

Child Protection Management in School: Case Study of School Dropouts in North Sulawesi, Indonesia

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Abstrak

Kasus anak putus sekolah telah menjadi keprihatinan masyarakat. Sekolah dianggap kurang peduli pada hak-hak anak. Sebaliknya masih ada sebagian sekolah yang beranggapan bahwa implementasi Undang-Undang Perlindungan Anak telah menambah beban tugas di sekolah. Padahal perlindungan hak anak di sekolah menimbulkan kewajiban pada pendidik dan tenaga kependidikan. Pendidik wajib memenuhi hak anak melalui aktivitas pembelajaran dan penanganan anak yang bermasalah di kelas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis manajemen perlindungan anak di sekolah. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah studi kasus. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa manajemen perlindungan anak di sekolah belum dapat direalisasikan secara optimal. Pendidik dapat melaksanakan aktivitas pembelajaran tetapi penanganan anak bermasalah belum dapat dilakukan secara profesional. Sekolah belum memiliki dokumen kebijakan dan manajemen perlindungan anak secara terpadu. Perlindungan anak di sekolah bersifat parsial-fokus pada pemenuhan hak anak untuk belajar sesuai Rancangan Pembelajaran. Oleh sebab itu pemerintah, masyarakat dan dunia usaha perlu bersinergi untuk pembangunan sekolah ramah anak, pelatihan bagi pendidik untuk memiliki keterampilan manajerial dalam melindungi hak-hak anak, serta penanganan anak bermasalah untuk mencegah anak putus sekolah dan mengalami dampak yang lebih buruk.

Kata kunci: Manajemen Perlindungan Anak, Siswa Putus Sekolah, Studi Kasus

Abstract

The case of children dropping out of school has become a public concern. Schools are considered less concerned about children's rights. On the other hand, there are still some schools that think that the implementation of the Child Protection Law has increased the workload in schools. However, protecting children's rights in schools creates obligations for educators and education staff. Educators must fulfill children's rights through learning activities and handling children who have problems in the classroom. This research aims to analyze child protection management in schools. The research method used is a case study. The research results show that school child protection management cannot be realized optimally. Educators can carry out learning activities, but handling problematic children must be done more professionally. The school still needs an integrated child protection policy and management document. Child protection in schools is partial - it focuses on fulfilling children's rights to learn according to the Learning Plan. Therefore, the government, society, and the business world must work together to build child-friendly schools, train educators to have managerial skills in protecting children's rights, and handle problematic children to prevent children from dropping out of school and experiencing worse impacts.

Keywords: Child Protection Management, School Dropout Students, Case Study

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1. INTRODUCTION

The problem of child protection management in schools and out-of-school children in North Sulawesi Province is very complex. The complexity of this problem can be seen from the aspects of protecting children's rights, fulfilling children's rights, exploitation of out-of-school children, and the influence and impact on out-of-school children and other people who interact with them (Damayanti et al., 2020; Kurniasari et al., 2018; Rizkita, 2017). Experts have widely discussed studies on school dropouts. According to previous study the causes of students dropping out of school are complex and complicated (Room et al., 2021). Regarding the factors that cause children to drop out of school have identified several reasons why

children drop out of school, one of which is because education at school does not match what students expect (Bakhshi et al., 2017; Ntamu & Oyo-Ita, 2022).

At a child's age (under 18 years), a child should go to school to receive an education. However, the reality shows that not all children can receive an education, let alone fulfill the 12-year mandatory education (Kassem, 2018; Priyastuti, M. T., 2020). If we pay attention to data on children's secondary school participation, there is a decreasing trend from middle school to high school level. Around 28% of junior high school students need help to continue their studies to high school. Judging from the impact on out-of-school children, they burden society and development (Herbein et al., 2018; E.-J. Kim et al., 2021). Apart from having limited knowledge and skills, out-of-school children are also often involved in harmful activities such as drinking alcohol, fighting, destroying public facilities, disturbing other people, stealing, and committing violence, including sexual violence. This condition gets worse when they are in a nasty social environment where violence is shown by adults as pride in having power and even thuggery (Choi et al., 2022; Parris et al., 2022).

