

Building an Inclusive School: Preventing Bullying Through Political Education at Padamu Negeri Medan High School

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ABSTRACT

Schools should be safe and supportive places for all students. However, sexual violence, bullying, and intolerance are still common. Inclusive education is the main foundation to ensure that every student receives fair and equal treatment without discrimination. Reality shows that bullying violates the principles of inclusion and equality in education. In this case, political education is essential to overcome bullying by strengthening students' understanding of democracy, pluralism, and human rights. Community service by the University of North Sumatra team at Padamu Negeri High School, Medan, North Sumatra, aims to educate students about bullying and the role of political education in preventing it and building inclusive and safe schools. The results showed students' interest in how political education can be an effective tool in preventing bullying. This service activity succeeded in building students' understanding of the critical role of political education in creating an inclusive and bullying-free school environment. A safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environment is likely to be realized with political education. Political education is about political mechanisms and shaping students' character and morality as good citizens.

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INTRODUCTION

Schools should be safe and supportive places for all students. However, three main problems in education still occur frequently, namely sexual violence, bullying, and intolerance. Based on data from the Federation of Indonesian Teachers' Unions (FSGI), cases of bullying in education units throughout 2023 reached 30 cases, with 80% occurring under the authority of the Ministry of Education and Culture and 20% under the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Rosa, 2023). This bullying takes various forms, ranging from physical, such as being hit or destroying the victim's belongings, to social, such as being ostracized or spreading nasty rumors (UNICEF, 2020). Data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) also shows that bullying cases continue to increase from 2020 to 2022. Namely, the number of bullying cases reported in Indonesia in 2022 was 226, 53 cases in 2021, and 119 cases in 2020 (Beritasatu.com, 2023). Bullying dramatically affects mental health in students at school, which can result in feeling insecure, long-term depression, decreased motivation to learn, and closing themselves off from relationships (Fikri et al., 2023). Poor mental health can cause students to be more susceptible to a variety of unhealthy conditions, including death. The impact of bullying is that it inhibits children's ability to develop themselves because of the unsafe and uncomfortable atmosphere it creates. Bullying makes the victim feel threatened, inferior, worthless, challenging to focus on learning and inhibits the ability to socialize with the surrounding environment (Amini, 2008). As a result, school is no longer a fun place for students; instead, it is a frightening and traumatizing place (Nasir, 2018).

Therefore, inclusive education is the main foundation for ensuring that every student in the school environment has equal rights to fair and equal treatment (Khaerunisa & Rasmitadila, 2023). However, the reality on the ground shows that there are still acts of discrimination, especially in the form of bullying, which often affect students' learning experiences at school. This bullying, whether directly or through social media, violates the principles of inclusion and equality in education. In this case, political education becomes essential in addressing the problem of bullying in the educational environment by strengthening students' understanding of the values of democracy, pluralism, and human rights.

Political education has great potential to shape students' attitudes, values, and behaviors when facing the challenges of bullying in schools (Sutrisman, 2019). Through political education, students can understand the conception of nationality that emphasizes self-awareness as citizens responsible for their environment and each other (Christoper et al., 2024). They are invited to internalize democratic values, such as equality, justice, and freedom, and practice them in daily interactions in the school environment. Thus, political education is about understanding political mechanisms and shaping

students' character and morality as good citizens. The role of schools in realizing inclusive education and overcoming bullying is vital. Schools should be safe and inclusive places for all students, without discrimination based on race, gender, religion, or other backgrounds. Therefore, political education should be integrated into the school curriculum as an integral part of the learning process. This allows students to learn about democratic and civic values actively and gives them the tools to recognize, respond to, and prevent bullying in the school environment.

On the other hand, social media also plays a vital role in influencing bullying behavior in schools. Harmful content and nasty comments on social media can reinforce a culture of bullying among students. Students need to know how to be wise and responsible social media users and develop the ability to identify, evaluate, and respond to discriminatory or harmful content. Thus, political education is critical in building inclusive schools and addressing bullying in educational settings. Through political education, students can better understand the values of democracy, pluralism, and human rights and practice them in their daily lives (Lubis et al., 2024). With a shared commitment, a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environment is hoped to be realized, where every student feels accepted and valued without discrimination.

