Implementing Child-Friendly Schools Program at Muhammadiyah Elementary School in South Tangerang

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Abstract
Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) are formal and non-formal education units that are safe, clean, healthy, and environmentally friendly. Schools guarantee, fulfill and respect children's rights and protect them from violence and discrimination. This child-friendly school model has proven effective in protecting children's rights, preventing discrimination, violence, and other unwanted actions, and developing students' potential. This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach to determine the implementation of the child-friendly school program at Muhammadiyah Elementary School in South Tangerang. Data collection in this study was conducted by conducting interviews with school principals and teachers, observing the teachers' and students' activities while at school, and studying school written documentation. To increase the trust, researchers conducted triangulation by examining field observation notes, written documents, and interview transcripts. Based on the study's findings and the discussion of the results, it was evident that Muhammadiyah Elementary School in South Tangerang has successfully implemented a child-friendly school program, despite needing to be officially designated. The school fulfills at least four of the six indicators required for implementing child-friendly schools, as outlined in PPPA Regulation 8 of 2014. These indicators include having a child-friendly school policy; incorporating child-friendly learning approaches; providing training for teachers and education administration staff on child rights; and ensuring child-friendly infrastructure and facilities are in place.

Keywords: Child-friendly Learning Environment, Child-friendly Schools, Child Protection, Children's Rights.

How to cite this article:
Introduction

Schools must be free from all forms of physical and verbal violence committed by students, teachers, education staff, or other parties within the school environment.\(^1\) It must be proven to facilitate students' self-development and policies that ensure children's rights are fulfilled in the school environment. The Indonesian government responds to the issue of child abuse by making policies that emphasize; schools must be able to protect children while they are at school from all forms of threats and violations of children's rights, as stated in the Republic of Indonesia Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Amendments to Law Number 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection.\(^2\)

One of the rights inherent in children is the right to obtain education and teaching in a learning environment that allows children to develop according to their interests and talents. The learning environment is the social, physical, psychological, and pedagogical context in which learning occurs and influences student achievement and attitudes.\(^3\) The learning environment has an essential role in children's personal development and intelligence. The learning environment makes students more motivated, improving their learning outcomes. In addition, fun learning aims to create quality education that does not discriminate between students regarding religion, race, gender, skin color, and language.\(^4\) Therefore, the learning environment must be child-friendly.

This child-friendly environment must be reflected in schools where children learn about cognitive, psychomotor, and values and how to discover themselves. The school aims to transmit knowledge and encourage students to love learning for their own sake. In other words, the school's primary goal is to make students enjoy learning for their own sake, where the school and its educators must create a pleasant atmosphere.\(^5\) This condition can be realized in schools that implement a child-friendly environment or child-friendly schools (CFS). CFS are schools that protect children's rights and provide opportunities for children.

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to become successful learners in academics, social relations, and career preparation and develop their potential optimally.⁶

Several studies on CFS have been conducted. In Denizli Province, Turkey, Cobanoglu et al. found that the most important thing to make CFS in secondary school is the collaborative effort between the principals, teachers, and parents because CFS characteristics must follow broader context such as socioeconomic level of the school, gender, and grade of the students.⁷ Its finding is almost similar to King’s research in Cambodia, that CFS policies fail to consider the cultural situation and local forms of pedagogy.⁸ At another school level, Cobanoglu and Sevim conclude that independent kindergartens are essentially child-friendly because there is no evidence of discrimination in school.⁹ In a different context, Thomas et al.’s research in India discovered that CFS requires a collaborative role of schools with parents and the local community, where schools have to educate both of them so they don’t allow violence against children.¹⁰ Meanwhile, other studies emphasize that an essential aspect of CFS is the availability of facilities, varying from health facilities to a safe, clean, healthy, and protective environment for children.¹¹

In Indonesia, Suharjuddin and Markum found that the CFS model effectively guaranteed children’s rights protection, prevented violence, discrimination, and other

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unwanted actions, and developed students’ potential.\textsuperscript{12} Another study showed that 75\% of teachers argue that CFS policies are relevant to the need for improving the education service system, then 86\% of teachers see that CFS policies benefit school culture improvement. Then, 87\% of teachers believe it will positively impact the comfort of school personnel.\textsuperscript{13}

This research aimed to complement several previous studies’ respective contexts and focuses. In comparison, this research explores the implementation of the child-friendly school program at Muhammadiyah Elementary School, South Tangerang. Through research, data, and information were obtained related to school policies regarding the performance of CFS programs, practices to meet the needs of children in schools, teacher understanding and competence in implementing CFS programs, school infrastructure and facilities, and the relationship between teachers and students, between students, management of school infrastructure that supports CFS programs that meet child-friendly criteria. The novelty of this research is that not all schools implement CFS policies. One of the Muhammadiyah schools as the location for this research has succeeded in implementing a CFS policy following indicators from the government through the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KPPPA) through Ministerial Regulations (Permen PPPA) Number 8 of 2014.