Previous study explained that the exploitation of children by adults from ancient times until now is a problem that needs to be addressed because the impact is very bad for children (Niraula, 2021). Sexual and economic exploitation generally occurs in low-income families. Low-income families with low education present complex problems in children's lives. Adults exploit those who drop out of school and indirectly exploit themselves (Bakhshi et al., 2017). Furthermore, out-of-school children are trapped in acts of exploitation that they are not aware of and then have even worse impacts, such as experiencing work accidents, committing unlawful acts, contracting sexually transmitted diseases, being involved in human trafficking, and experiencing frustration, stress, and anxiety—depression and other mental disorders (Indrawati et al., 2020; Ntamu & Oyo-Ita, 2022). The condition of out-of-school children is a concern for many parties, including universities, which are also responsible for contributing to development, especially in education (Anwar et al., 2016; Ashar & Sadaruddin, 2019). Therefore, research on out-of-school children who experience acts of exploitation is very urgent to explain the causes and impacts.

The results of this research will produce findings according to the scope of the problem and recommend efforts to prevent and treat out-of-school children who are victims of exploitation and its impact on their growth and development. Indeed, every child has the right to education. Children's rights in education encourage teachers to reflect on their role as implementers of child protection in schools (Ariyanti, 2020; Jiménez et al., 2014). These children's rights give rise to obligations for teachers to fulfill them. Children's rights must be given from the time the child is in the womb until he is eighteen years old, according to his life needs, so that he can grow and develop optimally, physically, and spiritually (Colwell, 2013; Haerani et al., 2020). Previous study offered several strategies to overcome the school dropout crisis. One strategy is protecting children's rights at school (Komalasari et al., 2021). This has encouraged the importance of conducting relevant studies, especially for out-of-school children in North Sulawesi, Indonesia.

Children's rights are human rights that must be guaranteed, protected, and fulfilled by parents, family, society, state, and government. Dropping out of school occurs in children who are not protected and whose rights at school are not fulfilled. The role of teaching staff as "managers" in learning is vital to plan, implement, supervise, and evaluate the implementation of their duties in protecting and fulfilling children's rights in learning at school (Bakken et al., 2017; Clarke, 2020). If this role is not implemented effectively, protecting and fulfilling children's rights will become increasingly worrying. Previous study stated that six factors cause children to drop out of school: education of the head of the household, ownership of KIP/PIP, number of household members, working children, poverty, and size of residence (Khan & Ahmed, 2021). Furthermore, other study states that six factors

cause children to drop out of school, namely: (1) lack of motivation to learn; (2) children like freedom; (3) children do not care; (4) parents: authoritarian, permissive parenting, busy with work; (5) school: verbal bullying, uncomfortable with class atmosphere; (6) peers (Cusinato et al., 2020).

The research findings show comprehensive school bullying prevention has yet to be done. Education administrators in schools still need to design child protection management and child care in an integrated manner in every activity in the school environment (Saraswati & Hadiyono, 2020; Swearer & Hymel, 2015). The complexity of child protection issues stems from various factors that fail to fulfill children's rights and protection. Unicef has identified several clusters that are factors in the failure to fulfill children's rights and protection in schools: (1) Failure to fulfill civil rights and independence or children's freedom to express and do various things necessary during their growth and development; (2) Failure in the family environment, including in an alternative care environment when the child cannot be cared for by parents or closest relatives, including further failure in fulfilling the child's right to essential health and welfare security; (3) Violence experienced by children (Salimi et al., 2021; Swearer & Hymel, 2015).

