



# Social Marketing Campaign through a Three-Pile Sorting Game for Bullying Prevention among Elementary School Students

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## ABSTRACT

Bullying in elementary schools is a serious problem that impacts children's psychological and social development. The community service activity packaged under the title "My School is Safe and Free from Bullying" at SDN Lenteng Agung, Jagakarsa, South Jakarta aims to increase students' understanding and courage in recognizing and preventing bullying behavior. The background of this program is based on the high rate of physical, verbal, relational, and cyber bullying among elementary school students in Indonesia, accompanied by a low level of children's understanding and minimal reporting actions. This campaign was designed with a social marketing approach through material delivery, interactive three pile sorting games, and pre-test and post-test evaluations, so that students can understand the forms and impacts of bullying, how to prevent it, and the importance of reporting. The campaign implementation emphasized the use of simple language and participatory activities to suit the characteristics of elementary school students. A total of 29 students participated in the activity. The results showed an increase in understanding, especially in identifying verbal bullying and cyberbullying. In addition, all students (100%) in the post-test expressed the courage to reprimand the perpetrator and report it to the teacher. These findings indicate that a social campaign based on a participatory approach is effective in increasing anti-bullying literacy while strengthening students' proactive attitudes in creating a safe school environment.

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## Introduction

The phenomenon of bullying in elementary schools is a serious problem that is frequently found in primary education environments. Data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) show that from January to October 2025, 61 children became victims of bullying at school. Beyond these figures, many cases remain unreported due to stigma and victims' fear. KPAI also reported 25 cases of child suicide throughout 2025, most of which were associated with prolonged bullying-related pressure. Various studies indicate that a large proportion of elementary school students have either experienced or witnessed bullying at school, whether in the form of verbal, physical, social, or cyberbullying (Hopeman et al., 2020; Musa et al., 2024). Verbal bullying, such as teasing, insults, and



derogatory name-calling, is the most common form and is often perceived by students as mere joking behavior, making them unaware of its negative impacts (Andini et al., 2024; Musa et al., 2024).

Research by Putri et al. (2024) states that, based on national data, elementary schools account for approximately 26% of all bullying cases in Indonesia, with 55.5% involving physical violence, 29.3% verbal or psychological violence, and the remainder consisting of social or relational violence. A study conducted by Indah Pratiwi et al. (2021) found that between 37.84% and 42.12% of elementary school students in Indonesia experienced verbal bullying. Research by Lestari et al. in Yogyakarta (2020) showed that 51.8% of elementary school children had experienced bullying, of which 62.7% involved physical violence. This finding is supported by a study conducted by Wicaksono et al. (2022) at SDK 078 Paipenga, Sikka Regency, which revealed that among 40 elementary school student respondents, 15% experienced physical bullying, 20% verbal bullying, 28% relational/social-physical bullying, and 20% experienced all three forms simultaneously (physical, verbal, and relational).

Conceptually, bullying is aggressive behavior that is carried out intentionally, repeatedly, and involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. Olweus (1993) defines bullying as a negative action committed by one or more individuals against another individual who has difficulty defending themselves. The key elements of bullying include intentionality, repetition, and an imbalance of power, whether physical, social, or psychological.

Bullying is not limited to physical violence but also includes verbal violence, relational violence (social exclusion), and cyberbullying conducted through digital media (Smith et al., 2019; UNESCO, 2019). In the context of elementary schools, forms of verbal bullying such as teasing, derogatory nicknames, and insults are often regarded as harmless jokes and are therefore not recognized as bullying, even though they can significantly affect children's psychological well-being.

Research findings regarding the impacts of bullying indicate that bullying has significant negative effects on the psychological, social, and academic development of elementary school students. Victims of bullying tend to experience reduced self-confidence, become withdrawn and quiet, isolate themselves from social environments, suffer from stress and anxiety, and demonstrate declining academic performance (Andini et al., 2024; Musa et al., 2024; Nopriyanti et al., 2024). In addition, bullying affects students' social attitudes, leading to fear, insecurity, and difficulties in building relationships with peers (Hopeman et al., 2020). Wardhana (2015) found that victims of bullying are twice as likely to experience depression in adulthood, and 19% of them may engage in self-harm. A longitudinal study conducted by King's College London found that the psychological effects of bullying can persist for more than 40 years after the incidents occur. Not only victims but also perpetrators experience negative consequences, including low empathy, aggressive behavior, poor discipline, and irresponsible attitudes, which may continue into higher levels of education if not addressed promptly (Andini et al., 2024; Nopriyanti et al., 2024).

