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THE EFFECT OF SCHOOL POLICY ON BULLYING IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the influence of school policy on bullying in elementary schools in Tembalang District, Semarang City. The study used a quantitative approach with a survey method through an ex post facto correlational design. The research population consisted of 176 elementary school teachers in the Baskara Sumirat Cluster, with a sample of 122 teachers determined using a proportional random sampling technique based on the Slovin formula. Data were collected using a Likert-scale questionnaire covering the dimensions of policy formulation, policy content, policy socialization, and policy implementation, and were then analyzed using simple linear regression. The ANOVA test results showed an F value of 409.731 with a significance level of 0.000 ($p<0.05$), indicating that school policy has a significant effect on bullying. The regression equation $\hat{Y} = 202.518 - 1.055X_1$ shows a negative and significant effect, with an R-Square value of 0.773, meaning that 77.3% of the variation in bullying can be explained by school policy. These findings imply that school policies that are clearer, more consistent, and well socialized can significantly reduce the occurrence of bullying in elementary schools.

Keywords

Bullying, Elementary school, School policy.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is essentially about humanizing humans. Basic/elementary education has a strategic role in shaping children's character, moral values, and personality from an early age. Schools are not merely places for transferring knowledge, but also serve as social spaces for students to learn to interact, collaborate, and internalize the values of empathy and mutual respect (Fitriyani et al., 2024). However, the reality in the field shows that many elementary schools still face bullying problems within the school environment.

Bullying is one of the serious problems in the world of education that directly impacts the psychological, social, and academic development of students (Hafizhah et al., 2024). Elementary school-aged children are at a social developmental phase that is still vulnerable, so negative experiences within the school environment can leave long-term impacts on self-confidence, mental health, and learning motivation. In general, the meaning of bullying is any kind of activity aimed at hurting and harming someone, either physically or mentally, repeatedly, which occurs as a result of the misuse of power or strength against someone who is weaker (Setyorini & Ramli, 2023; Panggabean & Wahyudi, 2025). These forms of bullying can include physical, verbal, social/relational, and cyberbullying, each of which has a different impact on the victim (Kartika et al., 2019), with the trend of cyberbullying continuing to increase over the past decade (Zuanda et al., 2024).

The Tembalang Sub-district area, Semarang City, has heterogeneous characteristics in terms of social and cultural backgrounds, as well as school conditions. Based on the 2025 Education Report Card (Rapor Pendidikan) data from several elementary schools in that sub-district, the following picture was obtained:

Table 1. Education Report (Rapor Pendidikan) Data for the Year 2025

School	Score	Category
SDN Tandang 01	81	Good
SDN Tandang 02	88	Good
SDN Tandang 03	64,67	Low
SDN Tandang 04	77	Good
SDN Sendangguwo 01	74	Good
Average	76,934	Good

Source: Education Report (Rapor Pendidikan), 2025.

The data in Table 1 shows that the achievement of school safety climate in Tembalang Sub-district is generally in the good category, with an average of 76.934, although one school (SDN Tandang 03) still falls into the need improvement category. The average score for Tembalang Sub-district is also slightly below the average for Semarang City, which was recorded at 77.75. This gap is reinforced by the results of interviews with several elementary school principals and teachers in Tembalang Sub-district, who confirmed that bullying behavior is still found within the school environment.

Bullying among elementary school-aged children remains a serious issue in various areas of Semarang City, including Tembalang Sub-district. A number of bullying cases occurring both within and outside the school environment involving students indicate that students remain vulnerable to physical, verbal, and social violence, which impacts their mental health, academic achievement, and social-emotional development. This condition confirms that schools function not only as places of learning but also as environments that must be able to guarantee the protection, safety, and well-being of students. This phenomenon shows that bullying at the elementary school level is no longer merely an interpersonal issue, but has become a matter with social impact that requires cross-sector handling. Therefore, the implementation of education needs to be supported by clear school policies, a structured prevention system, and an effective bullying-handling mechanism in accordance with the principles of child protection.

In this context, the government, through various regulations, has emphasized the importance of educational units creating a learning environment that is safe, inclusive, and free from all forms of violence, and must understand the factors that cause bullying to occur. The determining factors of bullying are influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors relate to individuals' difficulty in controlling their emotions and a lack of empathy (Olweus, 1993), as well as peer group dynamics that also contribute to shaping patterns of bullying within the school environment (Salmivalli, 2010), while one of the external factors contributing to bullying in Indonesia is the school factor, which includes the lack of teacher involvement in conflict mediation, the absence of a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for handling bullying, and insufficient character education (Pradana, 2024); (Nursehah et al., 2024). This condition indicates that school policy can contribute to the level of bullying that occurs in elementary schools.