These three factors cause children to experience problems in fulfilling their rights in education, free time, and cultural activities. If a child has problems in education, the child becomes increasingly vulnerable, so he needs to get special protection. When schools fail to provide exceptional protection in the school environment, then children should be given protection outside of school, namely protection against violence and exploitation, whether exploitation for economic or sexual purposes, or others (Carmel & Widom, 2020; Choi et al., 2022). Children who drop out of school because they do not receive special protection have received little attention, especially from the school (teaching and education staff). Analysis and evaluation of children dropping out of school focus more on the causes of the student's parents and the students themselves. Therefore, it is essential to research the management of child protection in schools so that things can be analyzed related to the causes of children dropping out of school because they do not get their rights and protection fulfilled at school (Damayanti et al., 2020; P. Y. A. Dewi, 2020). If this condition is left unchecked, the problem of children dropping out of school will become more widespread, and the impact will be even more detrimental. Children are the nation's future, and the state of the Republic of Indonesia will continue developing. However, with the current condition of children as human resources, Indonesia will no longer be the successor of development and the nation's future but will become a burden on development and even an obstacle to development.

Essential principles for fulfilling children's rights are stated in the Child Protection Law No. 23 of 2022 and Law No. 35 of 2014 as (1) non-discrimination, (2) the best interests of the children; (3) the right to life, survival and development; and (4) respect children's ideas. The state guarantees that every exploited child who leaves school is entitled to special protection. Likewise, the community supports the involvement of the business world, labor unions, non-governmental organizations, and the community in eliminating the economic and sexual exploitation of minors (Damayanti et al., 2020). School dropouts who are exploited are exploited by those who control them, and then: (1) Working and being sold as labor (physical exploitation of labor); (2). Their organs are taken to be sold to other interested parties; (3) Forced and tricked into having sexual relations and sold as sex workers; (4) Forced to take other actions relevant to exploiting the child's potential for the benefit of the party exploiting him (Tindowen et al., 2017; Vergara et al., 2020). Based on those problem, novelty of this study is focus on child protection. This research aims to analyze child protection management in schools. The research method used is a case study.

2. METHODS

This study was conducted from 2019 to 2023 at the North Sulawesi Province Special Development Institute (LPKA) in Tomohon, where children who dropped out of school come from. This study uses case studies of school dropouts who were exploited and eventually became criminals (Assyakurrohim et al., 2023). Data collection techniques are carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation (Kusumastuti & Khoiron, 2019). Sources of information are children in the care of the LPKA, LPKA employees, parents/guardians of children, teachers and school principals of children in conflict with the law, and community leaders in the child's area of origin who are members of the LPKA's support.

In this research, the problem studied is the management of child protection in schools where out-of-school children originate and the factors that cause exploitation and the impact it has, especially on the growth and development of out-of-school children. The research location was chosen based on (1) data on cases of children who conflicted with the law and then became prisoners at the Special Child Development Institution, Tomohon City, North Sulawesi Province; (2) locations where there are street children and child workers in the informal sector; (3) communities around locations number 1 and 2; and (4) the school from which the child drops out of school.

Based on the objectives set in this research, teachers and children are the primary informants. There are seven critical questions explored from semi-structured interviews with teachers, namely: (1) learning management based on fulfilling and protecting children's rights in schools; (2) teacher knowledge about children's rights conventions; (3) the teacher's attitude towards fulfilling and protecting children at school; (4) teacher skills in fulfilling and protecting children at school; (5) Teacher knowledge about Child-Friendly Schools; (6) Teachers' attitudes towards child-friendly schools (7) Teachers' knowledge and skills in implementing positive discipline. Meanwhile, interviews with parents/guardians and community leaders focused more on clarifying and confirming data obtained from teachers and children. There are three main questions used, namely: (1) Cooperation between parents and the school; (2) Conditions of the environment where the child lives; (3) Main cultural values in society.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Child protection management in schools is scientific knowledge about planning, implementation, monitoring, and reflection on all learning activities integrated with fulfilling children's rights. Schools still need to implement management specifically to protect and fulfill children's rights. The obstacles are complex, ranging from teachers' lack of knowledge and managerial skills in fulfilling children's rights and protection at school to school leaders' knowledge about child-friendly school policies and management.

