



Anti-Bullying Education Model Based on Symbolic Child Learning through the Concept of ‘Hantu Bullying’ in Elementary School

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Abstract

Bullying in elementary school environments continues to represent a significant socio-emotional problem that negatively affects children’s psychological well-being, peer interaction, and learning security. This community service study aimed to implement an anti-bullying education model based on symbolic child learning through the concept of “Hantu Bullying” at SDN 1 Dersalam, Kudus Regency, Indonesia. The program employed an empirical participatory approach involving third-grade elementary school students through observation, symbolic learning activities, emotional reflection, interactive discussion, expressive art activities, and collaborative anti-bullying commitments. The educational model introduced three symbolic bullying representations, namely “Hantu Pukul-Pukul,” “Hantu Kata-Kata Jahat,” and “Hantu Main Jauhan,” to simplify students’ understanding of physical, verbal, and social bullying behaviors. The findings indicated that students became more capable of identifying bullying practices previously considered normal peer interaction, while emotional participation and empathy toward classmates significantly increased during reflective learning sessions. Students also demonstrated greater confidence in communicating bullying experiences and supporting peers experiencing exclusion or intimidation. The study highlights that symbolic and participatory learning approaches constitute effective child-centered strategies for strengthening anti-bullying awareness, emotional literacy, and inclusive social interaction within elementary school environments.

Keywords: Anti-Bullying Education, Symbolic Child Learning, Emotional Literacy, Elementary School, Participatory Learning.



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INTRODUCTION

The increasing global concern regarding bullying in elementary school environments has generated a substantial shift in contemporary educational discourse from punitive intervention toward preventive and child-centered socio-emotional learning models, particularly those emphasizing psychological safety, empathy formation, and participatory learning experiences. Across diverse educational systems, bullying is no longer interpreted merely as episodic peer conflict, but rather as a structural social behavior capable of producing long-term emotional vulnerability, social withdrawal, and developmental disruption during critical stages of childhood formation. The urgency of this issue has become increasingly visible within primary education contexts where children remain cognitively and emotionally dependent on symbolic interpretation and social validation in understanding interpersonal interactions. Studies on school bullying demonstrate that repeated verbal humiliation, exclusion, intimidation, and physical aggression during childhood frequently normalize violent social behavior and contribute to persistent emotional insecurity in later developmental phases (Mayasari et al., 2019). The phenomenon becomes more alarming when bullying is socially disguised as harmless joking or peer entertainment, causing victims’ psychological suffering to remain institutionally invisible and culturally tolerated. Contemporary discussions have consequently emphasized the necessity of reconstructing anti-bullying education into forms that are emotionally accessible, cognitively meaningful, and developmentally compatible with elementary school children’s imaginative capacities (Rachmawati, 2024). Within this evolving landscape, educational innovation increasingly requires approaches capable of translating abstract moral concepts into concrete symbolic experiences that children are able to emotionally recognize and socially internalize.

Previous studies have contributed important insights regarding bullying prevention and anti-bullying education in elementary schools, although most interventions remain dominated by normative socialization models emphasizing information transfer rather than experiential transformation. Research conducted by Karisma et al. (2024) demonstrated that socialization and student empowerment activities were capable of increasing children's awareness regarding bullying behavior; however, the intervention primarily relied upon verbal explanation and behavioral instruction without integrating symbolic-emotional engagement as a pedagogical mechanism. Similar tendencies appear in the work of Sulistyowati et al. (2024), where anti-bullying seminars successfully encouraged collective awareness among students, yet the educational process remained centered on cognitive persuasion rather than participatory emotional reflection. Meanwhile, Firdaus and Hamidaturrohmah (2025) attempted to bridge this pedagogical limitation through illustrated storybooks designed to cultivate anti-bullying attitudes among elementary school students, revealing that imaginative visual media possess stronger affective resonance for children compared with conventional lecture-based instruction. These findings collectively indicate that anti-bullying education becomes more effective when educational messages are delivered through media compatible with children's symbolic imagination and emotional comprehension. Nevertheless, prior interventions still predominantly conceptualize symbolic learning as supplementary instructional media rather than as an integrated socio-emotional learning framework capable of reshaping children's interpretation of harmful social behavior.