**Methods**

This research was conducted using a qualitative descriptive approach. This research focuses on implementing the CFS program in Muhammadiyah Elementary School (SD) 03 Creative South Tangerang City. Data collection in this study was done through interviews and direct observation. The primary interviews were conducted with school principals to gather information regarding policies and their implementation in establishing a CFS environment. Researchers also conducted interviews with the vice principal of curriculum, class teachers, and Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers to explore the information the principal conveys. Interviews with all were conducted in school. Researchers obtained primary data by observing various activities carried out by schools related to the CFS program, observing and recording school facilities and infrastructure that met child-friendly criteria, learning strategies implemented by teachers, and collaboration carried out by


schools with all child-friendly stakeholders. Secondary data was obtained through documents such as school policies, guidelines, and programs related to the CFS.

The triangulation technique was used in this study to increase the degree of trust in the research results. Triangulation was carried out by examining field notes, written school documents, and interview transcripts. In addition, to ensure the validity of the interview data, the researcher will confirm the results of the interviews with informants to safeguard the truth of the interview results. Triangulation was also carried out by comparing the results of the principal's interview with the teacher's interview. In addition, to ensure the validity of the interview data, the researcher will confirm the results of the interviews with informants to safeguard the truth of the interview results.

We conducted an inductive analysis for the data obtained to be more meaningful. This inductive analysis is carried out to conclude the data that has been collected to get general conclusions. Data analysis followed by data condensation, presentation, and conclusion referred to phenomena and patterns of relationships between phenomena. The presentation of data was done by organizing data that has been reduced. The data were presented separately from one phase to another. All data were presented and abstracted in an integrated manner. Conclusions were drawn during and after data collection.

**Discussion**

**School Policies that Contain Efforts to Form a Child-Friendly School Environment**

Muhammadiyah Elementary School (SD) 03 Creative is not officially implementing the CFS program established and fostered by the Office for Community Empowerment, Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, and Family Planning (DPMP3AKB). However, this research reveals that this school has implemented a CFS program within certain limits. Of the six indicators that should exist for implementing CFS, as stated in PPPA Regulation Number 8 of 2014, schools have implemented at least four indicators. The four indicators are 1) CFS policy, 2) application of child-friendly learning, 3) trained teachers and education administration staff on child rights, and 4) child-friendly infrastructure and facilities.

The interviews with school principals found that schools have policies encouraging creation of a CFS environment. This policy is outlined in the code of conduct, which contains clauses on the prevention of violence against students both by teachers, education staff, and

fellow students. The teachers who were interviewed also acknowledged the policy. The policy was prepared jointly by the school principal and the teacher council through meetings held by the school. The regulations adopted various government regulations for protecting and fulfilling children's rights.15

Schools must create a safe, fun, healthy, and clean environment to realize a CFS. One of the efforts is to create a smoke-free area; narcotics, psychotropics, addictive substances (drugs), and other illegal drugs.16 The school is aware of this and is committed to making it happen. The principal and the teacher council have repeatedly held meetings to discuss this. Regulations regarding this matter exist and have been socialized among teachers and education staff.

A policy as good as any policy will not impact the environment in which the policy must be implemented. The school has carried out various activities to disseminate policies related to implementing this CFS to all related elements. Socialization is done in multiple ways depending on the target. For teachers, socialization is carried out in teacher council meetings. Teachers then convey to students in learning activities and extra-curricular activities.17

The development of school policies in forming a child-friendly environment is based on the school's mission: to form religious and insightful human resources with superior quality and abilities. This mission was developed to embody the school's vision to create Islamic, intelligent, reliable, insightful, and skilled resources.18 For this reason, all student development activities in schools emphasize Islamic values, character building, and skills to create superior and quality future leaders. Another foundation is the fulfillment of children's rights in Islam, as stated in the Al-Qur'an Surah Al-Tahrim verse 6, "O you who believe! Protect yourself and your family from the fires of hell whose fuel is human and stone; guardian angels who are rough and hard, who are not disobedient to Allah for what He commands them and always do what ordered."