From the 30 teachers interviewed, it turned out that only seven teachers had attended training on the Convention on Children's Rights. In comparison, 23 teachers had never attended training and did not understand children's rights. Teachers only learn about child protection based on information from friends, superiors, and social media. The number of teachers who have participated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child training still needs to be bigger (30%) even though the training is an essential reference for preparing teachers who can respect, protect, fulfill, and promote children's rights. The factor that causes children to drop out of school is that their rights need to be fulfilled and protected optimally at school.

School dropouts usually must enter into written contracts or employment agreements with employers. They generally need to learn and understand employment agreements. They

focus more on the money promised without paying attention to the various consequences that arise when they work. It is not uncommon for exploitation to occur because there is no contract or employment agreement. For children who drop out of school, they want to do whatever work they want; the important thing is that they can get money for whatever they want. Work in the informal sector involving child labor is seen in urban areas such as Manado City and Bitung City. Children who drop out of school usually look for work/offer themselves to work in the informal sector, which is practically more straightforward to obtain. Most business owners in the informal sector do not care about the age of the children they employ because the criteria for working in the informal sector prioritize physical labor and work skills according to the type of informal business they are involved in.

Problems and conflicts in the family that cannot be resolved wisely are causes of children leaving home and looking for work to meet their needs. It is not uncommon for them to be trapped in bad conditions and exploited by their employers. Out-of-school children not only drop out of school and stop studying formally but also do not understand their rights as children. Job providers who want to use them easily exploit them as cheap labor. Not everyone in the community/business world cares about children. When interviews were conducted with adults/community members about child protection laws, especially in education and employment, they did not know much about them. People, especially those with weak economies, think that if they no longer have money to pay for their education, they can no longer continue their education and have to work. Children from economically disadvantaged groups who have this mindset are very vulnerable to exploitation.

There are at least four impacts of exploitation on the growth and development of out-of-school children. Nervous disorders in the brain: Children who experience brain disorders cannot focus on making quality decisions. Children learn to exploit and exploit other children; children are great imitators who can imitate whatever someone else has done to them. The exploitative actions he received could also be carried out against other people. Children are used to being impulsive in their use of money; someone who is still a child who already has money can be impulsive in using money. On average, children aged 12-18 years who conflict with the law as perpetrators of sexual violence admit that with the money they have, they can easily persuade anyone they like to have sex in exchange for money. Children commit crimes. School dropouts who work and then have money are indirectly doubly exploited. First, they are forced to work young to earn money; secondly, their money tends to be misused, such as buying cigarettes and liquor. The use of alcohol causes users to become drunk, and in such conditions, it is not uncommon for them to fight and commit other acts that are against the law.

Out-of-school children who are victims of exploitation, especially girls who have experienced sexual exploitation, need a long time to recover from psychological, mental, and emotional trauma; even in some instances, victims who have not fully recovered then use this opportunity to gain material benefits by becoming perpetrators of sexual exploitation. Implementing education for all children through the compulsory education program in schools still faces one challenge: the increasing number of children dropping out of school. Data on the Pure Participation Rate of the child-age population receiving education shows a downward trend. The pure participation rate at the elementary school level is usually still at a high level of participation, then decreases at the middle school level and continues to decline at the high school level. The trend of decreasing net enrollment rates at the junior and senior high school levels shows that the dropout rate is increasing at these levels. education net participation rate of north Sulawesi province year 2020 is show in [Table 1](#).

Table 1. Education Net Participation Rate of North Sulawesi

Level of Education	Net Enrollment Rate
SD/MI/Paket A (Elementary School)	95.13
SMP/MTs/Paket B (Junior High School)	74.82
SMA/SMK/MA/Paket C (Senior High School)	63.43

Base on [Table 1](#), the pure participation rate data shows that children's participation at the junior high school level is decreasing. Compared with data on children's participation at the elementary school level of 95.13, there was a decrease of 20.31% in junior high school (the pure participation rate in junior high school was 74.82%) and continued to decline by 11.39% in high school (the pure participation rate in high school only 63.43%).