The existing literature simultaneously reveals several conceptual and methodological limitations that continue to weaken the effectiveness of anti-bullying educational practices at the elementary school level. Most anti-bullying interventions position children as passive recipients of moral instruction instead of active interpreters of social experience, resulting in educational processes that often fail to uncover children's hidden emotional realities or normalize empathetic reflection within peer interaction. Research on bullying frequently prioritizes behavioral identification and legal awareness while underestimating the developmental significance of symbolic cognition among children in the concrete operational stage. Piagetian developmental perspectives explain that children aged seven to twelve understand social concepts more effectively through concrete representation, visualization, metaphor, and emotionally connected symbolic experiences rather than through abstract verbal instruction alone (Imanulhaq & Ichsan, 2022). Despite this theoretical foundation, anti-bullying educational models rarely operationalize symbolic child learning into practical and participatory intervention frameworks capable of translating bullying into imaginative representations understandable from children's perspectives. Existing studies also tend to focus on outcome-oriented awareness campaigns without critically examining how children emotionally negotiate experiences of humiliation, exclusion, fear, and silence within peer environments. Such limitations create a substantial conceptual gap between developmental psychology theories and the practical design of anti-bullying educational interventions in elementary schools.

The unresolved absence of emotionally grounded and symbolically mediated anti-bullying education creates serious scientific and practical implications because bullying behavior in childhood frequently develops within normalized social interactions that remain undetected by formal disciplinary systems. Repeated teasing, social exclusion, mocking through parental names, and physical joking often become culturally accepted practices among children despite carrying significant psychological consequences that may shape future patterns of aggression, insecurity, and social alienation (Dewi, 2020). Research on the long-term consequences of bullying further demonstrates that exposure to repeated humiliation and violence during childhood may contribute to broader cycles of social aggression, emotional instability, and even criminal behavior later in life (Rachmawati, 2024). Within the Indonesian educational context, increasing cases involving underage bullying perpetrators indicate that preventive educational approaches remain insufficiently adaptive to children's socio-emotional realities and developmental characteristics (Setiawan & Saputra, 2024). The urgency of constructing more transformative anti-bullying educational models becomes particularly significant because elementary schools function not merely as academic institutions, but also as foundational spaces where children internalize ethical values, emotional sensitivity, and collective social identity. The cultivation of respectful interaction and empathy-based social behavior consequently reflects broader educational commitments toward humanistic civic values embedded within Indonesian philosophical principles concerning dignity, coexistence, and social justice (Santika, 2023).

Within this scientific context, the present community service-based educational initiative positions itself not simply as another anti-bullying socialization activity, but as an attempt to reconstruct anti-bullying pedagogy through a symbolic child learning framework specifically adapted to elementary school students' emotional and cognitive developmental needs. The novelty of this approach lies in the transformation of abstract bullying categories into imaginative symbolic entities represented through the concept of "Hantu Bullying," consisting of "Hantu Pukul-Pukul," "Hantu Kata-Kata Jahat," and "Hantu Main Jauhan" as metaphoric embodiments of physical, verbal, and social bullying behaviors. Unlike conventional anti-bullying seminars that primarily depend upon formal explanation and behavioral instruction, this model integrates symbolic imagination, participatory reflection, expressive emotional activities, and interactive child-friendly communication into a unified socio-emotional learning process. The educational framework acknowledges that children frequently understand moral danger not through juridical terminology or disciplinary discourse, but through symbolic narratives capable of evoking emotional recognition and relational empathy. By combining symbolic representation with participatory reflection, the program seeks to create a pedagogical environment where children are encouraged not only to identify bullying behavior cognitively, but also to emotionally interpret its impact upon themselves and others. This positioning differentiates the present initiative from prior anti-bullying educational practices that have largely remained informational rather than transformative in their pedagogical orientation.

This study aims to implement and examine an anti-bullying education model based on symbolic child learning through the concept of "Hantu Bullying" among elementary school students as an innovative participatory approach for strengthening socio-emotional awareness, empathy formation, and children's courage to resist bullying behavior within school environments. The study contributes theoretically by extending the application of symbolic child learning into the domain of anti-bullying education and positioning symbolic imagination as a central mechanism in children's socio-emotional meaning construction. Methodologically, the study introduces a child-friendly participatory educational model integrating symbolic metaphors, emotional reflection, expressive art activities, and interactive anti-bullying engagement as a holistic pedagogical strategy adaptable for elementary school contexts.