School policy is an important instrument in preventing bullying. Clear, firm, and well-structured policies regarding the prevention of violence against children, reporting procedures, and

case-handling systems will determine the effectiveness of student protection (Dewi, 2022). Schools that have anti-bullying standard operating procedures (SOP), a student code of conduct, and child-friendly disciplinary mechanisms tend to be able to reduce cases of bullying, whereas weak policies, inconsistent implementation, or a lack of understanding among school members can create opportunities for bullying to occur (Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Nomor 82 Tahun 2015). Studies on the implementation of anti-bullying policies in several educational units show that the formal existence of SOP does not automatically effectively reduce bullying cases without consistent oversight and enforcement (Rena et al., 2021); (Rachma, 2022).

The results of the preliminary observation of the Education Report (Rapor Pendidikan) data on the program and policy aspects of educational units regarding bullying for the 2023–2025 period indicate the following trend:

Table 2. Preliminary Observation of School Policy on Bullying

Year	2023	2024	2025
Average Achievement	91,256	81,482	73,994

Source: Education Report (Rapor Pendidikan), 2023–2025.

Based on Table 2, the average achievement of school policies regarding bullying shows a consistent decline, from 91.256 in 2023 to 73.994 in 2025. This decline indicates a gap between the formal existence of policies and the effectiveness of their actual implementation in educational institutions. Although most schools have established written policies related to bullying prevention and have disseminated them to members of the school community, the consistency of implementation, supervision, and evaluation of these policies still requires strengthening.

Normatively, school policies are designed as instruments for regulating the behavior of members of the school community, including preventing bullying practices (Halim et al., 2023). However, empirical findings in the field indicate that the existence of school policies does not automatically lead to a reduction in bullying practices, particularly when such policies have not been implemented consistently and sustainably. Empirical data on the aspect of school climate safety show that although schools have established rules and mechanisms for bullying prevention, students still experience bullying both from their peers and in interactions with teachers. This suggests that policies of an administrative nature have not yet been fully internalized into living social practices within the school environment.

The phenomenon of bullying in elementary schools in Tembalang District needs to be analyzed empirically, considering the increasing demand to create safe and child-friendly schools

as mandated by Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Nomor 82 Tahun 2015 concerning the Prevention and Mitigation of Violence in Educational Institutions. Research on the influence of school policies on bullying in this area is relevant for assessing the extent to which internal school policy instruments contribute to efforts to prevent violence. Therefore, this study aims to analyze and examine the influence of school policies on bullying in elementary schools in Tembalang District, with the expectation that it will provide theoretical contributions to the development of educational management studies as well as practical contributions for schools in formulating effective bullying prevention strategies.

Various previous studies have examined the relationship between school policies and bullying behavior from different perspectives. Using a difference-in-differences design with longitudinal data from elementary school students in the United States, the study found that the implementation of state-level anti-bullying legislation contributed to improvements in children's social-behavioral skills. However, the policy was examined at the macro-regulatory level and did not measure the perceptions of policy implementers at the school level (Sun & Zhao, 2025). In line with this, a study based on a document analysis of elementary school Campus Improvement Plans in Texas found variations in the strength of bullying policies across regions and over time. However, the study was descriptive in nature and did not statistically examine their effect on the level of bullying (Classen et al., 2022). Another study examined the implementation of child-friendly school policies qualitatively in elementary schools and concluded that the success of the policy largely depends on the consistency of socialization and the exemplary behavior of school leaders. However, the study did not quantitatively measure the magnitude of the policy's influence on the level of bullying (Retnasari & Suprastio, 2024). Meanwhile, a community service program for elementary school teachers in Pontianak emphasized the importance of strengthening teachers' knowledge in bullying prevention, but it did not present hypothesis testing based on large-scale primary data (Kartono et al., 2025).