The increase in the number of children dropping out of school is starting to be seen at the junior high school level in the 13-15 year range and at the high school level in the 15-18 year range. Simultaneously, children at this age have entered a "productive" period where they can work and be employed. They are very vulnerable to exploitation. School dropouts who have worked and have experienced what it is like to have money become very impulsive in using money. One of the cases found in a 14-year-old boy who was a prisoner at the Special Children's Development Institution in Tomohon, North Sulawesi, was a case of sexual violence where this boy could easily "cheat" his girlfriend by giving her the money he earned. from working in the gold mining sector.

Furthermore, there is the case of street children in the city of Manado who mix freely with other street children every day; they work in the informal sector with salaries varying from Rp. 30,000-50,000/day impulsively used some of the money to obtain "sexual services from street sex workers" around them. From an early age, they worked for money, lived freely and wildly, and did whatever they liked; they even proudly recounted their adventures, including the sexual sensations they experienced.

Discussion

Child protection management in schools includes the entire series of planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the implementation of formal education in developing children's potential in schools, including child protection management in the classroom in learning activities. Every student has the right to have their rights fulfilled and protected by education and learning service providers at school ([Damayanti et al., 2020](#); [Rizkita, 2017](#)). Therefore, school principals, teachers, laboratory assistants, technicians, administrative staff, security forces, cleaning staff, etc., should be able to carry out their duties to fulfill children's rights to the maximum. Implementing these tasks must be managed professionally by school leaders, both principals and teachers ([Asrial et al., 2021](#); [M. Kim et al., 2017](#)). School principals are responsible for strengthening the implementation of child-friendly schools and establishing child-friendly school policies to strengthen child-friendly school organizational culture. Each teacher is a manager in their respective class. Until now, implementing child-friendly schools in North Sulawesi province has not been realized optimally ([Dekawati, 2020](#); [Misbah et al., 2020](#)).

Teachers' knowledge and skills in implementing child-friendly schools to protect and fulfill children's rights in schools are still limited. According to the Learning Implementation Plan (RPP), teachers focus more on teaching efforts. At first glance, it seems like nothing is wrong. Children who excel are given praise, and those who do not achieve are given a warning ([Abdul-Majied et al., 2022](#); [Wegmann & Smith, 2019](#)). Everything goes well for children who excel, but things get worse for children who do not achieve. They face complex problems that they are unable to solve on their own. They have the right to be protected because they are students who must receive special protection at school. When they do not

get it, they run away from school. This is also made worse by the bullying and violence they experience at school (K. P. Dewi, 2018; Tambunan, 2021).

The condition of children who drop out of school and are then exploited is still very worrying. Efforts to fulfill children's rights, especially in the education/school sector, continue to concern those responsible for education and child protection in schools (Damayanti et al., 2020; Saraswati & Hadiyono, 2020). There is parental involvement in children's education. Effective collaboration can be established by parents and the school. Apart from the lack of adequate parental involvement in children's education, other factors such as interactions between parents, teachers, and children in fulfilling children's education, the values that shape culture in the school environment, and awareness that teachers are actors in educational development also play an essential role (Alfiansyah, 2019; You et al., 2016).

The new social environment in the social media environment is not uncommon for social media to display destructive behavior patterns. Children who are in a suitable environment are also sometimes influenced by broadcasts on social media that show violence, sexual scenes, and characters who bombard the media with hedonistic-materialist values that tend to show a lifestyle without hard work (Morrar et al., 2017; Yildirim, 2016). They like to have fun without paying attention to the moral responsibilities that everyone must carry out. Exploitation of children often results in cruel or dangerous treatment of children because the activities carried out by children can cause emotional, physical, and social problems. Children who work in mining and sectors that require highly skilled work are often trapped in conditions that endanger their lives. Physical injuries are considered lousy luck that children must accept as "accidents" because they are not careful (Anjum, 2015; Ruiyat, 2024). Then, the adults who employ the children easily blame them and scare them for their misfortune.