15 School Principal, Interview, interview by Research Team, November 4, 2022, 1.
16 Fourth Grade Teacher, Interview, interview by Research Team, November 10, 2022; Second Grade Teacher, Interview, interview by Research Team, November 8, 2022; 2; Islamic Religious Education Teacher, Interview, interview by Research Team, November 8, 2022; First Grade Teacher, Interview, interview by Research Team, November 8, 2022.
17 Teacher, Interview, November 10, 2022, 4; Companion Teacher, Interview, interview by Research Team, November 10, 2022.
18 Vice Principal of Curriculum, Interview, interview by Research Team, November 10, 2022.
Implementation of School Policies that Encourage the Formation of Child-Friendly Schools

The school policy regarding a child-friendly environment has been implemented in daily activities. The school's physical environment provides students with a sense of security and comfort in learning. Various school activities encourage the formation of positive student behavior. Multiple activities and a safe and comfortable learning environment support efforts to build character and promote students' cognitive development. The school provides a place for children to develop optimally without worrying about violence from others.¹⁹

From the interview results and observations, it can be said that school is a physically safe place for children to learn. Students can freely express themselves in school without worrying about being bullied by fellow students or teachers. Existing rules and regulations guarantee the safety of students while in the school environment. All school environments can be appropriately supervised by teachers and education staff so that it is safe for students to interact and express themselves. With this safe atmosphere, students can study diligently both in and outside the classroom, independently and with the teacher.

Schools are not entirely free from bullying behavior. There has been violence between students, both physically and verbally. This incident usually starts from jokingly taunting each other and developing into mutual contempt. In the end, some did not accept it, which resulted in hitting each other. The incident did not last long because a student reported it to the teacher. After receiving the report, the teacher immediately came down to reconcile the two parties. Since that incident, teachers under the school principal's leadership have carried out stricter supervision to prevent similar incidents from recurring.

A sense of security and protection from acts of violence, both physically and verbally, is an initial prerequisite in creating a CFS. The school has made various efforts to ensure a safe school environment. The school ensures that children understand seriously to comply with the rules to prevent acts of violence among students. Efforts to instill this awareness are integrated with learning activities.²⁰ Apart from that, instilling an attitude of non-violence is also carried out in religious activities, such as through tausiyah after the congregational Duha prayer and congregational Dhuhr prayer.

¹⁹ School Principal, Interview, interview by Research Team, November 10, 2022, 2.
The application of instilling a sense of security and being protected from acts of violence in schools has not been running perfectly. Schools do not yet have a complaint mechanism if someone experiences violence. Schools have not assigned special teachers to deal with problems related to acts of violence for both victims and perpetrators. If violence or bullying occurs, students report directly to the class teacher or the school's head/deputy principal. Under these conditions, the handling of problems of violence and bullying has not run optimally.

Schools also promote students' cognitive development within the framework of implementing this CFS program. This effort is carried out by allowing teachers to determine learning strategies according to students' learning needs. Some teachers create a fun learning environment by arranging classrooms that are not monotonous and student seating arrangements. Another effort made by the teacher is to implement a fun learning process by developing learning strategies, approaches, methods, and technologies that serve the needs of students. What is no less attractive is that teachers are taking advantage of a more open learning environment, such as learning outside the classroom.

This effort awakens the enthusiasm of students to learn. This enthusiasm for learning can encourage better learning outcomes and optimal cognitive development. This pleasant learning atmosphere is visible from observing the learning process in class. Students seem to enjoy this fun learning. Teachers also show effort to serve students’ learning needs with compassion.

The programs developed by the school encourage positive behavior in students. Many extra-curricular activities designed at this school are part of CFS activities. This extra-curricular activity is held to promote and create positive behavior in students. One of the extra-curricular activities at this school is the Muhammadiyah Hizbul Wathan Scouting Movement. One of Hizbul Wathan's goals is to develop abilities through thinking, exercising the heart, and feeling to foster independence, cooperation, and love for the homeland.

students of this school are all members of the Hizbul Wathan scouting movement, and through this, Hizbul Wathan students receive training to develop positive behavior.

Another activity that encourages the development of positive behavior in students is the martial art of Muhammadiyah, Tapak Suci. The Tapak Suci instills a spirit of worship and awareness in the Muhammadiyah youth, who are intellectual, faithful, challenging, and ready to devote themselves to the Muhammadiyah organization, religion, nation, and state. As with Tapak Suci martial arts in other Muhammadiyah schools, Tapak Suci martial arts is developed to encourage positive behavior in students by being brave, challenging, and able to control themselves in dealing with various problems that may arise.24

Implementing the CFS program at this school also embodies the function of the school as a support for building children's character. As part of Indonesian students, the character developed at school is the Pancasila students character, namely lifelong students who have global competence and behave following Pancasila values, namely faith and piety to God Almighty, noble character, diversity, international, cooperation, independence, critical reasoning, and creative.25 This activity is carried out through interactive activities and encourages students to participate in activities at school actively. This activity is carried out through classroom learning and extra-curricular activities.