RESEARCH METHODS

This community service program employed an empirical participatory approach through the implementation of an anti-bullying educational model based on symbolic child learning at SDN 1 Dersalam, Kudus Regency, Indonesia. The primary target community consisted of third-grade elementary school students who were considered developmentally vulnerable to normalizing bullying behavior within daily peer interaction. The program was designed collaboratively by the Dersalam Village Community Service Team from UIN Sunan Kudus through preliminary observation, informal communication with classroom teachers, and contextual identification of bullying-related interaction patterns among students. The implementation process was structured into four sequential stages consisting of: (1) initial observation and problem identification regarding students' social behavior and emotional interaction; (2) preparation of educational materials and symbolic learning media through the "Hantu Bullying" concept, including "Hantu Pukul-Pukul," "Hantu Kata-Kata Jahat," and "Hantu Main Jauhan" as symbolic representations of physical, verbal, and social bullying; (3) participatory educational activities integrating interactive presentations, anti-bullying ice breaking sessions, emotional reflection, expressive art activities, and child-centered discussions; and (4) reflective reinforcement through collective anti-bullying commitments and interpersonal engagement intended to strengthen empathy, emotional awareness, and students' courage to resist bullying behavior within the school environment.

Empirical evaluation data were collected qualitatively throughout the implementation process using participatory observation, students' verbal responses, emotional reflection activities, and interactive classroom engagement during educational sessions. The evaluation process focused on examining behavioral participation, emotional openness, students' ability to identify bullying forms, and their willingness to communicate personal experiences related to peer violence or exclusion. Data interpretation was conducted descriptively by analyzing students' responses during symbolic learning activities, expressive art reflection sessions, question-and-answer interactions, and collaborative anti-bullying commitments facilitated by the implementation team. The indicators of program success included increased student understanding regarding the characteristics and impacts of bullying, stronger

emotional empathy toward peers, greater student confidence in expressing bullying-related experiences, active participation during symbolic learning activities, and the emergence of collective awareness concerning the importance of creating a safe, inclusive, and child-friendly school environment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of Bullying Patterns and Students' Social-Emotional Conditions Before Program Implementation

Initial observations conducted by the community service team revealed that bullying behavior among third-grade students at SDN 1 Dersalam frequently appeared in subtle and normalized interaction patterns. Several students verbally mocked peers using parents' names, engaged in repeated physical teasing, and intentionally excluded classmates from group activities without recognizing these actions as harmful behavior. Classroom teachers explained that students often interpreted such actions as ordinary jokes rather than emotional aggression directed toward peers. Similar behavioral tendencies among elementary school students were identified by Mayasari et al. (2019), who argued that repeated peer humiliation in primary education environments is commonly disguised as playful interaction.

Participatory observation during preliminary classroom interaction also indicated that several students demonstrated hesitation when communicating personal experiences related to bullying incidents. Students who tended to remain silent during peer discussions appeared socially withdrawn and less confident during collaborative activities. This condition reflected the existence of emotional insecurity among children who had experienced repetitive exclusion or verbal intimidation within peer environments. Dewi (2020) emphasized that elementary school bullying often manifests through seemingly minor actions that gradually weaken children's self-esteem and social participation.

The communication process between the implementation team and classroom teachers identified a recurring pattern in which victims of bullying rarely reported incidents because they feared becoming targets of further ridicule. Teachers admitted that many bullying interactions occurred informally during break sessions and cooperative play activities outside direct supervision. The normalization of such behavior created difficulties in distinguishing playful interaction from emotionally harmful aggression among students. Rachmawati (2024) explained that unaddressed bullying behavior in childhood may contribute to long-term psychological vulnerability and relational insecurity.

Students' social responses during early discussions demonstrated limited awareness regarding the emotional consequences experienced by victims of bullying behavior. Several students openly admitted that teasing peers was considered entertaining when conducted collectively within friendship groups. Such attitudes reflected the persistence of symbolic violence embedded within children's everyday communication practices. Suryadinata (2024) argued that symbolic forms of exclusion and humiliation frequently become culturally tolerated because they are not immediately recognized as violence within educational environments.