The condition of out-of-school children who are exploited indirectly stems from discrimination that still occurs in educational institutions. There are still policies in schools that are exclusive in order to protect the provision of quality education and create social and cultural conditions in schools that are sterile from the bad influences brought by problematic students (Sulistyawati, 2020; Syifa et al., 2019). Many street children do not receive educational services at school because they have backgrounds that are considered flawed (Bessarabova & Kurysheva, 2020; Gaidelys et al., 2022). In general, formal schools do not want to accept street children because they are considered the source or "root" of problems where the school considers their attitudes and actions to influence other students.

Exploitation is carried out on vulnerable children who inevitably have to do what the adults who control them tell them. A child who drops out of school always make decisions without careful consideration because they cannot anticipate the dire consequences resulting from their decisions; even those decisions are always impulsive (Niraula, 2021; Tosun & Mihci, 2020). Every consideration is always based on short-term rather than long-term interests for a better future. Exploitation is carried out on vulnerable children who inevitably have to do what the adults who control them tell them. A child who drops out of school always make decisions without careful consideration because they cannot anticipate the dire consequences resulting from their decisions; even those decisions are always impulsive (Khalil et al., 2017; Tindowen et al., 2017). Every consideration is always based on short-term rather than long-term interests for a better future. If the child protection law can be implemented effectively by all parties responsible for protecting and fulfilling children's rights, then violations of children's rights can be limited. If cases of exploitation, especially for children out of school, can be controlled, then the future of children, especially in North Sulawesi Province, can be guaranteed to be even better (Fatimah & Santiana, 2017;

Michielsen & Brockschmidt, 2021). The pure participation rate of the child population will increase, and conversely, the number of children out of school will decrease.

Exploitation hurts children's growth and development, especially those who have dropped out of school. Children can experience neuroscience disorders. Children learn about exploitation from their experiences, and this has the potential for children to imitate and exploit other people when they can do so; children are impulsive, especially in the use of money (Naparín & Binti Saad, 2017; Ouyang & Scharber, 2017). To overcome the complexity of the problem of child exploitation and out-of-school children, especially in North Sulawesi Province, an integrative, comprehensive, and holistic approach is needed to minimize the causal factors. Therefore, it is recommended that: the government, in this case, regional apparatus organizations related to the fulfillment and protection of children's rights, needs to intensify the socialization of child protection laws as a form of education to the community and further law enforcement against parties who violate children's rights, especially in carrying out various types of exploitation (Lehan Mackin et al., 2016; Shantini et al., 2022). Educational institutions can improve the quality of educational services. Train teachers professionally on policies and management for fulfilling children's rights and protecting children's rights in schools so that they can guide problem children, including children from economically weak groups so that they continue to exist and can continue their studies (not drop out of schools).

4. CONCLUSION

Management of protecting children's rights has yet to be implemented effectively in schools. The school's knowledge of policy and management for protecting and fulfilling children's rights still needs improvement. One of the consequences is that children drop out of school. Cases of exploitation of out-of-school children occur in the informal sector. Five main factors are causing it, namely: first, these school dropouts need a contract/agreement; School dropouts are usually unable to enter into written contracts or work agreements with employers; second, most out-of-school children work in the informal sector; third, running away from home and working without parents' knowledge-problems and conflicts in the family that cannot be resolved wisely are one of the causes of children leaving home and looking for work to fulfill their desires. It is common for them to be trapped in bad conditions and exploited by those who house them; fourth, children do not know their rights; Out-of-school children not only drop out of school and stop studying formally but also do not understand their rights. Job providers who want to use them easily exploit them as cheap labor; fifth, there are still people in the business world who do not care about child workers.

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