Teacher's Ability to Carry out School Policies that Contain Efforts to Form a Child-Friendly School Environment

Teachers are the primary key to ensuring CFS programs' implementation. The teacher is face-to-face in shaping students' character, showing empathy and caring for students, and delivering fairness without discrimination so that students feel safe and comfortable.26 Most of the teachers at this school can already learn according to the concept of a CFS, even though they have never received formal training. The teacher obtains this ability through the socialization of the CFS program at and outside the school.27 Information obtained by

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26 Suharjuddin and Markum, “Child-Friendly School Policy.”
teachers from outside the school comes from teacher discussions with teachers from other schools, radio and television, print and social media.\textsuperscript{28}

Teachers apply various strategies, methods, and learning media to implement fun, happy, stress-free learning and encourage active students. The strategy often used is interactive learning using discussion methods, games, and quizzes. Some teachers also use the peer instruction approach by asking students to talk about their experiences, the texts they read, or the assignments they ask for. Teachers use the environment, such as school mosques, parks, and schoolyards, to learn. To eliminate boredom, the teacher also pauses learning activities with ice-breaking activities.\textsuperscript{29} That is all done by the teacher to ensure that children feel happy, excited, and without pressure in learning.\textsuperscript{30}

Apart from going through the learning process, efforts to develop character and prevent acts of violence committed by students are also given through the teacher's exemplary behavior. The modeling and exemplary approach (\textit{uswah}) is a more appropriate way of implementing character education.\textsuperscript{31} The example shown by the teacher is carried out in the way he talks to students, dresses, and behaves in everyday life. All teachers are fully aware of this example as a way of forming student character. This exemplary application is carried out as an implementation of school policies disseminated through teacher council meetings.

\section*{School Facilities and Infrastructure that Meet Child-Friendly Criteria}

Physical security protects everyone inside the school from violence and unforeseen events that may harm students and staff. This physical security can be obtained if school facilities and infrastructure meet child-friendly criteria. According to the requirements of UNICEF, CFS is healthy, safe, and protective.\textsuperscript{32} Based on these criteria, Muhammadiyah Elementary School 03 Creative South Tangerang has met the requirements for a CFS. From an environmental point of view, this school is sufficient to protect all residents from violence and unexpected incidents. This school is in a village and residential area far from main roads.

\textsuperscript{28} Sixth Grade Teacher, Interview, interview by Research Team, November 10, 2022, 6; Third Grade Teacher, Interview, interview by Research Team, November 10, 2022, 3.
\textsuperscript{29} Al-Qur’an and Hadith Teacher, Interview, interview by Research Team, November 11, 2022.
and neighborhood roads. Thus, children are protected from the threat of traffic accidents. It is located in a village environment. It will be easy for the school to get help from the local community if needed.

A clean environment is a mirror that shows the health of everyone in that environment. The atmosphere at school, including the facilities and infrastructure inside, is clean and well-maintained. The main infrastructures, such as classrooms, libraries, and laboratories, are clean and well-organized. Infrastructure such as toilets, corridors, parks, and school grounds are also clean. The school environment is quite beautiful and shady, making this school a comfortable school environment. This condition shows that this school meets the healthy criteria in the CFS concept.

Existing infrastructure facilities in schools also meet child-friendly criteria. The school provides sufficient infrastructure that students can use for their activities. The school has a prayer room that is large enough to accommodate a large number of students. Apart from being used for prayer outside prayer times, it is also for teaching, learning, and extra-curricular activities. Another infrastructure owned by the school is a park. This park was made for beauty and as a comfortable place for students and teachers for teaching and learning activities outside the classroom.

**Conclusion**

Based on the findings and discussion of the results of this study, it can be concluded that Muhammadiyah Elementary School 03 Creative Elementary School, South Tangerang, has implemented a CFS program even though formally it is not part of a designated school and is established as a school that runs a CFS program. Of the six indicators that should exist for implementing CFS, as stated in PPPA Regulation Number 8 of 2014, schools have implemented at least four indicators. The four indicators are 1) CFS policy, 2) application of child-friendly learning, 3) trained teachers and education administration staff on child rights, and 4) child-friendly infrastructure and facilities.

The school already has a policy that aligns with the CFS program. This policy was prepared jointly by the school leadership and the teacher council. The policy was developed based on the school's vision and mission. This policy has been disseminated to all stakeholders through teacher council meetings, education staff meetings, and meetings with

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students' parents. Policy socialization is also conveyed to students through learning activities and extra-curricular activities.

This policy has been implemented in daily activities at school. This implementation is carried out in curricular and extra-curricular activities. An indicator of the performance of this CFS policy can be seen in creating the school environment as a physically safe place for children to learn. Various programs have been implemented to ensure a safe school environment for students. Other programs, such as student cognitive development, inculcating positive behavior, and developing student character, can run optimally by creating a safe learning environment.

References