The implementation team identified that conventional anti-bullying explanations previously delivered in schools had not sufficiently transformed students' emotional understanding regarding harmful peer interaction. Students were capable of memorizing general definitions of bullying but struggled to connect those concepts with their own daily behavior. This discrepancy suggested that cognitive recognition alone was insufficient for developing reflective social awareness among elementary school children. Suhandoko et al. (2025) noted that anti-bullying programs in elementary schools often fail because instructional delivery remains overly formal and disconnected from children's experiential realities.

At this stage, the implementation team introduced symbolic learning as a pedagogical strategy intended to bridge abstract anti-bullying concepts with children's imaginative cognition. The use of symbolic representation was considered relevant because students at the concrete operational stage understand social meaning more effectively through visualization, metaphor, and experiential interaction. Participatory engagement during early symbolic exposure indicated stronger student curiosity compared with conventional instructional dialogue. Susanto et al. (2024) and Imanulhaq and Ichsan (2022) emphasized that children aged seven to twelve demonstrate greater conceptual comprehension when learning activities incorporate concrete symbolic mediation.



Figure 1. Anti-Bullying Ice Breaking



Figure 2. Students Enthusiastically Participating in the Ice Breaking

The atmosphere during the initial anti-bullying ice breaking session demonstrated notable changes in students' emotional participation and classroom engagement. Figure 1 and Figure 2 may be placed in this paragraph because they illustrate students' enthusiastic participation during the anti-bullying song activity and interactive opening session. Students who were initially passive gradually became more responsive during collective singing and movement-based interaction. Muslim (2017) explained that aesthetic and emotionally engaging learning activities in elementary education strengthen children's participatory confidence and social receptiveness.

The implementation team subsequently documented the frequency of bullying-related behaviors identified by students during preliminary discussions. Students most frequently mentioned verbal teasing, followed by exclusion from games, physical pushing, and mocking related to personal appearance. These findings demonstrated that verbal and symbolic aggression represented the dominant forms of peer violence within the observed classroom environment. The observed patterns corresponded with findings by Nur and Habiby (2020), who argued that peace-oriented educational environments require systematic reconstruction of students' communication ethics and peer interaction culture.

Table 1. Initial Identification of Bullying Behaviors Recognized by Students

Type of Behavior	Number of Student Mentions	Behavioral Category
Mocking peers verbally	14	Verbal Bullying
Excluding classmates from games	11	Social Bullying
Physical pushing during play	8	Physical Bullying
Calling offensive nicknames	10	Verbal Bullying
Refusing cooperative interaction	6	Social Bullying

The data presented in Table 1 demonstrated that students predominantly recognized bullying through verbal interaction patterns rather than overt physical aggression. Verbal humiliation appeared deeply integrated into peer communication culture, causing students to perceive emotionally harmful language as socially acceptable behavior. The prevalence of exclusion-based interaction further indicated that relational aggression had become embedded within children's friendship structures. Dahlia et al. (2025) explained that repeated verbal humiliation and social rejection frequently produce invisible emotional wounds that significantly affect children's psychological well-being.

The overall findings from the preliminary stage indicated that bullying behavior within the observed school environment operated not merely as isolated misconduct but as a socially normalized interaction pattern reinforced through collective peer culture. Students demonstrated limited emotional literacy in interpreting the harmful consequences of verbal ridicule and exclusion toward classmates. The empirical evidence also revealed that anti-bullying education required approaches capable of transforming children's emotional perception rather than merely transferring normative behavioral information. Ariani and Prawitasari (2024) emphasized that bullying prevention efforts become more effective when educational intervention combines institutional awareness with emotionally responsive child-centered strategies.

Implementation of the “Hantu Bullying” Symbolic Learning Model in Anti-Bullying Education Activities

The implementation phase began with the introduction of the “Hantu Bullying” concept as a symbolic educational medium designed to translate abstract bullying categories into imaginative representations understandable for elementary school students. Students showed immediate curiosity when the facilitators introduced the characters “Hantu Pukul-Pukul,” “Hantu Kata-Kata Jahat,” and “Hantu Main Jauhan” through visual slides and interactive storytelling. The symbolic naming strategy encouraged children to emotionally associate harmful behavior with negative social consequences rather than perceiving bullying as ordinary peer interaction. Cuciatur et al. (2025) explained that symbolic learning media significantly strengthen children's cognitive engagement because symbols stimulate associative and imaginative thinking processes during early educational development.

