



## The Importance of Establishing Harmonious School Culture to Improve Quality of Education in Indonesia

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### **Abstract**

The educational institution, largely recognized as school, plays a crucial part in the holistic development and learning of students. It offers a structured setting where students acquire essential knowledge and skills that lay the groundwork for their personal and professional advancement. Schools provide access to various resources aimed at promoting students' well-being, such as counselling services, healthcare professionals, and support networks. Additionally, schools contribute to public health efforts by imparting information on disease prevention, hygiene practices, and the importance of vaccinations. Nevertheless, the perspectives outlined represent ideals, as instances of physical and sexual violence, as well as bullying, continue to be prevalent. Hence, it is of utmost importance to cultivate a school culture rooted in harmony and prioritize peace education to prevent the aforementioned problems from arising. This present study utilizes a library research method which consists of detecting and placing sources that provide factual information or individual or expert perspectives on a research question. It is powerfully advised that Indonesian government authority and public and private school educators and policy makers to apply the better learning environments for students and all stakeholders by applying peace education into their systems.

**Keywords:** *School; Harmonious Culture; Quality Education; Indonesia*

### **Introduction**

School plays a fundamental role in the development and education of a person. It can provide a well-arranged environment for learning, utilizing individual with foundational knowledge and skills necessary for their personal and professional growth (Haddon *et al*, 2005; Ferreira *et al*, 2020). It generally offers broad curriculum that includes numerous kinds of subjects. They could be for physical and cognitive developments (Mouraz *et al*, 2013; Reiss & White, 2014; Zhou & Zhang, 2022). It also fosters personal growth and character development. It opens opportunities for social interaction, building friendships, and developing social skills. Students can learn to do collaboration and learn to understand different perspective. Moreover, it prepares learners to encounter the future by giving them essential skills and knowledge required for further education, vocational training, or employment. It imparts the foundation for higher education and specialized careers. It stimulates critical thinking skills, encourages students to question and analyze information. Via assignments, projects, and classroom discussions, students learn to see problems creatively and develop effective problem-solving strategies. It promotes

health and well-being by educating students about healthy lifestyles, nutrition, physical fitness, and mental health. Schools provide access to resources for students' well-being, including counselors, nurses, and support systems. Schools also contribute to public health by disseminating information about disease prevention, hygiene practices, and vaccinations.

However, all perspectives mentioned above are just ideals. There are many deviance attitudes found in Indonesia. It is found that, in formal education, there were 117 cases of children as victims of sexual violence in East Java at the end of February 2018 (Hadiwinata *et al.*, 2023). Therefore, legal protection for victims is crucial to be made inside the education system. Moreover, according to study conducted by Wantu (2023), bullying behavior among high school students happened in a district in Indonesia. The study displayed that the social bullying had the highest percentage at 65.20%, followed by cyber at 60.76%, physical at 46.99%, and verbal at 43.13%. This means that students engage in behaviors such as hitting, talking rudely, choosing friends, and insulting others through social media. The research also notes that bullying behavior can be caused by various factors, including seeking attention, difficulty in controlling emotions, coming from a dysfunctional family, feeling that bullying is beneficial, and lack of empathy.

Furthermore, Borualogo & Casas (2022) claimed that bullying cases in Indonesia have been happening for many years and that the number of cases is increasing over time. Bullying incidents are reported in schools and also among siblings. Despite the value of "rukun" (harmonious) in Indonesian culture, it does not seem to prevent bullying. Beliefs supportive of violence are identified as a predictor of bullying in Indonesia. The situation is very worrying, with an increasing number of serious and fatal cases being reported in the study.

To increase the awareness and the importance of overcoming this case, it is crucial to build positive school culture and peace education in Indonesia in order to prevent bullying, sexual violence, and other deviate behavior in teaching and learning environments. This present paper will discuss on why establishing harmonious school culture is crucial, how to prevent and respond to bullying and sexual violence in educational institution, and why peace education is vital.

## **Method**

This present study applies a library research method which consists of identifying and locating sources that provide factual information or personal or expert perspectives on a research question (George, 2008). This method was chosen for this investigation because of its supportive nature of efficiency; consequently, the current study requires solid theoretical and empirical evidence to back up its claims. By drawing on known scholarly publications and authoritative sources, the study hopes to reinforce its findings and add to the field's existing body of knowledge. This methodological approach allows researchers to investigate multiple perspectives and examine prior study findings in the literature. Furthermore, by using credible sources, the study hopes to ensure the trustworthiness and validity of its findings. This study uses the library research method to produce a complete and well-supported analysis that contributes to the comprehension and advancement of the subject matter.

## **Discussion**

### **Harmonious School Culture**

Building a positive school culture is essential for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for students, teachers, and staff (Sharma et al, 2015; Cinnamond, 2017; Panindranauth, 2023; Paryono & Oktarini, 2023). A positive school culture fosters a sense of belonging, promotes academic achievement, and supports the social and emotional well-being of all members of the school community.

One of the primary benefits of a positive school culture is improved academic outcomes. Studies have shown that schools with a positive culture have higher levels of student engagement, lower absenteeism rates, and improved academic achievement (Uzzaman & Karim, 2016; Chuni & Ahn, 2018; Sumiati & Lo, 2022; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2023; Claudet, 2024). A positive school culture creates a sense of belonging and community among students, which can lead to increased motivation and a greater sense of purpose in their academic pursuits.