The phenomenon of bullying among elementary school children does not emerge spontaneously but rather develops from social interaction patterns that are permissive toward



violence. According to Wardhana (2015), many Indonesian children are accustomed to teasing, hitting, or excluding their peers as a form of entertainment or a tradition of seniority at school, without realizing that such actions constitute violence. This condition is exacerbated by children's limited understanding of bullying. Research conducted by Sancaya, I. W. W. (2025) at SD Peguyangan Kaja, Denpasar, found that only 45% of elementary school students understood the meaning of bullying. Consequently, verbal and physical violence are often considered normal, while both perpetrators and victims fail to recognize that such actions violate children's rights. Furthermore, Mohan and Bakar (2021) identified fear of reporting as a critical but often overlooked root cause. Many victims choose to remain silent because they fear being labeled as informants, being socially excluded by peers, or facing retaliation from perpetrators. Studies show that the majority of bullying cases go unreported; therefore, only visible forms of physical bullying are usually addressed by teachers, while verbal and social bullying often remain unnoticed.

Based on the phenomenon described above, bullying must be regarded as a serious threat to children's rights and the development of national character. Government statements have also emphasized that bullying has the potential to hinder the development of high-quality human resources needed to achieve the vision of Golden Indonesia 2045. Therefore, given the high rates of physical, verbal, relational, and cyber violence, coupled with children's limited understanding of bullying and low reporting rates, it is necessary to conduct an anti-bullying educational campaign in elementary schools through community service activities. This program is important to help elementary school students recognize various forms of bullying, understand its harmful effects on both victims and perpetrators, realize that bullying is neither funny nor acceptable, and develop the courage to report incidents when they become victims or witnesses of bullying at school. In general, this community service activity is expected to foster empathy, break the cycle of violence, and create a safe and supportive learning environment for all students.

This community service program (PKM) employs a social marketing approach, which is a marketing strategy designed to influence and encourage desired behavioral changes, such as students' willingness to report bullying incidents. Social marketing is the application of marketing principles and techniques to influence individual or group behavior for the improvement of societal well-being, including the promotion of desirable social behavior changes (Lee & Kotler, 2020). Campaigns designed using a social marketing approach generally emphasize audience segmentation, contextually tailored messages, and the effective use of communication media to achieve sustainable behavioral change.

## **Methods**

The community service activity was held in December 2025 at Lenteng Agung Public Elementary School, Jagakarsa, South Jakarta. The target group was fifth-grade students. The selection of fifth-grade students was based on considerations of children's cognitive, social, and emotional



development. At 10–11 years of age, fifth-grade students have more mature thinking skills than lower-grade students, making them better able to understand the concept of bullying, identify various forms of bullying, and reflect on its impact on both victims and perpetrators. Furthermore, at this developmental stage, interactions with peers become more intense, thus increasing the risk of bullying. Fifth-grade students were assessed as being able to participate in educational activities, discussions, games, and complete pre- and post-test instruments independently and more accurately. The selection of fifth-grade students also took into account that they were not yet busy preparing for final exams like sixth-grade students, allowing them to optimally participate in all activities.

The program included 29 fifth-grade students selected in coordination with the school. This number was based on students who were present and granted permission to participate during the program. The program lasted 90 minutes. The 90-minute activity duration was chosen to ensure the entire anti-bullying education program could be implemented effectively without causing fatigue among elementary school students. This timeframe included a pre-test, educational material delivery, interactive discussion, a Three-Pile Sorting game as a participatory learning medium, a question-and-answer session, and a post-test to measure changes in students' knowledge and attitudes after participating. This duration also took into account the school's school schedule to ensure the program could be implemented optimally without disrupting established teaching and learning activities.

Campaign materials included an introduction to the forms of bullying (physical, verbal, relational, and cyber), the impact of bullying on victims and perpetrators, how to prevent bullying in the school environment, and the importance of having the courage to report it. The materials were presented using simple language and examples relevant to students' everyday experiences.

The implementation method was carried out through several stages, including:

1. Pre-test to measure students' knowledge, understanding, attitudes, and responses toward bullying behavior in the school environment, namely:

- 1) Understanding the Types of Bullying:

Questions 1–4 assess students' ability to identify different forms of bullying, including:

- Physical bullying (pushing, hitting, or hurting others)
- Verbal bullying (teasing, insulting, or using derogatory nicknames)
- Social or relational bullying (excluding or isolating others)
- Cyberbullying (bullying conducted through digital media)

- 2) Understanding the Impact of Bullying:

Questions 5 and 6 measure students' knowledge of the effects of bullying on both victims and perpetrators:

- Students are expected to understand that victims may experience sadness, fear, low self-esteem, stress, and learning difficulties.
- In addition, perpetrators may face social consequences and disciplinary actions from the school.