The educational process was conducted interactively through question-and-answer sessions, participatory storytelling, and visual interpretation activities that encouraged students to identify forms of bullying from their own social experiences. Students became increasingly active when facilitators connected symbolic ghost characters with real-life situations occurring within classrooms and playground interactions. Several students voluntarily admitted that they had previously engaged in mocking behavior without realizing its emotional impact on peers. Firdaus and Hamidaturrohmah (2025) emphasized that imaginative educational approaches in anti-bullying programs create stronger emotional resonance among elementary school children compared with one-directional instructional methods.

The implementation team observed that symbolic visualization enabled students to recognize the distinction between playful communication and emotionally harmful behavior more effectively than conventional verbal explanation. Students began categorizing peer interaction into harmful and non-harmful behavior through references to the symbolic ghost figures introduced during the session. This process demonstrated that symbolic mediation functioned not only as educational entertainment but also as a cognitive-emotional framework for moral interpretation. Fitri et al. (2025) argued that symbolic representation possesses strong pedagogical potential because metaphorical imagery allows children to emotionally internalize social conflict and relational violence.

During the interactive discussion session, students demonstrated increased willingness to communicate bullying experiences that had previously remained concealed. Some students described situations in which classmates repeatedly excluded them from group activities or mocked their physical appearance during playtime. Emotional openness emerged more naturally after facilitators framed bullying as something represented by “ghost characters” that needed collective resistance. Nur et al. (2025) explained that cultures of bullying in elementary schools often persist because children normalize repetitive humiliation as a routine component of social interaction.

The expressive communication process became more visible when facilitators encouraged students to identify bullying incidents through symbolic reflection rather than direct accusation toward classmates. Students appeared more comfortable discussing harmful experiences because the symbolic approach reduced feelings of embarrassment and fear during classroom dialogue. This condition indicated that symbolic child learning created a psychologically safer environment for emotional disclosure among participants. Dahlia et al. (2025) emphasized that emotionally secure educational environments are essential for helping children communicate psychological distress caused by bullying experiences.



Figure 3. Three Symbols of the “Hantu Bullying” Concept



Figure 4. Material Presentation by the Dersalam Village Community Service Team

The emotional atmosphere during the educational session became increasingly participatory when students collectively responded to symbolic anti-bullying questions posed by the facilitators. Figure 3 and Figure 4 may be placed in this paragraph because these figures illustrate the three symbolic “Hantu Bullying” characters and the material presentation conducted by the implementation team. Students consistently referred to the symbolic ghost names when identifying examples of harmful peer interaction during discussions. Supriyatno et al. (2021) explained that anti-bullying education becomes more effective when preventive messages are delivered through engaging communication models adapted to children’s developmental characteristics.

Participatory observation further revealed that symbolic learning strengthened students’ attentiveness and reduced passive classroom behavior during anti-bullying education sessions. Students who initially avoided participation gradually became involved in responding to facilitators’ questions and discussing classroom interaction experiences. The collaborative structure of symbolic learning activities created an educational climate characterized by emotional openness and peer engagement. Karisma et al. (2024) found that participatory anti-bullying educational programs increase student responsiveness because children feel directly involved in constructing collective understanding regarding harmful behavior.

Table 2. Students’ Participatory Responses During Symbolic Learning Activities

Observed Student Response	Number of Students	Interpretation
Actively answering questions	15	Increased cognitive engagement
Sharing bullying experiences	11	Emotional openness
Identifying bullying symbols correctly	18	Improved conceptual understanding
Participating in group reflection	17	Strengthened peer interaction
Showing hesitation during discussion	4	Residual emotional insecurity

The findings presented in Table 2 demonstrated that symbolic learning significantly encouraged active participation and emotional engagement among students during anti-bullying educational activities. Most students successfully identified bullying categories through symbolic references and demonstrated stronger willingness to communicate personal experiences compared with preliminary observations. The remaining hesitant participants reflected the persistence of emotional insecurity

among some children who had previously experienced peer intimidation. Suhandoko et al. (2025) argued that anti-bullying learning models require sustained participatory reinforcement because children's emotional confidence develops gradually through repeated social affirmation.