Based on the review of previous studies, it appears that most research on school policies and bullying remains qualitative descriptive in nature or evaluates policies at the macro regulatory level. Studies that quantitatively examine the influence of teachers' perceptions of school policies covering the four dimensions of policy formulation, policy content, policy socialization, and policy implementation simultaneously on the level of bullying in elementary schools are still very limited, particularly in the context of Tembalang District, Semarang City. The novelty of this study lies in the

use of a quantitative ex post facto correlational design with regression analysis to empirically measure the magnitude of the influence of school policies on bullying, while also comprehensively mapping the four dimensions of school policy within clusters of elementary schools that have received limited attention in previous research.

Based on the description of the problems and research gaps above, the objectives of this study are explicitly formulated as follows: (1) to analyze and examine the influence of school policies on bullying in elementary schools in Tembalang District, Semarang City; and (2) to identify the magnitude of the contribution of school policies, including the dimensions of policy formulation, policy content, policy socialization, and policy implementation, to variations in the level of bullying that occur. The formulation of these objectives serves to emphasize the problem that the formal existence of school policies does not necessarily guarantee the effectiveness of their implementation in practice, as indicated by the discrepancy between the Education Report (Rapor Pendidikan) data and the findings of the preliminary interviews presented in the previous section. The results of this study are expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of educational management studies as well as practical contributions for schools in formulating effective bullying prevention strategies.

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach using a survey method, which is a type of research that collects quantitative data from a sample through questionnaires in order to describe the characteristics and opinions of a population (Creswell, 2023). The research design used in this study is an ex post facto correlational design, which is a research design employed to examine cause-and-effect relationships among variables that have already occurred without any manipulation by the researcher (Ibrahim et al., 2018). This study involves one independent variable, School Policy (X), and one dependent variable, Bullying (Y).

The study was conducted in 11 elementary schools that are members of the Baskara Sumirat Cluster in Tembalang District, Semarang City, consisting of 7 public elementary schools and 4 private elementary schools. The population of the study comprised all teachers from the 11 elementary schools, totaling 176 teachers. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error (Sukwika, 2023). Thus, a sample of 122 teachers was obtained. The sampling technique used was proportional random sampling, which is a sampling technique that

provides an equal opportunity for each member of the population in each school to be selected as a member of the sample (Setiawan, 2024), as presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Research Samples by School

School	Population	Sample
SD Negeri Tandang 01	24	17
SD Negeri Tandang 02	16	11
SD Negeri Tandang 03	23	16
SD Negeri Tandang 04	16	11
SD Negeri Sendangguwo 01	23	16
SD Negeri Sendangguwo 02	8	6
SD Negeri Kedungmundu	15	10
SD Kanisius	6	4
SD Al-Hikmah	12	8
SD Al Maarif	8	6
SD Kebon Dalem	25	17
Jumlah	176	122

Source: Primary data processed, 2026.

In this study, the School Policy variable is defined as formal regulations established by school leaders as part of micro-level educational policy, which are authoritative, contextual, and strategic in nature, aimed at regulating, directing, and ensuring the implementation of effective, safe, and inclusive education (Hamdi & AM, 2024). This variable was measured through four dimensions: (a) policy formulation, (b) policy content/substance, (c) policy socialization, and (d) policy implementation, which were further elaborated into an instrument blueprint as presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Blueprint of the School Policy Variable Instrument

Dimension	Indicator	Number of Items
Policy Formulation	needs analysis, stakeholder involvement, vision–mission alignment, and regulatory alignment.	12
Policy Content/Substance	clarity of objectives, scope, relevance, consistency, strategies, and policy language.	21
Policy Socialization	dissemination, socialization media, document accessibility, and school community understanding.	18
Policy Implementation	work programs, resources, task allocation, leadership commitment, and coordination.	21
Total		72

Source: Adapted from the theoretical review of school policy, 2026.

The instrument was developed in the form of a closed-ended questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale (strongly agree = 5, agree = 4, somewhat disagree = 3, disagree = 2, strongly disagree = 1)

(Sugiyono, 2022). After validity and reliability testing had been conducted, a total of 30 valid statement items were retained and used to measure the School Policy variable. The Bullying variable was measured using a questionnaire covering the dimensions of physical bullying, verbal bullying, social/relational bullying, and cyberbullying. The data analysis techniques employed consisted of prerequisite tests for analysis (normality and linearity tests), followed by simple linear regression analysis (Ghozali, 2021) to examine the influence of School Policy on Bullying.

