker and can manifest as physical, verbal, social, or cyberbullying (Yuli & Efendi, 2022). Physical bullying involves direct harm like hitting or kicking, while verbal bullying includes insults and threats. Social bullying aims to isolate victims through exclusion or rumor-spreading, and cyberbullying occurs through digital platforms like social media (Febrianti et al, 2024; Aprilianto & Fatikh, 2024).

Several factors contribute to bullying, including individual traits such as low empathy or aggressive tendencies (Nida, 2021), family conditions like harsh parenting or domestic violence, and a school's lack of anti-bullying policies and supportive environment. Wider social influences, including media portrayals of violence and cultural norms, can also exacerbate bullying behaviors (Novaliendri et al, 2020).

The impacts of bullying are profound. Victims may suffer from emotional issues like anxiety and

depression, reduced academic performance, and physical symptoms. Perpetrators risk future behavioral problems, academic setbacks, and potential criminal behavior. Bystanders can experience fear, anxiety, and guilt, contributing to a tense and insecure school environment.

Relationship between Literacy and Bullying

The relationship between literacy and bullying in primary schools is complex yet crucial for both education and student well-being. Literacy encompasses more than reading and writing; it involves understanding, reasoning, and utilizing information, which can be instrumental in preventing and addressing bullying (Aslan & Aybek, 2020). Literacy enhances social awareness, helping students comprehend social dynamics, respond to others' needs, and understand the impact of their own actions. Through literacy programs that include stories about tolerance and cooperation, students can develop empathy and reduce bullying behavior.

Moreover, literacy aids students in managing their emotions and articulating their experiences of bullying, thus enabling them to seek help and respond constructively to criticism. Access to diverse stories and information through literacy can combat stereotypes and promote inclusivity, reducing bullying based on differences such as culture or gender identity. Literacy empowers students to advocate for themselves and others, enhancing their confidence in addressing and combating bullying (Falakh, 2023).

However, challenges exist in implementing effective literacy programs for bullying prevention. It is essential to teach literacy not just as a technical skill but as a means to foster understanding, empathy, and inclusiveness. Successful implementation requires collaboration among teachers, parents, and the school community, including professional development for educators on using literacy to prevent bullying and support student well-being.

Engaging parents in literacy and bullying prevention is also vital. Schools should facilitate programs to inform parents about literacy's role in preventing bullying and ways to support their children. Creating an inclusive and supportive school environment, with clear policies and resources for addressing bullying, further supports these efforts. Literacy programs should be student-centered, incorporating relevant materials and interactive activities to enhance engagement and social relationships.

Regular evaluation of literacy programs is necessary to measure their effectiveness and make adjustments based on student needs and school dynamics. By integrating literacy into bullying prevention efforts, schools can create a safe and supportive learning environment, promoting both academic success and overall student well-being.

The Role of Literacy in Bullying Prevention

Literacy can play an important role in bullying prevention efforts in primary schools. Literacy is not only about the ability to read and write, but also includes emotional and social literacy that helps students understand and manage their feelings and interact with others positively (Yunianto & Yudha, 2021). A good literacy program can increase students' awareness of the consequences of bullying and encourage them to engage in more prosocial behavior.

Emotional literacy, for example, can help students identify and express their emotions in healthy ways. Students who are able to recognize and manage their own emotions are more likely to be able to resolve conflicts without having to resort to violence or bullying. In addition, social literacy can teach important skills such as empathy, cooperation and effective communication, all of which contribute to the creation of a safe and inclusive school environment.

Literacy programs designed for bullying prevention can include a variety of activities, such as reading books that address the theme of bullying and peaceful solutions, class discussions about personal experiences and positive values, and collaborative projects that encourage cooperation and understanding among students. In addition, the integration of technology in literacy, such as the use of apps and digital platforms that teach socio-emotional skills, can help expand the reach and impact of these programs.