The implementation team also identified that symbolic learning promoted collective empathy by encouraging students to imagine the emotional experiences of bullying victims from perspectives beyond their own. Students increasingly responded negatively toward bullying examples discussed during classroom interaction and demonstrated greater sensitivity toward exclusion-based behavior. This transformation suggested that symbolic imagination contributed to the reconstruction of peer interaction ethics within the classroom environment. Santika (2023) emphasized that educational practices grounded in respect, social dignity, and collective responsibility are essential components in strengthening humane interaction values within Indonesian educational culture.

The empirical findings from the implementation stage indicated that the "Hantu Bullying" model functioned effectively as a participatory anti-bullying educational framework integrating symbolic cognition, emotional reflection, and interactive peer engagement. Students demonstrated stronger conceptual understanding regarding physical, verbal, and social bullying after participating in symbolic learning activities adapted to their developmental characteristics. The educational process simultaneously transformed classroom interaction into a more emotionally expressive and reflective environment where students felt safer discussing harmful social experiences. Mardiatama et al. (2024) emphasized that contemporary bullying prevention programs for elementary school students must prioritize adaptive communication strategies capable of strengthening children's social awareness across both physical and symbolic interaction spaces.

Strengthening Students' Empathy, Emotional Awareness, and Collective Anti-Bullying Commitment

The final stage of the program focused on strengthening students' emotional awareness and collective responsibility through reflective anti-bullying activities designed to encourage empathy and social sensitivity. Facilitators introduced the concept of "Jurus Ampuh Melawan Bullying" consisting of simple preventive actions such as refusing silence, courageously saying stop, inviting isolated peers to play together, and reporting harmful behavior to teachers or trusted adults. Students demonstrated strong enthusiasm during this session because the strategies were communicated through language and illustrations closely aligned with children's social experiences. Supriyatno et al. (2021) emphasized that anti-bullying education for elementary school students becomes more effective when preventive strategies are simplified into emotionally understandable and actionable behavioral guidance.

The participatory reflection process revealed notable changes in students' willingness to express empathy toward classmates who had experienced bullying. Several students acknowledged that they previously ignored exclusionary behavior because they considered it a normal component of peer interaction. Emotional discussions during the session encouraged students to reconsider the emotional consequences of humiliation, ridicule, and social rejection experienced by victims. Dahlia et al. (2025) explained that reflective anti-bullying education contributes significantly to children's emotional literacy by helping them recognize the invisible psychological wounds caused by repeated peer aggression.

Students' emotional openness became increasingly visible during the expressive art reflection activity in which participants marked body areas associated with painful bullying experiences. This activity encouraged students to connect emotional suffering with physical expression, allowing facilitators to observe the depth of students' personal experiences related to peer violence. Several participants became visibly emotional while discussing experiences of verbal humiliation and exclusion from friendship groups. Rachmawati (2024) argued that bullying-related trauma frequently remains hidden because children lack emotionally secure spaces for articulating fear, shame, and psychological discomfort.

The emotional reflection activities simultaneously strengthened peer solidarity because students began responding supportively toward classmates sharing painful experiences. Students who previously remained passive during discussions gradually offered verbal encouragement and emotional reassurance to peers describing bullying incidents. This shift indicated the emergence of collective empathy as a social response cultivated through participatory symbolic learning activities. Nurwanto and Habiby (2020) emphasized that peace-oriented educational approaches encourage children to

reconstruct peer relationships through empathy, mutual respect, and collaborative emotional understanding.

The implementation team observed that students increasingly demonstrated awareness regarding their individual roles in preventing bullying behavior within classroom interaction. Some participants voluntarily stated that they intended to stop mocking classmates and avoid excluding peers from social activities after recognizing the emotional impact of such actions. The educational process transformed anti-bullying awareness from abstract moral instruction into concrete interpersonal responsibility among students. Dewi (2020) explained that sustainable bullying prevention in elementary schools depends upon children's ability to internalize respectful behavior as part of everyday social ethics.