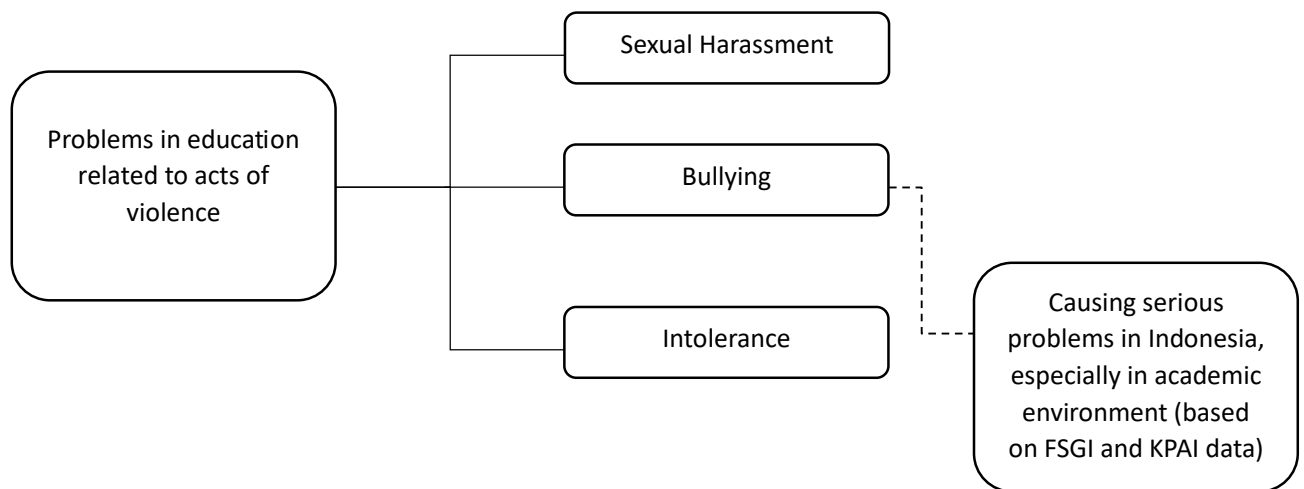


Figure 1. Issues in education related to violence

METHODOLOGY

This activity was held on June 13th, 2024, at Padamu Negeri High School, Medan, North Sumatra. The participants of this activity were first and second grade high school students. The objectives of this activity are as follows: First, showing how political education can reduce bullying by highlighting the obligations of a good citizen; therefore, students, as part of citizens, are obliged to practice the ideas of good citizens. They were second, building students' understanding of democracy, pluralism, and human rights as a foundation for preventing bullying. Third, creating an inclusive and safe school environment for all students, especially within Padamu Negeri Private High School. Furthermore, the

method of socialization activities is carried out in a series of ways:

1. Providing material exposure to understanding bullying, how it forms, and its impact on the social environment, especially in the academic environment. Then, the types of bullying are divided into physical, verbal, and social. Furthermore, the impact of bullying actions includes intellectual, physical, and psychological losses. On the other hand, it also relates the role of political education as a step to overcoming bullying through democratic values as a foundation for the rights of equality, justice, and freedom. Finally, the steps to overcome bullying through political education are respecting the human rights of every human being, developing critical attitudes and empathy, and increasing civic awareness.
2. Opening a communication session of questions and answers and discussion to build students' enthusiasm about the material presented aims to develop students' critical side towards phenomena that are often of particular concern to the public. This session involves students elaborating on the phenomena they have seen with the material presented to bring up analytical thoughts that can foster student criticism.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The Community Service Team from the University of North Sumatra (USU) conducted community service activities at Padamu Negeri High School, Medan, North Sumatra, on June 13th, 2024, attended by 20 students. This activity aims to educate students about bullying and the role of political education in preventing it, as well as to build an inclusive and safe school.