The data used in this study consisted of primary and secondary data. The primary data were obtained directly from 122 elementary school teachers who served as the research sample through the completion of Likert-scale questionnaires regarding their perceptions of School Policy (X) and Bullying (Y), which were distributed both offline and online to respondents from 11 elementary schools in the Baskara Sumirat Cluster. The secondary data were obtained from the 2023–2025 Education Report (Rapor Pendidikan) documents, particularly the aspects of school safety climate and educational unit programs/policies concerning bullying. These data were used as supporting information to map the initial baseline condition of the problem, as presented in Tables 1 and 2, as well as from preliminary interviews with several school principals and teachers to strengthen the interpretation of the quantitative data.

Based on the theoretical framework and the formulation of the research problem, the hypotheses proposed and tested in this study are as follows: H0: There is no significant influence of School Policy on Bullying in Elementary Schools in Tembalang District; and H1: There is a significant influence of School Policy on Bullying in Elementary Schools in Tembalang District. Hypothesis testing was conducted using simple linear regression analysis with the following decision criteria: H0 is rejected, and H1 is accepted if the significance value is < 0.05, whereas H0 is accepted if the significance value is ≥ 0.05.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The field data collection successfully obtained 122 teacher respondents (N = 122) distributed across 11 elementary schools in the Baskara Sumirat Cluster. The largest contributions of respondents came from SD Kebon Dalem and SDN Tandang 01, each with 17 teachers (13.9%), while the smallest proportion came from SD Kanisius with 4 teachers (3.3%). The relatively even distribution of respondents across all schools strengthens the validity of the research findings.

The description of the research variable data aims to illustrate the tendency of respondents' answers regarding the School Policy (X) and Bullying (Y) variables. The results of the frequency distribution for the School Policy variable categories are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Frequency Distribution of School Policy Variable Categories

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very Low	34	27,9
Low	18	14,8
Moderate	5	4,1
High	29	23,8
Very High	36	29,5
Total	122	100,0

Source: Primary data processed, 2026.

Based on Table 5, the group of respondents who assessed School Policy as being in the positive category (High and Very High) consisted of 65 teachers (53.3%), while the group who perceived School Policy as being in the negative category (Very Low and Low) consisted of 52 teachers (42.7%), and the remaining 5 teachers (4.1%) were in the Moderate category. These data indicate variations in teachers' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of school policies in preventing bullying within the research area.

Table 6. Frequency Distribution of Bullying Variable Categories

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very Low	23	18,9
Low	40	32,8
High	8	6,6
Very High	51	41,8
Total	122	100,0

Sumber: data primer diolah, 2026.

Table 6 shows that 59 respondents (48.4%) assessed the level of bullying as being in the High and Very High categories, which constitutes an important signal regarding the effectiveness of student management in the area. On the other hand, 63 respondents (51.7%) assessed the level of bullying as being in the Low and Very Low categories, indicating that there are groups of schools that have relatively succeeded in reducing the incidence of violence among students.

Before hypothesis testing was conducted, prerequisite tests for analysis were first performed, namely the normality test and the linearity test on the School Policy and Bullying data. The results showed that the data for both variables were normally distributed and had a linear relationship, indicating that the data met the requirements for analysis using simple linear regression.

Hypothesis testing was conducted using simple linear regression analysis to determine the influence of School Policy (X) on Bullying (Y). The results of the ANOVA test are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. ANOVA Test Results of School Policy on Bullying

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	212105,661	1	212105,661	409,731	0,000
Residual	62120,413	120	517,670		
Total	274226,074	121			

Source: Primary data processed, 2026.

Based on the results of the ANOVA test presented in Table 7, the calculated F-value was 409.731, with a significance value of 0.000. Since the significance value was less than 0.05 (0.000 < 0.05), the research hypothesis (H1) was accepted, indicating that School Policy has a significant influence on Bullying in elementary schools in Tembalang District.

Table 8. Regression Coefficients of School Policy on Bullying

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	202,518	5,252		38,561	0,000
Kebijakan Sekolah	-1,055	0,052	-0,879	-20,242	0,000

Source: Primary data processed, 2026

Based on Table 8, the regression equation $\hat{Y} = 202.518 - 1.055X$ was obtained. The t - value of -20.242 with a significance of 0.000 (t-value > t-table 1.980; sig. < 0.05) indicates that School Policy has a negative and significant effect on Bullying. This finding indicates that the stricter, clearer, and firmer the school policy implemented, the lower the level of bullying in Elementary Schools in Tembalang Sub-district will be.