### 3) Ability to Distinguish Between Joking and Bullying:

Question 8 assesses students' awareness that actions causing others to feel hurt, sad, or cry are not acceptable jokes, even if the perpetrator considers them harmless teasing.

### 4) Attitudes and Courage to Respond to Bullying:

Questions 7, 9, and 10 assess students' attitudes and responses when they encounter or witness bullying. Students are expected to demonstrate the courage to:

- Confront or discourage bullying behavior.
- Refrain from supporting or laughing at the perpetrator.
- Report incidents to teachers or trusted adults.
- Understand that threats and intimidation are forms of bullying that require assistance and intervention from others.

2. Interactive material presentation regarding the forms, impacts, and prevention of bullying.
3. Three-Pile Sorting educational game, in which students classified case cards into bullying or non-bullying categories and determined the appropriate actions to take.
4. Reflection and reinforcement of key messages.
5. Post-test is administered to measure changes in students' understanding and attitudes. Students are asked to answer the same questions used in the pre-test. The post-test is intended to evaluate the effectiveness of the anti-bullying educational campaign program among elementary school students. The success of the program can be observed through improvements in students' ability to identify different forms of bullying, understand its impact on both victims and perpetrators, distinguish between joking and bullying, and demonstrate greater concern and willingness to report bullying incidents. Therefore, this instrument assesses changes in students' knowledge, attitudes, and behavioral intentions after participating in the anti-bullying education program.

## Results and Discussion

The campaign activities were divided into several structured stages. The initial stage began with the campaign team introducing themselves, explaining the objectives of the campaign, and outlining the procedures of the activity to ensure that students could participate actively and orderly. This was followed by an ice-breaking session aimed at creating a conducive classroom atmosphere.

The next stage involved the administration of a pre-test, which aimed to measure students' cognitive understanding and attitudes toward bullying. The pre-test consisted of 10 multiple-choice questions covering knowledge of the types of bullying, its impacts, and appropriate responses when experiencing or witnessing bullying incidents.

Following the pre-test, the activity continued with an interactive campaign presentation using presentation media. The materials covered several topics, including: recognizing the forms of bullying



among elementary school students, understanding the negative impacts of bullying on both victims and perpetrators, strategies for preventing bullying in the school environment, understanding that bullying is neither humorous nor merely a joke, and encouraging students to be brave in reporting bullying incidents. Students were also provided with simple case examples to help them clearly distinguish between joking, ordinary conflict, and bullying.

To further strengthen students' understanding, the activity continued with the Three-Pile Sorting educational game, in which students were divided into three groups. Each group was given 15 cards containing descriptions of behaviors commonly found in the school environment. Students were asked to discuss and classify the cards into *bullying* or *non-bullying* categories, as well as determine the appropriate response, namely whether to report the incident or remain silent. After the cards had been classified, students placed them into labeled boxes marked *bullying* or *non-bullying*, and *report to the teacher* or *remain silent*. The results of each group discussion were then reviewed collectively, with group representatives asked to provide arguments and explanations for the classifications they had made. The following are examples of the cards used as discussion materials in the group activity.

Figure 1. Group Discussion Material Cards



In the final stage, students were asked to complete a post-test using the same instrument as the pre-test. The purpose was to measure changes in their knowledge and attitudes after participating in the campaign. The entire series of activities concluded with a summary of the key messages and an encouragement for students to have the courage to report bullying if they experience or witness it. The activity ended with a group photo session.



The results of the activity involving 29 participating students can be seen in the summary of the pre-test and post-test results presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test Results (n = 29)

Indicator	Pre-Test (%)	Post-Test (%)	Change
Physical bullying	82,8	86,2	+3,4
Verbal bullying	37,9	48,3	+10,4
Social bullying	86,2	89,7	+3,5
Cyberbullying	82,8	89,7	+6,9
Impact on victims	96,6	100	+3,4
Consequences for perpetrators	100	100	0
Courage to intervene	96,6	100	+3,4
Courage to report	96,6	100	+3,4

The results of the activity indicate that the anti-bullying social education campaign was effective in improving students’ understanding and strengthening their attitudes toward bullying. The most significant improvements were observed in the identification of verbal bullying and cyberbullying. These findings suggest that elementary school students tend to recognize physical bullying more easily than verbal bullying. In addition, the educational intervention delivered through this community service activity also helped students distinguish between ordinary jokes and forms of verbal or digital bullying.