In the material presentation, which lasted for 30 minutes, the service team conveyed an in-depth understanding of bullying, from the forms of bullying, including physical, verbal, and social, to its impact on the social environment, especially in the academic environment. Physical bullying includes actions such as being hit or having the victim's belongings destroyed, while verbal bullying includes taunts and insults. Social bullying, on the other hand, can include ostracism and the spreading of nasty rumors. The impact of bullying is not only limited to intellectual and physical harm but also includes severe psychological repercussions for the victim.



Figure 2. The team presented the material

Furthermore, the service team highlighted the role of political education as a strategic step in overcoming bullying. Political education here is about understanding political mechanisms and internalizing the values of democracy, equality, justice, and freedom. By understanding and applying these values, students can be more critical, empathetic, and aware of their rights and obligations as good citizens. The practical steps suggested include respecting the human rights of each individual, developing critical attitudes, and increasing civic awareness. Students' enthusiasm was evident during the discussion and Q&A session, which lasted about 20 minutes.



Figure 3. Material Content

Many students revealed that they often witness the phenomenon of bullying, especially on social media. They were interested in knowing that political education can be an effective tool to prevent bullying because previously, they considered politics to be something far from their daily lives, such as political understanding reflected in the behavior of officials. Students also discussed how to change the perspective of people who consider bullying a common thing or a joke. In addition, they also explored the concept of an ideal citizen by applying democratic values, such as justice, equality, and freedom, to stop bullying through the presentation of the material provided.



Figure 4. The service team takes a photo with students and the principal of Padamu Negeri High School.

The discussion also covered the issue of bullying on social media due to the weak security of these platforms. Students sought solutions on how to be wise and responsible social media users and identify, evaluate, and respond to discriminatory or harmful content. This activity successfully built students' understanding of bullying and the importance of political education in creating an inclusive and safe school environment. In this case, the school supported the realisation of this service activity through the action of an anti-bullying and violence declaration campaign in the school environment involving all school members including students, teachers, and educational staff. This indicates that Padamu Negeri Senior High School really cares as well as awares about bullying issues. The cooperation carried out by the Service Team together with the school signifies an active collaboration that complements each other. With this concern, it also creates a sense of security and comfort for everyone, especially in the academic environment.



Figure 5. Anti-bullying declaration campaign activities conducted by the School



Figure 6. Posters and Signatures of School Members as a symbol against bullying

In the other hand, Students showed high interest and participated in the discussion, showing that this topic is relevant and essential to them. By promoting the values of democracy and human rights, it is hoped that students can play an active role in creating a school culture that values diversity

and upholds equality.

CONCLUSIONS

The community service activity conducted by the University of North Sumatra (USU) at Padamu Negeri High School in Medan demonstrated political education's vital role in preventing bullying and promoting an inclusive school environment. Attended by first and second-grade students, the event focused on raising awareness about the various forms of bullying—physical, verbal, and social—and their severe impacts on mental health and overall well-being. The presentation emphasized the serious intellectual, physical, and psychological repercussions of bullying, enhancing students' understanding of the issue. Political education was highlighted as a strategic tool to combat bullying by instilling democratic values such as equality, justice, and freedom. Through interactive learning sessions, including an engaging Q&A and discussion period, students could relate their personal experiences with bullying to the material presented, demonstrating high enthusiasm and critical thinking.

The discussion also addressed the role of social media in bullying, underscoring the need for students to be wise and responsible users of these platforms and providing practical steps for identifying, evaluating, and responding to harmful online content. The activity successfully built students' understanding of the importance of an inclusive and safe school environment. It fostered a willingness to adopt democratic values and human rights principles to create a culture of respect and equality at their school. Additionally, the event culminated in an anti-bullying and violence declaration campaign involving all school members, including students, teachers, and educational staff.

This initiative highlights Padamu Negeri High School's commitment to addressing bullying and creating a safe and inclusive learning environment. The cooperation between the Service Team and the school signifies an active collaboration that complements each other, creating a sense of security and comfort for everyone in the academic environment. This community service initiative underscores the importance of integrating political education into the school curriculum to empower students to prevent bullying and contribute to a more inclusive and respectful school culture.

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