Prevention and Intervention Strategies

Addressing bullying in primary schools requires a comprehensive and holistic approach. Schools should develop and implement a clear and consistent anti-bullying policy. This policy should include a definition of bullying, reporting procedures, as well as sanctions for perpetrators and support for victims. All members of the school community, including students, teachers, staff and parents, should be involved in this effort.

Character education and social-emotional skill development are key components in bullying prevention (Dini, 2022). These programs can help students develop empathy, communication skills

and the ability to manage conflict in healthy ways. In addition, literacy learning that focuses on values such as respect, fairness and social responsibility can reduce the incidence of bullying by creating an inclusive and supportive school culture.

Direct intervention is also needed to deal with cases of bullying that occur. Teachers and school staff should be trained to recognize the signs of bullying and respond quickly and effectively (Marhamah et al, 2023). Students involved in bullying, whether as perpetrators or victims, should get appropriate guidance and support, including counseling if needed. Parental involvement is also very important. Schools should work with parents to raise awareness about bullying and provide tools and strategies to support their children at home. Open communication between schools and families can help ensure that cases of bullying are identified and addressed early.

Empirical Studies and Case Examples

Empirical studies demonstrate that integrating literacy programs with bullying prevention efforts can effectively reduce bullying in schools. Research indicates that literacy programs focusing on social-emotional skills often lead to decreased aggressive behavior and improved social relationships among students. For instance, the "Literacy for Equality" program in Indonesia uses stories and activities to teach values of equality and mutual respect, enhancing students' literacy while promoting a safe, inclusive environment. Similarly, a Canadian program combining empathy and communication skills with relevant reading materials significantly reduced bullying, engaging the entire school community in fostering a supportive environment. The "Steps to Respect" program in the United States also showed positive outcomes, using reading materials and classroom activities to improve students' understanding of respect and empathy, leading to reduced bullying and improved emotional well-being.

Several specific studies reinforce the effectiveness of literacy in bullying prevention: Anggita (2023) demonstrated that digital literacy can prevent cyberbullying by educating students about online risks and impacts. Martini et al. (2024) found that using fairy tales to convey anti-bullying messages is effective in elementary schools. Razzaq et al. (2023) showed that anti-bullying video literacy programs can reduce bullying incidents among primary school children. Syria et al. (2024) highlighted the use of card games to enhance bullying prevention literacy among junior high students. Soto-García et al. (2024) emphasized the role of teachers in bullying prevention through peer mentorship, suggesting that integrating literacy into these programs could further support anti-bullying efforts. Vartiainen et al. (2023) discussed how media literacy helps students navigate and respond to misinformation, which can be relevant in addressing bullying. Van Aalst et al. (2022) stressed the importance of teacher training in identifying and addressing bullying, while Hayden and Prince (2023) highlighted the role of positive representations of disability in children's books in fostering inclusion and reducing bullying.

In order to create a safer and more supportive school environment, literacy can be integrated into bullying prevention efforts in schools. Utilizing the findings from various studies, a diverse and integrated literacy program can be designed to increase students' awareness, understanding and skills in identifying, preventing and addressing bullying behavior. It also helps strengthen students' social and emotional skills and promotes values such as tolerance, empathy and respect for differences. Thus, integrating literacy into bullying prevention efforts in schools not only helps protect students from the negative impacts of bullying but also forms a strong foundation for inclusive and sustainable learning.

CONCLUSION

Literature review reveals that literacy plays an important role in bullying prevention efforts in elementary schools. Literacy integration, including digital literacy, storytelling literacy, video literacy and media literacy, can help students understand, prevent and overcome bullying behavior. Through integrated and diverse programs, schools can create a safe, inclusive and supportive environment for all students. With the involvement of teachers, parents and the school community, literacy becomes an effective tool in promoting student well-being and building a better society as a whole. A holistic approach that integrates literacy in the curriculum and extracurricular activities can improve students' awareness, empathy and social skills. In addition, training for teachers and parental involvement in supporting literacy practices at home are also important. Thus, bullying prevention efforts can become more effective and sustainable, creating an environment that promotes positive attitudes, tolerance and healthy communication skills

among students.

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