The pre-test and post-test findings are consistent with the cognitive developmental characteristics of elementary school-aged children, who tend to understand concrete phenomena more easily than symbolic or verbal forms of violence. The improvement in students’ understanding observed in this activity is in line with meta-analytic findings showing that school-based bullying prevention programs can significantly increase students’ awareness and reduce aggressive behavior when participatory and collaborative approaches are employed (Gaffney et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the increase to 100% on the indicator measuring students’ willingness to report bullying incidents demonstrates that the campaign approach was not only informative but also effective in fostering students’ moral awareness and empathy. This strengthening of empathetic values was reflected in the absence of victim-blaming responses in the post-test. For several indicators with already high baseline scores, the intervention functioned as reinforcement of students’ existing understanding. This suggests that social educational campaigns remain relevant even when participants initially possess relatively good levels of knowledge. The increased willingness of students to intervene and report bullying behavior also supports findings that strengthening prosocial social norms can reduce the *bystander effect*—the tendency to remain passive—among elementary school children (Meter & Card, 2021).



These findings are also consistent with the results of previous social educational campaigns. The increase in post-test scores, particularly in the indicators of verbal bullying (+10.4%) and cyberbullying (+6.9%), indicates that elementary school students initially found it easier to recognize concrete forms of bullying, such as physical bullying, but still experienced difficulties identifying symbolic or indirect forms of bullying. This condition is consistent with the findings of Arif et al. (2025), in which several teachers also admitted difficulty in distinguishing between ordinary joking and verbal abuse, highlighting the need for psychoeducation to clarify the boundaries between normal social interaction and bullying behavior.

In addition, the use of the Three-Pile Sorting method demonstrated an effective participatory learning approach in developing students' conceptual understanding. This approach is consistent with the simulation and group discussion methods described by Arif et al. (2025), in which teachers were divided into small groups, discussed cases of violence, and collaboratively explored possible solutions. As a result, participants not only acquired new knowledge but also experienced a shift in perspective in handling bullying cases in a more empathetic and structured manner.

The increase to 100% in the indicators of students' willingness to report bullying incidents and intervene against perpetrators further supports the findings of Arif et al. (2025), which suggest that psychoeducation not only enhances cognitive understanding but also fosters moral courage and social empathy. In their study, several teachers emphasized the importance of establishing reporting systems, building emotional closeness with students, and creating a *child-friendly school* environment so that victims feel safe to speak up and seek help. These findings indicate that participatory educational interventions, whether involving students or teachers, can reduce the *bystander effect* and promote a more prosocial school culture.

Therefore, the results of this social campaign reinforce the findings of Arif et al. (2025) that psychoeducation-based social educational campaigns represent an effective strategy for improving bullying literacy, enhancing the ability to identify different forms of bullying, and strengthening students' courage to engage in social intervention. This suggests that, in both teacher and student contexts, interactive, collaborative, and experience-based educational approaches have proven effective in supporting the development of a Child-Friendly School (CFS) environment and an anti-bullying culture.

## Conclusion

The anti-bullying social marketing campaign using the Three-Pile Sorting Game successfully improved elementary school students' knowledge, understanding, and attitudes toward bullying behavior. The comparison between the pre-test and post-test results demonstrated improvements across nearly all measured indicators, particularly in students' ability to identify verbal bullying (+10.4%) and cyberbullying (+6.9%), which had previously been more difficult for students to recognize than physical bullying.



In addition, all students demonstrated a strong understanding of the impacts of bullying and showed increased willingness to intervene and report bullying incidents after participating in the program. These findings indicate that the combination of a social marketing approach and the Three-Pile Sorting Game created an interactive, participatory, and engaging learning experience that was well suited to elementary school students.

Through group discussions, case classification activities, and collective reflection, students not only acquired new knowledge but also developed empathy, moral awareness, and the confidence to take action when encountering or witnessing bullying. The participatory nature of the intervention encouraged students to distinguish between acceptable social interactions and bullying behavior while fostering a greater sense of responsibility toward their peers.

Overall, the program can be considered an effective educational strategy for improving bullying literacy, strengthening anti-bullying attitudes, and promoting prosocial behavior in the school environment. Therefore, participatory educational campaigns such as the Three-Pile Sorting Game have strong potential to be implemented as sustainable school-based programs to support the development of Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) and to foster a safe, inclusive, and bullying-free school culture.

Based on the results of the activity, several recommendations can be proposed:

1. For schools, anti-bullying education programs should be implemented continuously and integrated into classroom learning activities or school character-building programs. Participatory approaches such as case discussions and educational games have proven effective and may serve as a model for regular school activities.
2. For future community service programs, it is recommended to expand the number of participants and involve parents in anti-bullying education in order to create synergy between the school and family environments. Follow-up evaluations with long-term measurements are also important to assess the sustainability of changes in students' behavior.

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