Table 9. Coefficient of Determination of School Policy on Bullying

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0,879	0,773	0,772	22,75236

Source: Primary data processed, 2026.

The R Square value of 0.773 in Table 9 indicates that 77.3% of the variation in the level of Bullying in elementary schools in Tembalang District can be explained by the School Policy variable, while the remaining 22.7% is influenced by other variables outside the research model.

Discussion

The results of the hypothesis testing show that School Policy has a negative and significant effect on Bullying in Elementary Schools in Tembalang Sub-district, with a regression coefficient of -1.055, a t-value of -20.242, and a significance of 0.000 (< 0.05). The negative direction of the coefficient

indicates that the better the school policy implemented, the lower the level of bullying that occurs in schools.

This finding reinforces the view that school policy is an important component in creating a safe learning environment that is free from bullying (Khoiriyah et al., 2025). From the perspective of the school social systems theory proposed by (Hoy & Miskel, 2012). In this perspective, school policy functions as an organizational control mechanism that regulates the behavior of all members of the school community through rules, norms, and procedures that must be collectively followed. Policies that are clearly formulated, understood by all members of the school community, and consistently implemented will create a conducive school climate, strengthen discipline, and reduce deviant behaviors, including bullying (Nurhayati et al., 2024). Conversely, weak policy implementation leads to inconsistency in rule enforcement, thereby creating opportunities for aggressive behavior among students (Azizah et al., 2023).

This finding is also consistent with developmental ecological theory, which explains that children's behavioral development is influenced by their immediate environment (microsystem), one of which is the school environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). School policy is part of that environment, which directs students' patterns of social interaction through rules of conduct, supervision mechanisms, and violation-handling systems (Murni et al., 2024). Therefore, the better the implementation of school policies, the greater the likelihood of creating a safe, comfortable, and supportive learning environment for students' social development. Effective policies should not only be repressive through the imposition of sanctions but should also be preventive through education, character development, and the involvement of teachers and parents in bullying prevention (Hutagalung et al., 2026).

The coefficient of determination (R Square) of 0.773 indicates that the contribution of School Policy to the variation in the level of Bullying is **very substantial**. This finding suggests that strengthening school policies through participatory formulation, clear and consistent policy content, comprehensive socialization, and implementation supported by adequate resources and strong leadership commitment can play an important role in reducing bullying in elementary schools (Hamdi & AM, 2024); (Sarghini et al., 2023); (Nurkolis et al., 2024), plays a major role in reducing the rate of bullying in elementary schools. This is also in line with findings that social skills training and the strengthening of moral values and character have proven effective in reducing students' aggressive intentions and behavior (Hardhiyanti et al., 2020); (Nafis et al., 2025). In addition,

comparative studies of bullying prevention programs also show that structured and sustainable programs are more effective than short-term interventions (Sainz & Martín, 2023); (Pratama & Husniyah, 2025).

Based on the research findings and theoretical review, it can be understood that the success of school policies is determined not only by the existence of written documents or regulations, but primarily by the quality of their implementation (Said & Filasofa, 2024). The dissemination of policies to all school members, exemplary conduct from principals and teachers, sustained supervision, easily accessible reporting mechanisms, fast and fair case handling, and periodic policy evaluation are factors that determine the effectiveness of policies in reducing bullying (Irmawati et al., 2024). Active involvement of parents and the formation of a responsive child protection task force have also proven to strengthen the effectiveness of handling bullying cases in elementary schools (Fauziyah & Sutini, 2024). Therefore, the findings of this study imply that elementary schools in Tembalang District need to continuously strengthen the implementation of anti-bullying policies through collaboration among school principals, teachers, students, parents, and school committees, thereby creating a safe, inclusive school environment that supports both the academic and social-emotional development of students.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the hypothesis testing, it can be concluded that School Policy has a negative and significant effect on Bullying in Elementary Schools in Tembalang District. This is indicated by a regression coefficient of -1.055, a calculated *t*-value of -20.242, and a significance value of 0.000, which is lower than the significance level of 0.05, with a contribution of 77.3% to the variation in bullying levels. The negative coefficient indicates that the clearer, stricter, and more consistently implemented the school policies are, the lower the level of bullying occurring in schools. These findings emphasize the importance of strengthening school policies, starting from participatory policy formulation, the development of clear and consistent policy content, comprehensive socialization, and implementation supported by strong leadership commitment and adequate resources, as one of the key strategies for preventing and reducing bullying behavior in elementary school environments.

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