In addition to academic benefits, a positive school culture can also improve the social and emotional well-being of students and staff. Schools with a positive culture tend to have lower rates of bullying, violence, and other negative behaviors (Sims-Schouten, 2019; Ortega, 2020; Abdillah 2023). A positive school culture also promotes positive relationships between students and teachers, which can lead to improved mental health outcomes for students.

Furthermore, a positive school culture can also have a positive impact on the broader community. Schools with a positive culture tend to have stronger relationships with families, community organizations, and local businesses (Segredo *et al*, 2017; Aliazas *et al*, 2021; Banwo *et al*, 2021; Patterson *et al*, 2021; Leverett *et al*, 2022). This can lead to increased community involvement and support for the school, which can in turn lead to improved resources and opportunities for students.

### **Bullying Prevention**

According to Borualogo & Casas (2022), to mitigate instances of bullying in Indonesia, it is essential to establish comprehensive initiatives that encompass both family and school systems. While the Indonesian government has implemented regulations and introduced child-friendly schools to ensure the safety of students, additional prevention programs targeting the microsystem and mesosystem levels are necessary. Rather than disseminating detailed information about bullying incidents or sharing videos online, mass media should assume a role in educating parents, teachers, and communities about bullying prevention. Teachers should be particularly vigilant regarding verbal bullying, especially within the classroom, and any form of minor bullying observed at school should be treated seriously to avert escalation. Intervention programs aimed at preventing bullying should not only focus on bolstering children's resilience but also on equipping parents with the necessary skills to raise their children effectively. Teachers who demonstrate care and provide positive reinforcement can effectively contribute to the prevention of bullying behaviors.

### **Sexual Violence Prevention**

Sexual violence prevention in educational institutions is a critical issue that requires a multifaceted approach. Batlukoy (2019) suggested to recognize and address risk factors that enhance the likelihood of sexual violence. The educational institution should provide support to victim of sexual violence. It can be in the form of counselling service, medical care, and legal assistance. Public and private school should have policies and procedures in place to prevent and respond to sexual violence. They should provide training for the staffs on how to prevent and respond to the issue. He maintained that the institutions must create safe environment. It can be done by locating security cameras, adequate lightings, and increased number of supervisions in areas where the issue is most likely to happen.

Supporting the previous arguments, Orozco *et al* (2022) state that educational institution has to provide education to students related to sexual and gender identities to comprehend diversities, prevent discriminations, and even murders. This enables learners to understand that sexual activity needs a consent from the actors. Furthermore, Sameshima *et al* (2020) argue that educational institution ought to collaborate with community partners to prevent sexual violence. These groups could be law enforcement, healthcare providers, and advocacy organizations.

## Peace Education

Peace education has gathered the interest of scholars and educators in recent times (Gur-Ze'ev, 2019; Haavelsrud & Stenberg, 2012; Harris, 2011; Lombardo & Polonko, 2015). This concern becomes prominent, especially when addressing tangible challenges like violence, warfare, intense conflict, oppression, and the violation of human dignity on local, national, and global levels (Chen & Astor, 2010; Flannery *et al.*, 2013; Kim *et al.*, 2006; Young *et al.*, 2006).

Based on Unicef (Loreta & Jasmin, 2010) peace education involves the dissemination of information, development of abilities, and cultivation of principle necessary to instigate positive shift in behavior among children and young individuals. Its aim is to empower them to steer clear of both physical and systemic conflict and violence, seek peaceful resolutions to disputes, and foster environments conducive to peace. This objective extends to interpersonal relationships, interactions between different groups, national contexts, and even the global stage.

Peace education is an educational framework that aims to foster a transformative culture of peace. It equips individuals with knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that challenge the perception and behaviors rooted in violent conflicts. Through raising awareness, promoting understanding, and encouraging critical thinking, peace education seeks to bring about personal and societal transformation. It empowers people to live in accordance with principles of justice, non-violence, and other peace values, and encourages them to actively contribute to creating conditions and systems that embody these values (Loreta & Jasmin, 2010).

Referring to the explanations highlighted above, Indonesian government officials and public and private school educators and policy makers are expected to be able to arrange the better learning environments for students and all stakeholders by applying peace education into their systems.

## Conclusion

The educational institution, largely recognized as school, plays a crucial part in the holistic development and learning of students. It offers a structured setting where students acquire essential knowledge and skills that lay the groundwork for their personal and professional advancement. Schools provide access to various resources aimed at promoting students' well-being, such as counselling services, healthcare professionals, and support networks. Additionally, schools contribute to public health efforts by imparting information on disease prevention, hygiene practices, and the importance of vaccinations. However, all viewpoints mentioned before just display ideals since broad cases of physical and sexual violence, and bullying cases occur. Therefore, it is crucial to foster harmonious school culture and peace education to avert all the mentioned issues above.

Building a positive school culture is essential for creating a safe and supportive learning environment that promotes academic achievement, social and emotional well-being, and community engagement. For bullying prevention, government, mass media, and teachers have to be able to take control of the system, and to provide education regarding bullying. To avert sexual violence in an institution, the rulers need to create safe environment, counselling service, and even legal protection to the victims. Peace education is vital due to its role in raising awareness about personal and community transformation. It strengthens individuals to live based on value of justice and calmness and inspire them to actively contribute to generate situations and systems that exemplify peace values.

It is strongly recommended that Indonesian government officials and public and private school educators and policy makers are able to arrange the better learning environments for students and all stakeholders by applying peace education into their systems.

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