Figure 5. Students Actively Answering Questions and Courageously Expressing Experiences of Verbal Mockery They Had Experienced



Figure 6. Students Participating by Sharing Their Experiences During the Expressive Art Activity for Evaluation and Guidance by the Dersalam Village Community Service Team

The reflective reinforcement stage also included the formulation of a collective anti-bullying commitment involving collaborative declarations by students to create a safer classroom environment. Figure 5 and Figure 6 may be placed in this paragraph because these figures illustrate students actively answering questions and participating in expressive emotional reflection activities. Students demonstrated increased confidence while communicating anti-bullying messages publicly during classroom interaction. Muslim (2017) explained that emotionally expressive educational activities strengthen children's participatory confidence because aesthetic and reflective learning experiences foster deeper personal engagement within social learning processes.

The facilitators further identified that students who initially exhibited social withdrawal became more participatory after receiving interpersonal encouragement and positive reinforcement during reflective sessions. Children who previously hesitated to speak gradually engaged in collaborative dialogue and group-based anti-bullying commitments. This transformation indicated that emotionally supportive educational interaction contributed to strengthening children's confidence within peer environments. Karisma et al. (2024) argued that participatory empowerment strategies in elementary education increase students' social courage because children perceive themselves as valued participants within collective learning environments.

Table 3. Indicators of Emotional and Social Change After Program Implementation

Observed Behavioral Indicator	Before Program	After Program
Students willing to share experiences	Low	High
Participation during discussion	Passive	Active
Awareness of bullying impacts	Limited	Increased
Empathy toward peers	Inconsistent	Stronger
Confidence in reporting bullying	Weak	Improved

The findings presented in Table 3 indicated substantial improvement in students' emotional participation, anti-bullying awareness, and confidence during social interaction after implementation of the symbolic learning program. Students became more capable of identifying emotional harm caused by bullying and demonstrated stronger empathy toward classmates experiencing exclusion or verbal humiliation. The increase in reporting confidence also reflected the emergence of psychological safety within the classroom environment after participatory educational intervention. Ariani and Prawitasari (2024) emphasized that effective bullying prevention requires educational environments capable of encouraging children to communicate harmful experiences without fear of social retaliation.

The program additionally demonstrated that symbolic child learning possesses significant potential for reconstructing anti-bullying education into a more emotionally grounded and developmentally adaptive pedagogical framework. Students responded more positively to imaginative symbolic representation compared with conventional lecture-centered approaches previously implemented within school environments. The integration of emotional reflection, symbolic imagination, and participatory interaction strengthened children's moral interpretation of harmful peer behavior. Firdaus and Hamidaturrohmah (2025) explained that child-centered anti-bullying education becomes more transformative when educational media stimulate emotional imagination and reflective social interpretation simultaneously.

The final evaluation findings indicated that the "Hantu Bullying" educational model succeeded in creating a participatory anti-bullying learning environment characterized by emotional openness, collaborative empathy, and stronger collective awareness regarding respectful peer interaction. Students not only demonstrated improved conceptual understanding regarding physical, verbal, and social bullying but also developed greater emotional sensitivity toward the psychological consequences experienced by victims. The symbolic learning framework effectively translated abstract moral values into concrete social experiences understandable for elementary school children within their developmental context. Setiawan and Saputra (2024) emphasized that preventive anti-bullying education at the elementary level remains essential because early intervention contributes significantly to reducing future patterns of aggression, violence, and socially harmful behavior among children.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the anti-bullying education model based on symbolic child learning through the concept of "Hantu Bullying" demonstrated significant effectiveness in strengthening elementary school students' understanding of bullying behavior, emotional awareness, social empathy, and participatory courage within peer interaction environments at SDN 1 Dersalam. The preliminary findings revealed that bullying behaviors such as verbal ridicule, social exclusion, and physical teasing had been normalized within students' daily communication patterns due to limited emotional literacy and weak recognition of harmful interpersonal conduct. The symbolic learning approach transformed abstract anti-bullying concepts into imaginative and emotionally accessible representations through the use of "Hantu Pukul-Pukul," "Hantu Kata-Kata Jahat," and "Hantu Main Jauhan," enabling students to recognize bullying categories more concretely and reflectively. Participatory educational activities integrating interactive discussion, expressive reflection, emotional storytelling, and collective commitment-building successfully increased students' confidence in expressing personal experiences and strengthened collaborative empathy toward peers experiencing bullying. The findings further indicated that symbolic child learning provides an adaptive and child-centered pedagogical framework

capable of reconstructing anti-bullying education into a more emotionally meaningful, participatory, and developmentally relevant learning process for elementary school environments.

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